



# the messenger

CZK 20

volume 5, number 1, January-March '05

**Find 42 animals:**

mole elephant antelope  
peacock lion nightingale  
kingfisher rabbit tiger rhinoceros  
harm kangaroo owl lizard dog  
gull trout unalligator toad  
dogfish hippopotamus wallow  
aspill bug grasshopper raccoon  
ighthawk kestrel ladybird  
duckling goose earthworm  
mantis parr  
ow woodpecker rattlesnake

**editorial**

Dear all

Due to insuperable difficulties we didn't manage to get an issue out in December, for which we apologize.

As a result of this, however, I think you'll find the present issue all the more interesting.

In the Linguistics Pages you will find not only senior Brno academic Ludmila Urbanová in conversation with Brno academic Renata Povolná but also, for the *aficionados* among you, Jaroslav Ondráček's regular transcription page.

Andrew Oakland talks to his father Trevor about English grammar schools in the 1950s, which is sure to draw the attention of those of you interested in British culture and history.

Thanks to Lucie Podroužková you will find several excellent pieces by students in our Literature Pages.

Of course, there are many other interesting articles in this issue that I fail to mention. I recommend that you begin your reading immediately (go on, skip a couple of classes!), the sooner to make these treasures your own.

For those of you whom all this excitement may make slightly light-headed, I recommend Amy Jarvis for a bit of light relief.

Your editor  
Gabriela Oaklandová

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## news from the department

### Signposts 2005

A conference committee has been set up to supervise the preparations of the annual ELT conference on 9th to 11th September called Signposts 2005. We are looking for students who would help with running the event. Your assistance will be paid. For more information please contact Světlana Hanušová.

### 8th Brno Conference of English, American and Canadian Studies

Between February 2 – 4, the Department of English and American Studies, Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University, held a biennial conference of English, American and Canadian Studies. Our department was represented by Martin Adam (Functional Macrofied Perspective?), Světlana Hanušová and Petr Najvar (Do Early Birds Really Catch the Worm?), Olga Navrátilová (Supplementative Clauses in Resolutions), Renata Povolná (Some Discourse Items as Response Elicitors in English Face-to-Face and Telephone Conversation), Tamara Váňová (English Online), Irena Příbylová (From Woody Guthrie to Ozomatli; Protest Songs in the Changing World) and Lucie Podroužková (Shakespeare's New Clothes).

### New degrees

There are two fresh Ph.D. degrees in the department. Both Olga Dontcheva-Navrátilová and Lucie Podroužková have successfully defended their theses on *Style markers of diplomatic discourse. Text analysis of UNESCO resolutions* and *The*

*Shakespearean Canon in the Works of Tom Stoppard*, respectively.

### New babies

Two baby boys have recently adorned the department: Benedikt Popelka (the son of the former secretary) and Jan Hásek.

### Staff news

A very warm welcome to Martin Adam, who is joining our team this term. Martin received a Ph.D. degree in linguistics from the Faculty of Arts and will be teaching Syntax and Practical Language.

### Accreditation

A new accreditation round was completed for the introduction of *magister* studies at the department. The verdict of the accreditation committee is expected in April. If the programme is approved, we will be able to open single subject follow-up *magister* studies next year (jednooborové následné magisterské studium).

### Scottish Writing in Focus

The British Council Literary Seminar held yearly in Kostelec nad Černými lesy took place from 3 – 5 March 2005, with contemporary Scottish writers Neil Ascherson, Robert Crawford and Jackie Kay as guest speakers. Lucie Podroužková and students Michaela Marková, Libuše Votípková and Vojtěch Pipek attended.

### Call for assistance

Interested in new teaching methods?  
Wondering how to support integration  
and intercultural understanding  
in your lessons?

Come and help with *INTER-ACT*,  
a conference on promoting  
intercultural education in ELT  
from 22 April to 23 April 2005  
at CDVÚ Šlapanice

For more information please apply to  
Lucie Podroužková or Světlana Hanušová

### Call for assistance

- experience the biggest ELT conference  
in the Czech Republic
- discover new trends in ELT
- meet teachers of all levels of English

#### SIGNPOSTS 2005

9 – 11 September 2005

at the Faculty of Education, Masaryk University

Our department seeks students  
willing to help  
with registration and organization.

Your assistance will be paid  
and you will have an opportunity  
to visit sessions free of charge.

For more information

please contact Světlana Hanušová

### Study exchanges at this department

- Institucio Politechnico Leira, Portugal
- Hogeschool van Utrecht, the Netherlands

For more information  
please contact Lucie Podroužková

**“In English, please.”**

**“But we’re not even in class!”**

Shannon Douglass

Anyone who knows me knows that I fear banks the way some people fear spiders. But honestly, no one is going to dress a spider in a suit and make you talk to it about paperwork and money, (the two most excruciating subjects known to man.) Banks, however, are notorious bloodsuckers. So it is hard for me, even in the States, to be articulate in one. But, alas, that is the only defense. They have money and time and bureaucracy on their side. What do we have but language?

Of course, our faculty and department are not filled with bloodsuckers and should not be feared like banks, but this is precisely why it is a good idea to use and practice real English here. And all consultation between students and teachers can use real English. So from now on, the policy is that it will.

And don't let your teachers forget either. Not when there are bankers out there, and prospective employers, and other motley terrors that will require from us a strong and confident defense.

## interview

*Trevor Oakland was born in Nottingham in 1940. Between 1957 and 1992 he worked at power stations in the East Midlands as an industrial chemist for the Central Electricity Generating Board (CEGB, which on privatization in the early Nineties became Powergen). In September 2005 he will qualify for his state pension.*

*Here, Trevor talks to Andrew Oakland about his compulsory schooling, particularly the years he spent at grammar school in the 1950s.*

*Can you tell us which schools you attended, when you started and when you left?*

I went to primary school, which was from age five to seven. Burford Primary School, it was called. And then from age seven to ... well, I was still ten, to Haydn Road Junior School. From the age of nearly eleven to seventeen, I was at the High Pavement Grammar School.

*And how did you get to each of these schools?*

The primary school was about a kilometre away, so we walked. The junior school was about two or three kilometres away, and we got a bus. A special bus which took us to the junior school. To grammar school we went under our own steam. It was about four kilometres away.

*What time did school start in the morning?*

About nine o'clock. And we finished at about four o'clock in the afternoon. [Start and finish times would have varied slightly from school to school. This is still the case today. Ed.] And there was an hour and a half for lunch. We needed an hour and a half at the grammar school: we stayed there for lunch, but they didn't have a canteen so we had to go to the local chapel, which was about four hundred yards away. As there were eight hundred boys, we had to have two sittings. When I started grammar school it was only six years after the end of the Second World War. Obviously there was not much money about and Britain still owed an enormous amount of money to pay for its war effort. Things were still rationed.

*Did you have to pay for your schooling?*

No, the schooling was free. It was provided by the state.

*Did you have to pay for school meals?*

Yes, if your economic circumstances allowed. If not, you got free school meals.

*Tell us more about what you did at primary and junior school.*

I can't remember much about primary school because that was basically a kindergarten and you were just learning how to socialize and the rudiments of reading.

*So classroom time wasn't divided into different subjects?*

No, not at primary school. We had the same teacher for everything. At junior school we had the same teacher for everything, too, but we did have different lessons: maths, English, art, physical education ... At grammar school, of course, all this would be completely different.

*What about grading? Did you receive grades A to E?*

You were graded according to which class you were in. At primary school, of course, this wasn't an issue. In the fourth – the last – year of junior school you had to take the 11+ [Eleven Plus] exam. And that was the Be-All-and-End-All. The Holy Grail. To take the 11+ you had to be in the top form – which at our school meant being in the A class. (There were classes A, B, C and D.) I'd been in 1B, 2B and 3B. In the third year I was in 3B Boys – there was a 3B Girls as well.

*Was that common policy then? To divide girls and boys into different classes at state schools?*

No, I don't think so. Ours was a mixed school and the A-class was mixed. Perhaps there had been a baby boom. Anyway, I was in a boys-only class in the third year only. We started preparing for the 11+ when I was still in the third year. My mother wanted me to get into the A-class, so I had to study hard. Fortunately, I did quite well in the end-of-year exams and was put up into the 4A class.

*So if you hadn't got into the A-class you wouldn't have done the 11+?*

A few out of the B-class who showed good aptitude were put in for it – perhaps half a dozen out of a class of forty. Everyone in the A-class took the 11+ and about fifty per cent of them were successful. So I suppose that means that about one eighth of the pupils in the school qualified to go to grammar school. The rest went to an 'ordinary' secondary modern school.

*If you weren't successful the first time you did the 11+, could you do it again?*

Not for two more years. There was a 13+, but that was extremely rare. People who passed the 13+, when they came to the grammar school (having been at a secondary modern school for two years) they were put into the lowest classes and were given a general education; they couldn't specialize in certain subjects. I specialized in sciences, others specialized in classics. They just had to follow a general stream until they did their O-levels.

*Can you tell us about the 11+ exam? Did it consist of written papers only?*

As far as I remember it was all written. And it took one morning. There was an English paper, a Maths paper and a General Knowledge paper. And they took an hour – or perhaps forty-five minutes – each. It was an external exam composed by a national examinations board. We all sat together in the assembly hall under the gaze of an invigilator.

If you weren't there that morning, you lost your chance.

*And how long did you have to wait for the results?*

Oh, I'm not sure I can remember. We took the exam round about March, I think. The results arrived four to six weeks later, I think – but I'm really not sure of that. I seem to recall knowing a month or two before we left junior school. And during that time I went to the grammar school for an interview.

*Oh, so passing the 11+ wasn't the only requirement for grammar-school entrance?*

Oh, it was. But the school was very formal, you couldn't just turn up for the first day of term without an introduction. You went to the school before you started there to be "addressed" by the headmaster, and interviewed by the housemaster – with your parents. And then we learned what the parents had to provide in the way of a school uniform – grey shirt and trousers, socks with the school colours on them, black shoes, a special tie, a school pullover with the school colours on it, a school blazer, a cap, and a scarf.

*And where did you get the uniform?*

There were about four different outfitters in the city that provided school uniforms. All grammar schools had uniforms, and most of the secondary moderns as well.

*Did you have a uniform at junior school?*

No. There was a badge which you could wear on your cap, if you wore a cap. But it wasn't compulsory, no. At the grammar school the uniform was extremely strict: you had to be seen at all times on the way to and from school to be wearing your uniform. If you hadn't been, you might arrive at school to be called to see the housemaster, who might say it had been reported to him that you weren't wearing your cap at such-and-such a time, perhaps half an hour after school had ended. You *were* wearing your school uniform, but you weren't wearing it properly. The housemaster would give you lines or even detention.

*Was there ever any kind of inspection of uniform?*

Yes, every morning. As you went into school assembly you had to pass some prefects who were inspecting you.

*Prefects?*

Students who were in the lower-sixth or upper-sixth [the sixth or seventh year].

*... who had been appointed as prefects by whom?*

By the teaching staff.

*So it wasn't a free election?*

No, no, there was no free election. There was no democracy at all in the school.

*What did the teachers wear?*

The teachers wore gowns, but they only wore the hoods on their gowns on Speech Day or other formal occasions in the school. On Speech Day, they would also wear their mortar boards.

*Tell us about Speech Day.*

Speech Day was held once a year. The whole school gave a concert. Speeches were given and prizes were awarded. It was held in a hall that seated about two thousand people, and there would be eight hundred boys on the platform. It was in Nottingham's Albert Hall. Every boy was allowed to have two guests – parents, aunts, uncles, brothers and sisters. It took place in the evening. It was a showcase for what the school could do. The orchestra would give a concert, and the male-voice choir was always particularly good.

*Were all the boys required to learn a musical instrument?*

No, but the facilities for doing so were excellent and there were many opportunities to perform. There were two orchestras, two choirs, and a proper music room which was also a lecture theatre. But we all had to study the theory of music for a minimum of two years – people like me instantly forgot it, of course. Music was very much part of the formal education.

*Before we leave the subject of Speech Day, tell us something about the speeches.*

There was normally a visiting academic or celebrity – a professor, the mayor, maybe a

Member of Parliament, certainly someone quite well known and/or respected in the community.

*Would this person be an old boy [former student] of the school?*

He could be, but not necessarily. After he'd given his speech, he would assist in the awarding of prizes for academic achievement. The boys were presented with these on the platform.

*What would the prizes be?*

Usually books. And there were cups and shields for sporting achievement. All the masters [teachers] sat at the front of the platform, resplendent in multi-coloured gowns which represented their university degrees. The headmaster, of course, was in pride of place.

*What degrees would they have had? Most of them had a Bachelor's, or ...?*

Most had a Bachelor's, some had a Master's, there were a few doctorates. The headmaster had a Master's degree from Cambridge, an M.A. (Cantab.), which meant that after his Bachelor's he hadn't had to do any further study for it.

*Did the headmaster actually teach anything?*

Oh, no. The headmaster was solely an administrator. His deputy headmaster was a Chemistry master. Quite a few of the masters had their names on the Roll of Honour, which

listed people who had given illustrious service to the country. The deputy headmaster was on it: he'd won a military medal in the First World War. One of the Games masters, who also taught Maths, was on the Roll of Honour and we couldn't understand why. We found out later he'd got a Blue from Cambridge for rugby, which was supposed to be something very special.

*Were all the teachers Nottingham men? Were they all men?*

All men, not necessarily from Nottingham. The only woman in the school was the school secretary.

*There wasn't a nurse?*

No, no nurse. A doctor would come round and examine people. We didn't have a resident nurse.

*You mentioned something about sport, that prizes were awarded for sport. What sports were these?*

In the winter, the main sport was rugby, then athletics, cross-county running and hockey [field hockey not ice hockey]. There was swimming all the year round. In the summer there was cricket and tennis. Games was built into the timetable so as to take place for the whole of one afternoon. It didn't matter what the weather was like – rain, snow, hail – you had to do it.

*Could you choose which sport you wanted to play?*

Not until the third or fourth year. In the later years, I chose to do swimming instead of rugby.

*Can you tell us something about the competition element of Games?*

The competition element was built into the school. The school was divided into eight houses. Each house was headed by a senior master, called a housemaster. I won't bore you with all the names of the houses, but – apart from School house, which is traditional – the houses were named after districts of Nottingham. I was in Basford house because my elder brother had been in Basford house. And after me my younger brother was in Basford house – you didn't get a lot of choice in the matter. It was tradition – Oakland major and Oakland minor. All this came from the public school system; it's a bit like the system of colleges at the old universities.

*There were no boarders at your grammar school?*

No, no boarders. Interestingly, up until the 1930s our school was a mixed grammar school. Then they built a girls' grammar school about 400 yards away. We boys were not supposed to be seen together with the girls, not until the Sixth Form when we might go to dances.

*Really? And this would be a disciplining matter?*

Oh, yes, you could be disciplined for fraternizing with a grammar-school girl while wearing your uniform on the way to or from school. Of course, I don't mean just talking, but holding hands, kissing ... It was very well regulated.

*Back to the houses and sport ...*

Yes, when you played competitive sport it was for your house. The house teams then fed into the school teams, which would represent the whole school against other schools in the county or the neighbouring counties.

*Were the house competitions very prestigious? Did the boys take them seriously?*

Yes, I think so. This was the form Games took. There was never any question of playing for the sake of it, without any element of competition. There was always something at stake. And the ultimate target was an award at Speech Day.

*What about discipline? You've mentioned detention and lines – were these the only forms of discipline?*

No. There was corporal punishment as well. This was usually administered by the headmaster. Persistent offenders would be sent to the head, who would wallop their backsides with a cane.

*Would it be known throughout the school that somebody had been punished in this way?*

Oh, I don't know, but it wasn't rare, most people had it. I only had it once.

*What had you done?*

I can't remember.

*Had you been holding hands with a girl while wearing your uniform?*

No, no, no, no, no ... I'd probably been talking in assembly, or something like that.

*Six of the best across the backside?*

I think it might have been just one, across the hand. I remember the headmaster saying, "I'm very disappointed with you, Oakland. I never expected to see *you* here." THWACK. "Now go away and don't do it again." Quite kindly, really. He had to hit me because that was the prescribed thing. I mean, it didn't make you *cry*. I think it was the humiliation of it that acted as a deterrent.

*And there were other boys outside waiting to follow you in for their 'treatment'?*

No. Every day there might be two or three. The Headmaster's Office was on a set of stairs between the second and third floors. (It was a Victorian building with four levels.)

*So your climb was a bit like the Stations of the Cross ...*

... halfway down the corridor you went into the Secretary's Office, and the Headmaster's Office was at the back ...

Anyway, back to the general subject of discipline. Prefects could give you lines.

*Could you explain what 'lines' are?*

You'd be given fifty or a hundred of them – you had to write fifty (or a hundred) times a sentence that had been dictated to you. This sentence was supposed to serve as an expression of your contrition. Say you'd been kicking a ball in the street, you'd write fifty times: "I must not kick a ball in the street." The following day before assembly you'd go to the Prefects' Office and he'd check that it was done and record this in a book.

*And the boys would honour the punishments handed down by the prefects?*

Oh, yes, because if they didn't the prefects had the authority to increase the punishment or go to the housemaster.

*So the chain of command was Prefect – Housemaster – Headmaster.*

Yes.

*And 'detention'?*

Detention was when you were kept behind after school – for perhaps an hour. And you had to do some work that was set. It might be some Latin prose to translate, it was usually something classical. There'd be a whole classroom full of detainees, from different years – with a supervisor, of course.

*Didn't your mother wonder where you were, when that happened?*

No, you were given detention a day or two after your crime was discovered, so that you could make arrangements.

*What about homework?*

You normally had two or three hours an evening.

*What, even in the first year?*

Oh, yes. That was just how things were. One thing we didn't have to do was take home all our books. We only took the books that we needed that evening or weekend. We each had a locker [a wooden cupboard with a lock on it] where we could leave our textbooks, exercise books, games kit. And the books were all provided by the school.

*How did the subjects change in your timetable from one year to the next?*

Well, first of all, in Year 1, we were put into groups which corresponded to how well we had done in the 11+: the most successful went into the A-class, the least successful into the D-class. Everybody took the same exams at the end of Year 1, and after these a few people were moved into another class. The A-class started Classics in Year 2 – Latin in Year 2, Greek in Year 3. French had been compulsory for everyone from Year 1. And, I don't really know why, some of the boys also did Russian.

I was in the B-class, which became the Science Form. For the first two years we did General Science – from Year 3, this was split into Biology, Physics and Chemistry. Those in the D-class continued with more integrated subjects, and could only do [at the end of Year 5] one O-level in science, for example. (We in the Science Form did O-levels in Biology, Physics and Chemistry.)

An important function of the grammar schools was to turn out people with O-levels – this was what industry wanted. If you had O-levels, your employer would think in terms of the development of your career. If you didn't have O-levels, you were likely to be given more manual and technical jobs and unlikely ever to make it to a managerial grade.

*And O-levels then were in eight or nine subjects?*

Yes. Usually eight. If you passed at least five or six of these you could get a job in industry. I went into the electricity industry.

*How did that happen?*

I came home from school one day and my father said, "I've got you an interview." By now I was in the Sixth Form, studying for my A-levels. I had to go to the Electricity Board for an entrance exam. So off I trotted. I must have passed the entrance exam because they offered me a job. My father said, "You're taking it," and he took me out of school.

*From one day to the next?*

Well, from one week to the next, yes.

*And how did you feel about that?*

A bit put out, really. Anyway, I started work in August 1957, at a power station.

*How was your father's education different to yours?*

He just went to an elementary school, which he left at the age of fourteen, perhaps younger. He had to help look after his mother, who was blind. And then he went to work for a newspaper as a proofreader. Later he was a bus inspector, and then a bus driver. He met his wife – my mother – on the buses.

*We should perhaps return to the subject of your leaving school. Did your father give you a reason for insisting you left school?*

Don't forget that this was only twelve years after the end of the war. There was still a lot of poverty about. If you got a job with prospects, you grabbed it. I think he was thinking of my future. Though it was completely different with my younger brother, who is four years younger than me. He finished school, went to university and never lived in Nottingham again.

Anyway, everything worked out all right.

*Thanks, Dad. You've got a memory like an elephant.*

## linguistics pages

### Glottal stop – a dirty word?

Jaroslav Ondráček

In the last issue of the Messenger we mentioned the increasing popularity practically all the **aspects of connected speech** enjoy in informal English standard. Assimilation, elision, coalescence and glottalling find their way from the "street" to handbooks of phonetics and things like /,ðæ? ,feɪn? 'bʌz/ instead of /,ðæt ,feɪnt 'bʌz/, although still condemned by some people, are part of the normal pronunciation of many British speakers.

Let us have a look at the following text:

1 /wɒ? dɪdʒu 'meɪk əv ðə 'fʊ?bɔ:l 'ðen ||  
 2 'brɪliənt || aɪ 'lʌv ðə ʤɔ:rəpɪən 'tʃæmpjənʃɪp  
 3 || wɒtʃ 'evrɪ 'mætʃ || 'aɪv wɒtʃ 'sʌm || aɪ  
 4 wəz 'wɒtʃɪŋ wen 'ɪŋɡlən ɡɒ? 'bɪ:tɪ || ðæ?  
 5 dɪ'sɪzən əbaʊ? ðæ? ɡəʊl || 'pʊʃt || 'nevə ||  
 6 ðə wəz 'æbsəlu:tli 'nʌθɪŋ 'rɒŋ wɪð ɪt ət ɔ:l  
 7 || 'evrɪwʌn raʊnd 'ɑ: weɪ | sɪ:m tə hæv  
 8 'fʊ?bɔ:l'aɪtɪs || 'fɜ:st ɪ? wəz 'reg 'krɒsɪz |  
 9 ɒm 'waɪ? 'bækgraʊnz 'flʌtrɪŋ 'evrɪweə ||  
 10 'ðen ɪ? wəz 'blu: əm 'waɪt | wɪð 'wɪslz |  
 11 'belz | 'kɑ: hɔ:nz | fəwɜ:kz | ən i:vɪm 'pi:pl  
 12 hɪtɪŋ pɒ?s wɪð spu:nz || 'wɒt ə 'rækɪt ||  
 13 'defnɪŋ || pɒts ən 'spu:nz || 'krʌmz || ðeɪ  
 14 'hæg 'ɡɒt ɪ? 'bæd/

Although the above text is an instance of ordinary phonemic transcription, our SCEP (= Summer Course in English Phonetics) teachers in London actually insisted on us

consistently using all aspects of connected speech, including the use of the glottal stop, wherever possible. It is glottal stop usage that we will comment on first.

A glottal stop, symbolized /ʔ/ is a plosive made at the glottis (= made by vocal folds). Traditionally, it has been associated with the omission of various consonants in Cockney, e.g. /kʌ?ə 'tʰəɪ/ *cup of tea*, /lʌ?ɪ/ *lucky*, and even /ɑ:ʔə 'mɪnɪ?/ *half a minute*.

Although such liberal replacement of almost any consonant by a glottal stop is still considered “illegal” in RP, we do come across almost regular replacement of syllable-final /p, t, k/ by /ʔ/ in RP speakers (*get down, that chair*) and recently also replacement of /t/ even in other positions, i.e. before the syllabic [ŋ] and [l] and before words beginning with vowels in London Regional RP (*cotton, little, eat an apple*) – see Gimson p.170.

In our text all the instances underlined with one line illustrate the most frequent use of the glottal stop, i.e. at the end of a syllable or a word, where /t/ is preceded by a vowel and followed by a consonant, mostly homorganic, e.g. alveolar like /t/ in [wɒ? dɪdʒu, ðæ? dɪ'sɪzən, əbaʊ? ðæ?, pɒ?s], but also with other places of articulation ['fʊ?bɔ:l, ðæ? wɒtʃ, ɡɒ? 'bɪ:tɪ, ɪ? wəz, 'waɪ? 'bækgraʊnz]. Obviously, like any other aspects of connected speech, the use of a glottal stop is fully optional and only shows a tendency, however important, not a rule.

Let us now look at instances of **assimilation** and **coalescence**, in our text double-underlined.

In line 4 [ˈɪŋɡlən ɡɒʔ] we have an example of assimilation of place, where /n/ becomes /ŋ/ because of the following velar plosive /g/, which is, however, only possible after elision of final /d/ takes place in the word [ˈɪŋɡlənd]. Other instances of regular regressive assimilation of place can be found in line 8 [ˈred ˈkrɒsɪz], where the velar plosive /k/ causes the change of alveolar /d/ to the velar /g/ [ˈreg ˈkrɒsɪz]. An example of the same case is [ˈhæɡ ˈɡɒt ɪʔ ˈbæd] in line 14. In line 11 [i:vŋ ˈpi:p], alveolar /n/ changes into bilabial /m/ because of the following bilabial /p/.

Similar to assimilation, yet not quite like it, is **coalescence**, found in line 1 of our text [dɪdʒʊ]. Here the alveolar /d/ followed by palatal /j/ form together the affricate /dʒ/, as if the palatal pronunciation of /j/ were shifted more towards the front with the outcome of the post-alveolar /ʒ/.

Finally, instances of **elision** in our text, marked with a thick underline. “Elision is the eliding (= omission of, deletion) of a sound that would otherwise be present. It is particularly characteristic of rapid or casual speech.” (LPD p.255) *A very basic rule is that in consonant clusters of three, within a word or at word boundaries the consonant in the middle can usually be omitted.*

In our text in line 3 we have an instance of /t/-elision in the past tense ending of regular verbs [wɒtʃ], where only the context disambiguates the meaning of the word. We have an example of /d/-elision in line 4 - the very case already commented on above - [ˈɪŋɡlən ɡɒʔ], where the omission of /d/ enables consequently the assimilation process

as stated above. Other cases of /d/-elision in the text are the following: [ˈbækgraʊnz] in line 9, where the middle consonant within a 3-consonant cluster is omitted, then a very typical omission of final /d/ in the conjunction *and* [ˈblu: əm ˈwaɪt] - again followed by assimilation (line 10), [pɒts ən ˈspu:nz] - line 13.

Last but not least, still under the heading of elision in general, come instances of 'schwa-elision', which cause loss of a weak syllable in words like *fluttering* [ˈflʌtrɪŋ], *deafening* [ˈdefnɪŋ] and syllable consonant formation in *beaten* [ˈbi:tŋ], *whistles* [ˈwɪsɪlz], *even* [i:vŋ] and *people* [ˈpi:p] - in lines 9, 13, 4, 10, and 11 respectively.

As the materials I brought from London last August as a participant of the Summer Course of English Phonetics (see the October issue of the Messenger for more information ) are very rich, I hope I will be able to tell you more on the subject of contemporary spoken English in the near future. Next may come compression and smoothing (in our text the word faəwɜ:kɪs in line 11).

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## Ludmila Urbanová

in conversation with Renata Povolná

*Associate Professor Ludmila Urbanová spent several fruitful years as the Head of the Department of the English Language and Literature at the Faculty of Education. Now she is a member of the Department of English and American Studies at the Faculty of Arts, where she acts mainly as a supervisor of postdoctoral studies in the area of English Language. However, her co-operation with the English Department at the Faculty of Education remains strong: several of its teachers have been or are her postgraduate students. Moreover, together with Associate Professor Milada Franková, Assoc. Prof. Urbanová acts as guarantor of all Bachelor's programmes taught here. In connection with Assoc. Prof. Urbanová's sixtieth birthday, Renata Povolná has conducted with her the following interview.*

*Lída, I know that after your graduation from the Faculty of Arts in Brno you spent several years in Prešov in Slovakia. So could you perhaps tell us something about your stay there and the people you met in Prešov?*

Actually, I spent 27 years of my working life in Slovakia, in Prešov at the Faculty of Arts. When I went there in 1965, the

Department of English Studies was just being founded, so it was a very difficult time. The start was very, very difficult. And it took a long time to establish a department with the kind of reputation it enjoys now. But it was a very fruitful period of my life, especially with regard to the colleagues I worked with. The most important colleague, the most important influence I came across, was Professor Josef Vachek, who came to Prešov in 1974 and stayed there for more than 5 years. He was teaching the History of English and some special seminars, in particular a seminar on Linguistics for young researchers. I attended this last seminar, which gave me a lot of insight into all kinds of linguistics problems. I should also say that I never lost touch with the Brno department because I was working there for my qualifications, for the CSc. degree, and I completed my degree in 1984 with Professor Jan Firbas. So in fact my homes are both Prešov and Brno.

*After your years in Slovakia, you came back to Brno, where you first spent several years at the Faculty of Education before you moved to the Faculty of Arts. So what was your position at the Faculty of Education and how did you spend your time here?*

I came back to Brno before Czechoslovakia was split. It was in fact autumn 1992 when I came back. I started working at the Faculty of Education on 1<sup>st</sup>

October 1992. I came on the invitation of Professor Jan Firbas. It so happened that in 1992 I had spent three months in London – January, February and March. When I came back to Prešov, a letter was sitting at home, waiting for me. It was a letter from Professor Jan Firbas asking me to come back to Brno because the new department, the newly founded department at the Faculty of Education, needed qualified people. So in fact it was his invitation which took me back. I came here and the new department was a real challenge because, again, it was being founded. But now the time was favourable. It can't be compared with Prešov because after the revolution the situation was much more favourable with regard to support, getting sources, getting funding (from the British Council in particular). The department was full of native speakers in those days. It was difficult work but it was very challenging. And I think it was a very, very useful part of my career. In those days, as you remember, Renata, we were compiling the syllabi, the plans of study for the individual types of study. So it was a crucial time for putting the shape of the department together. And I think we were really lucky with what we managed in those days. There was a lot of enthusiasm around; this is partly lost now, I think. But in those days it was here. And it was a very good time for me to be with young colleagues eager to do something for English studies in Brno.

*So how did it happen that you finally moved to the Faculty of Arts, and what is your position there? What do you specialize in and what is your main area of research?*

It so happened that I was addressed by several people from the Faculty of Arts, especially Professor Firbas and also Professor Hladký, who kept coming and saying: Why don't you come to our department? It is true to say that my background is not in methodology at all. So I felt this discrepancy when I was teaching at the Faculty of Education that in fact I was not primarily methodology-minded; my education is more theoretical. So I felt the need - you know - to go to a department which was more theory-oriented. And because the need was there and there was an expressed wish for me to go, I didn't hesitate and I went. And it's true that I feel very happy in that department now because my major concern at the moment is the education of doctoral students among whom you, too, can be counted as an erstwhile successful postgraduate student. And I am very happy that I can educate these qualified colleagues, happy for the future of English studies, not only in Brno but in other parts of the country, too. I have worked with many really bright young people who are interested in language research; I am surrounded by them and I feel really very useful at the moment.

*As you say, you supervise the work of a lot of postgraduate students. But you also continue your own research. Your specialization is spoken language and working with corpus-based material. Can you tell us something about what you are working on at present?*

Thanks to the support of Professor Jan Firbas, my research has been corpus-oriented for more than two decades now. I feel that my area of study, that is spoken English, is an area which is still full of question marks. And I also see that spoken language is an area of study which is very interesting for my students, for young researchers, for doctoral students; at least for the moment I am well-established in this area and I wouldn't like to leave it because there is still such a lot to cover. And because we have all the materials now – materials which are available in all forms, printed or spoken, recorded and so on – I expect to continue my research in this area. My plan for the future is to publish another book, the tentative title of which is *“Phatic Communion and Small Talk“*; I see this as a sequel to a book I've already published called *“On Expressing Meaning in English Conversation“*. Authentic conversation and – more recently – fictional dialogues are the main areas, the main subjects of my research.

*My last question. You have published – together with Andrew Oakland, who teaches at the Faculty of Education – a*

*practically oriented book called “Úvod do anglické stylistiky“. This was published in Czech. Have you any plans concerning this publication, such as extending it or publishing it in English?*

I really very much treasure the co-operation with the department at the Faculty of Education, especially the co-operation with Andrew Oakland. I think that our joint publication is quite unique in the sense that it's the first book written in Czech about English stylistics in print. And I think it's very useful. It would be worthwhile to consider a kind of extension because, of course, it would be of value to include some more topics which deal with stylistics and with styles. Another plan for the future – let's hope the near future – is that we would translate the book into English, because we feel that in English the book might find many more readers. Stylistics is also an area which is not so much research-oriented, though it is central to my teaching. I feel the need to extend the topics I've already covered.

*Thank you very much for your time and answers. I would like to express my belief that in the future there will be more co-operation between the two departments of English – including publications. And I wish you many more years of successful research and work with your students.*

Thank you very much.

## methodology pages

### **Learning English Through Picture Books Munich 19 – 21 November 2004** *Conference Report*

Nad'a Vojtková

I had a unique opportunity to participate in a conference organised by IATEFL YL SIG, the British Council Germany and Internationale Jugendbibliothek Munich, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität Munich, Realbook news and Mopsy Club.

There were 150 participants from 20 countries. The conference provided space for both theoretical and practical experience. It started with a plenary session given by Janet Enever (London Metropolitan University) and Opal Dunn (Realbooks news). They both provided a very clear theoretical framework for the programme to follow as they gave the rationale for using real books for TEYLs.

On the Saturday the participants were divided into four groups in which four researchers presented their findings. I was one of the presenters and I was in a group where a colleague from Latvia presented a project called "Travelling Books", in which schools from 4 countries gathered in sharing various books through lesson plans that teachers had prepared.

The second presentation was given by Jutta Rymarczyk (Pädagogische Hochschule Heidelberg) and she looked at cross-curricular links in using real books, especially books using various forms of art. Throughout the conference visual literacy was referred to alongside language literacy.

I presented my small-scale research on "What teachers find challenging in introducing picture books in their English

lessons". My presentation was based on data gathered from 74 teachers of English.

The last presentation in our group was given by Penelope Robinson (School of Education, University of Leeds) and she discussed the practice of shared reading using Big Books to promote first and second language development.

After that a practical workshop on using real books followed. ("Real books" means authentic books that are published for English-speaking children.) We had an inspiring session with Sandie Mourao (an IATEFL YL SIG coordinator based in Portugal). Her session called "EEK! A cheese and tomato spider!" used a Nick Sharrat flap book and provided ideas on how to use it with pre-school children.

After lunch there were two sessions given by prominent authors and illustrators of children's books. I took part in Pat Hutchins and Tony Ross's sessions. They gave the conference a new dimension which made it so unique and very different from other ELT events.

On Sunday there was a slot where teachers exchanged ideas on using picture books with their learners. Then a panel discussion followed in which experts from various countries answered questions raised by the participants.

The final talk was given by Professor Friederike Klippel from Munich University. Her talk was entitled "Literacy through Picture Books".

The whole conference was a great success because of its academic programme, the venue (the Internationale Jugendbibliothek, which is located in Schloss Blutenburg) and its participants, enthusiastic teachers from all over the world.

If you would like more detailed information you can contact me in my office.

## CUP News

Nad'a Vojtková

Based on my Conference Report in this issue of the Messenger I would like to draw on that experience and look at what CUP can offer in this area. For teachers of very young learners we have a set of small Cambridge Storybooks. These are beautifully illustrated nursery rhymes and chants. They are sold in packs of six with a tape and teacher's notes for inspiration.

For older children (still at primary school) we offer level 2 and level 3 Cambridge Storybooks (which differ in number of pages and level of language). These are real stories with beautiful illustrations and they introduce children to the enjoyment of books.

They are also accompanied by teacher's books containing lesson plans and activities.

All the stories are available on audio CD/cassette.

And if you become a real story fan then "Stories" by Ruth Wajnryb (Cambridge Handbooks for Language Teachers series) might be just the thing you are looking for.

See you next time!

## TOEFL and recent developments in ETS language assessment and admission testing

Lucie Podroužková

### PART ONE: TOEFL

If you have ever considered studying in the U.S.A. or elsewhere abroad, you will have heard of TOEFL. Like the Cambridge exams, TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) is not in any way compulsory. Rather, you choose to take it in order to advance your career or improve your prospects. TOEFL is often listed as one condition for entering university studies, for

study exchanges and scholarships, or as a graduate requirement. It can help you to receive academic credit and enhance job opportunities. Some people take the exam simply for personal information, to assess their language level and competence.

The test, now 40 years in existence, was devised by IIE (Institute of International Education), founded in 1919, an organization which offers scholarships and fellowship programmes. Another institution seminal in international testing is ETS (Educational Testing Service), which has been active for 50 years now and which provides a bridge between testing and preparation for tests.

At present, there are two types of TOEFL: computer-based (CBT) and paper-based (PBT). In this country, the tests are supervised by the Fulbright Commission in Prague. Unfortunately, the CBT option is no longer provided locally and should you choose to opt for it, you will need to apply to other centres, such as Berlin, Munich or Budapest. The test is currently administered three times a year.

There are a number of differences as to how to register for either CBT or PBT and several options, too. Registration, including payment, can be made by mail, by phone or online. If registering via post, your application form and cheque drawn on a bank must arrive at the TOEFL address in Princeton, U.S.A. before the deadline. Online registration gives you more time (you don't have to allow for postal delivery) and the option to pay by credit card. For CBT, there are different forms to be completed and while the fee goes to the US, just like with PBT, the documents must be sent to the Netherlands, the registration centre for our region. The deadline is set approximately five weeks before the actual test takes place.

The maximum test scores are 677 points for PBT, and 300 for CBT. The entry levels typically demanded by universities range from 500 to 550 points for the former, and 173 to 213 for the latter form of the exam.

In autumn 2005, unprecedented changes await the TOEFL exam. The propounded main purpose of the “Next Generation TOEFL” is an “assessment of English language proficiency that uses an *integrated* approach to measure students’ *communicative* competence for the *real academic* world” (key words highlighted). What it means in practice is that, for example, the four language skills will be examined through two types of tasks: an independent one, focusing on one skill only, and newly, an “integrated” task, combining two or more skills, which will thus simulate a real-life situation of a student. After all, language communication does usually involve a combination of skills rather than using one at a time. A university lecture, for example, expects a student to listen, take notes and ask questions, sometimes even to follow a text on the OHP, computer projector or board.

Another ambition of the new test is to produce a more authentic material, which would “better measure the ability to understand and respond to material in the real academic world”. The total test time will be 3.5 hours, 60 minutes of which are devoted to three sets in a Reading section, where the student should prove their ability to learn by and from reading. The Listening Section will last 40 minutes and will include two brief conversations and four lectures of approximately five minutes.

In two independent speaking tasks, you will be granted 15 seconds for preparation prior to speaking about personal experiences and preferences. This will be followed by four integrated speaking tasks, requiring the student to answer questions based on information from a reading or listening material. Both the listening and reading items will be short (1.5 minutes the former, one paragraph the latter) but all the relevant information must be included in your

answers. Other criteria, apart from understanding, are the ability to make connections, clarity, fluency and coherence.

In the Writing Section, you will be asked to state, explain and support an opinion on an issue. The required length of the essay will be 300 words in an allotted time of 30 minutes. The 15-minute integrated task will comprise a short listening, a short reading and a subsequent writing task, ranging from 150 to 225 words.

To sum up, what the new TOEFL seeks in the test-taker is the ability to cover all the relevant information, organized in complete thoughts, a wide range of vocabulary and appropriate grammar, and a fluent, effortless response.

*For this article, ETS materials, Fulbright Commission information and data from an ETS workshop in Prague have been used.*

*Useful links:*

<http://www.ets.org/ell>

<http://www.toefl.org/tour>

<http://www.toefl.tast>

#### TEST YOUR READING SKILLS

1. What does TOEFL stand for and what kind of exam is it?
2. What types of TOEFL are there?
3. How do you register for CBT?
4. Where can you take CBT at present?
5. What two types of tasks does the New Generation TOEFL include?
6. What chief aspects of language competence will the Next Generation TOEFL aim at?
7. What is the point of integrated tasks?
8. What are the main evaluation criteria?

## literature pages

*In each issue of The Messenger, Lucie Podroužková browses the library shelves for both new arrivals and all-time favourites to give an informal review and a personal recommendation, concluded with a comprehension question for potential readers.*

### **A SCHOOLMISTRESS WITH A DIFFERENCE**

When Muriel Spark came to Prague in 1999, she struck everyone as an embodiment of her own surname. A short and bulky lady now well into her eighties, she radiated wit and intellect. She has written novels to fill a bookshelf, yet her creativity and imagination show no signs of dwindling. She is said to engage in no compositional planning; merely, she writes down a title and writes on.

*The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* remains Spark's best-known novel to date. Set in Edinburgh of the 1930s, with occasional but important references to the "years after", it revolves around the charismatic and intriguing character of Miss Jean Brodie, a schoolmistress with original methods of instruction and a very specific outlook on life. Miss Brodie holds classes in the open air, takes the girls walking around historical Edinburgh, explains what "a dole" is, and intimates to them her travel and love experiences:

"Hold up your books," said Miss Brodie quite often that autumn, "prop them up in your hands, in case of intruders. If there are any intruders, we are doing our history lesson ... our poetry ... English grammar."

The small girls held up their books with their eyes not on them, but on Miss Brodie.

"Meantime I will tell you about my last summer holiday in Egypt ... I will tell you about care of skin, and of the hands ... about the Frenchman I met in the train to Biarritz ... and I must tell you about the Italian paintings I saw."  
(10-11)

Being now in her self-declared prime, Miss Brodie fancies that under her tutelage her plain pupils will rise to be the *crème de la crème*. This magnificent scheme comes to fruition in six girls of unprotesting parents: Rose Stanley, later famous for sex, Monica Douglas with a head for numbers and a fiery temper, small-eyed Sandy Stranger with English pronunciation, insipid and blamed-for-everything Mary Macgregor, who later dies in a hotel fire and who everybody meant to have been kinder to, pretty Jenny Gray with acting ambitions, and gymnastics genius Eunice Gardiner. These girls become known to the whole of Marcia Blaine School as "the Brodie set". Under the formative influence of their guru, they learn that the Classics are to be preferred to the Moderns, that art comes before science and that team spirit is vulgar. They get invited to tea and to the theatre, are taken into confidence and even play a part in Miss Brodie's love life.

Miss Brodie's memories of a fiancé killed in the war incite and inspire the girls' awakening sexual awareness. Having renounced her passion for arts teacher and

married man Teddy Lloyd, Miss Brodie embarks on another love affair as a cure, with a shy singing master called Mr Lowther. When this does not help, she offers one of her girls to Mr Lloyd as a replacement. His way of coping is through a series of portraits he paints of the Brodie set, in which all the girls look like a version of their teacher.

A ruthless romantic, Miss Brodie sails with her head high among other schoolmistresses, such as the gaunt Mrs Gaunt and the headmistress Miss Mackay, who sniffs around for compromising evidence on the pretext of which she could remove Miss Brodie:

“It has been suggested again that I should apply for a post at one of the progressive schools, where my methods would be more suited to the system than they are at Blaine. But I shall not apply for a post at a crank school. I shall remain at this educational factory. There needs must be a leaven in the lump. Give me a girl at an impressionable age, and she is mine for life.” (9)

Miss Brodie’s ideas are not at all uninteresting:

“I have no doubt Miss Mackay wishes to question my methods of instruction. It has happened before. It will happen again. Meanwhile, I follow my principals of education and give of my best in my prime. The word “education” comes from the root *e* from *ex*, out, and *duco*, I lead. It means a leading out. To me education is a leading out of what is already there in the pupil’s soul. To Miss Mackay it is a putting in of something that is not there, and that is not what I call education, I call it intrusion, from the Latin root prefix *in* meaning in and the stem *trudo*, I thrust. Miss Mackay’s method is to thrust a lot of information into the pupil’s head;

mine is a leading out of knowledge, and that is true education as is proved by the root meaning. Now Miss Mackay has accused me of putting ideas into my girls’ heads, but in fact that is *her* practice and mine is quite the opposite.” (36-37)

But in their execution she is hardly consistent:

“Who is the greatest Italian painter?”

“Leonardo da Vinci, Miss Brodie.”

“That is incorrect. The answer is Giotto, he is my favourite.” (11)

It is not her teaching methods that bring about her downfall, though. Intent on her Pygmalionic project of the *crème de la crème*, Miss Brodie is naturally impressed with the fascist movements springing up in Italy and Germany. On the eve of 1939, she is forced into premature retirement on account of her political sympathies. In her unassailability and providential pretences, Miss Brodie fails to see there lurks a traitor in one of her own set: “I should like to know who betrayed me.” (60) She never will – which is a token of her failure. Neither will she ever be forgotten – which is her victory. Anytime the girls meet in the future, they will always fall into talking about the controversial teacher of their youth. Even the traitor admits that the main influence of her school days was “a Miss Brodie in her prime.”(128)

*For thought:*

Do you think Miss Brodie was a happy or an unhappy person?

*The book is available in multiple copies in the library upstairs.*

## Animating Literature – Reading Scottish Literature

Vojtěch Pipek

The British Council held a seminar on Reading Scottish Literature on Thursday, 4 November at 5pm in the English Library in Brno. The leader was Michaela Čaňková, who we had had the pleasure of meeting once before at *The Man Booker Prize Seminar* in October.

We congregated in large numbers, were given a file including materials and the seminar could begin. Mrs. Čaňková was on good form, full of enthusiasm and eager to share information that for many of us would be new, and not only about Scottish literature. First of all, she presented our friend with a book as a prize for guessing this year's winner of the Man Booker Prize. Do you know who the winner is, and with which book? **Q1**

She continued with a brainstorming on the theme of "Scotland", which elicited ideas such as *highland, tartan, dancing, music, bagpipes, whisky, sheep* and *haggis*. She followed this with a discussion aimed at pinpointing who the Scottish used to be and who they are today after redefinition, which lasted till 1999 and which transformed the traditional image of the Scots to something more sophisticated and pluralistic, and also better suited to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In 1997 a referendum was held in which seventy percent of the Scottish population voted for the devolution of powers from Westminster to a Scottish parliament.

To a great extent artistic expression began in 1707 with the Act of Union with England, and this led to a big boom in Scotland's fortunes. Do you know why Scots were attracted to art at this time? **Q2**

Today almost everybody knows the cult film *Trainspotting*, but be aware that it is a Scottish production which mirrors the middle class in the form of art.

When speaking about Scottish plays, we must mention that they are acted, more specifically, spoken, in Scots. In the Czech Republic you may have seen an advertisement for a Scottish play by Liz Lochhead called *Perfect Day*. The fact that there is no national theatre, in the form of a stone building, in Scotland is worth noting. The actors are happy to travel around and take a look at various places.

Later in the evening, we focused on Alisdair Gray, father of group of artists whose aim it is to show not a romantic Scotland, but an urban one. His first novel *Lanark*, published in 1981, is a humorous work full of pictures. Moreover, you can feel the influence of Oscar Wilde and William Blake in his works.

Then our discussion moved on to the controversial Edinburgh Parliament building, which is very showy and very, very expensive and on which construction started in 1991 and finished in 1994. It cost eleven times more than the original plan allowed for. Try to guess how much it was. **Q3**

Do you want to know where the Scottish got the money? The answer is: from London. News of the sum involved caused a big scandal. The book *Without Day* was written as a reaction to the scandal. It is funny book, and might be compared to Cimrman. It is written in official language, which is often the source of the humour.

The next writer to be mentioned was Jackie Kay, who is half Scottish, half Nigerian, though she was adopted and brought up by "white people". For her book *Trumpet* (1998), she found inspiration in the real story of a woman who played a trumpet and became a man. Her story is about an adopted son who, as an adult, finds out ... Well, try to guess what. **Q4**

Our conversation returned to Liz Lochhead and her *Poem on a Day Trip* from her *Dreaming Frankenstein and Collected Poems 1967-1984*. The poem describes a journey through countryside, from dirty, ugly, black Glasgow to gentle, cautious Edinburgh.

Lochhead has also translated Moliere into Scots (and according to Mrs. Čaňková she is a very approachable person).

Nowadays, Glasgow is no longer thought of as a city of crime and drugs, but rather one of industry and recovery. The book, however, gives an image of Glasgow before such renewal was much in evidence.

The next item was about the Edinburgh Festival, which takes place every August. You can attend many cultural events there, including music, TV, films, readings, and fringe events.

Later on, we listened to a BBC recording which talked about several contemporary and bygone writers.

We also learned about James Kelman, whose *How late it was, how late* gives us a portrait of a man who is struggling with alcoholism and homelessness. The last work to be discussed was Alan Warner's *The Sopranos* (1998).

At the close of the evening we were told about the three languages which are used in Scotland. These are ... Well, try to answer this yourself. **Q5**

After each British Council seminar and the subsequent submission of a questionnaire and the handing round of Certificates of Attendance, we meet for a cup of coffee and a plate of cakes and sandwiches. It is then that we discuss the seminar and plan the events to come.

To sum up, this was one of those seminars where you learn a lot of new information from an area you would never meet by chance. It was enjoyable, interesting and what is more, of value.

answer for Q1: *The Line of Beauty* by Alan Hollinghurst

answer for Q2: As people were not allowed to express themselves politically, they chose to express themselves in art.

answer for Q3: more than 400 million pounds

answer for Q4: his father was in fact a woman.

answer for Q5: Gaelic, Scottish and English.

## **British Council: Animating Literature Man Booker Prize Seminar**

**Seminar designer and leader:**

**Michaela Čaňková**

Simona Šebestová

For anyone interested in the culture and especially the literature of Great Britain, there is a project introduced by the British Council called "Animating Literature". And for those who like learning things in an interactive way, Animating Literature is unlikely to disappoint expectations.

I attended a seminar called "the Man Booker Prize". I was expecting quite a boring "lecture" which would give me little more than some unknown names and statistics, but from the very beginning of the seminar I was surprised by the way Mrs. Čaňková led the meeting. Fortunately, this was not a "lecture", but rather a pleasant talk about the most prestigious prize for fiction in Great Britain.

The invitation promised that participants would get acquainted with six books nominated on the prize's shortlist; I was expecting this process to be quite dull. Everybody was given a few excerpts from the shortlisted books and could immediately read and compare these. Mrs. Čaňková also gave a rough description of each of the books in order that we could bet which of the shortlisted books was going to win.

Though I do not remember all the winners of the Man Booker Prize in the last ten years, I got to know books which I would probably not have come across if I had not attended the seminar and which are all worth reading. If nothing else, events such as this broaden one's horizons.

## Baghdad Diaries

Gabriela Oaklandová

*Nuha Al-Radi died last year of leukaemia, aged 63. Throughout her Baghdad Diaries she hints at a connection between the bombings and a rapid rise in the number of cancer cases in Iraq. Recently I discovered another diary written by an Iraqi, Salam Pax. Not only was I dazed by the similarities of the discrimination experienced by these two authors when entering the USA, but I was also amazed by their shared sense of (very dark) humour, which I rather got to like. If Nuha was to use her dark wit to send a message to Bush, she might advise him to smoke the terrorists out by giving them cancer. What does it matter that these tactics will carry along thousands of civilians in their wake?*

*Baghdad Diaries, a Woman's Chronicle of War and Exile* is divided into five parts. The first part, called *Funduq al-Saada, or Hotel Paradiso*, was first published in 1992 by Granta: this covers the life of Nuha's family in Baghdad throughout the continuous bombing of the city which lasted several weeks. A first Vintage edition of all five parts of *Baghdad Diaries* was published in May 2003.

The first entry of *Baghdad Diaries* is dated 19<sup>th</sup> January 1991, the third day of the war. In this first entry Nuha writes: "I'm not sure why I was so definite that there would be no war...Perhaps I simply couldn't believe that

in this day and age leaders could be so childish and/or plain stupid as to think that war could solve any issue."

The last entry of *Baghdad Diaries* is a postscript written in March 2003 in Beirut. Nuha writes: "The world is crying "no to war" but Mr. Bush and Mr. Blair are single-minded.... Hope is in the people of the world, demonstrating, demonstrating and demonstrating against this war. It is they who bring us strength and hope for the future."

In between, Nuha deals with questions of exile and identity. She battles with her hate for all Westerners, finding this emotion unreasonable, just as she fights her feelings of inadequacy for being a member of a nation hated by the whole world, or so it seems to her.

She moves to Beirut. She visits the USA, on the one hand humiliated by passport control and on the other reaching her life's peak. Nuha the visual artist becomes famous in the West not for her paintings and sculptures but for her diary. She visits the USA as a guest of an exhibition called *Diaries from Newton to Al-Radi*.

Although the book deals with the injustice suffered by Iraqis including herself and there are many occasions when the reader feels sick to the bottom of his soul, he is also charmed – by Nuha's personality, by her creativity and wisdom, by her endurance and humanity.

## culture pages

### Kevin Kling – 21A

Mojmír Muzikant

Several people meet in a bus. The bus is leaving in 15 minutes and the driver goes to a nearby snack bar to drink his coffee. In those 15 minutes before departure the passengers experience the drama ... This is a brief characterization of a mono-drama called 21A written by American commentator, performer and playwright Kevin Kling.

But don't worry – the performance will not last only 15 minutes. As I said, it is a so-called mono-drama, which means that all the characters are played by one person. So when the actor is playing one character, the other characters are of course also present but at the same time they are only imaginary – this feature puts the play into another dimension. In the beginning, before you have familiarized yourself with the characters, it is sometimes hard to realize what the imaginary persons are saying, but as the play continues you become more and more involved in the story until finally everything fits together like a mosaic. However, it is not only the type of play which makes it all look really amazing, but also the excellent performance of the actor. In this case it is Vladimír Hauser who plays all the characters.

Maybe you are interested how the play was translated and adjusted to Czech surroundings. It is generally known that in America only Afro-Americans, lower social classes and the unemployed travel a lot by bus. If you do not have a car in America, quite simply you are totally "out". In the Czech Republic, travelling by public transport is an everyday occurrence and is considered normal. In my opinion, therefore, the adjustment has been done pretty well – there are the kinds of people you would definitely

find in a Czech bus – a grumpy old woman who wants to sit only in "her seat", a student who is studying hard and is disgusted when he has to make the seat available to the old lady, a drunken homeless man, and many others...

All in all the play is composed really well. What I appreciate most is the originality of this masterpiece, because in today's globalized world it is really difficult to make up something which is not hackneyed and ordinary. I recommend this play without reservation; it is well worth seeing.

### Bridget Riley: a Print Retrospective, 1962 – 2003

Eva Krejčí

I went to this exhibition in December in the Pražákův palác of Brno's Moravian Gallery. To be honest, my first impression was not very positive and I considered leaving. At first sight, the works of Bridget Riley did not look like art or anything like it. But I decided to stay and discovered that what Riley created was really rather excellent.

Bridget Riley is an adherent of pop art. Often, this category excites a negative reaction among critics, though it is relatively popular with the "middle classes". Riley based her "paintings" on optical effects. Typical of her work is the screenprint. She began working in black and white before later using colours and the relationships between them.

She has commented on her experiments in tonal gradation developed into compositions of colour with these words: "I do not paint light. I present a colour situation which releases light as you look at it." In the view of the critics the addition of colour enhances the optical energies released and creates an even more intense visual effect.

Paul Moorhouse, curator at the Tate, is explicit about the influence of Riley's work: "Previously, the viewer's optical interaction with a painting led inexorably to an 'event' in

the form of apparent movement of light. Now this performance by the work has been replaced by a situation in which the viewer and the paintings are in a balanced dialogue.“

Later in the 80's Bridget Riley continued to experiment with colour relationships – she discovered how colours can change effect in different combinations. “In the 80's, I have only managed two prints. I felt them crucial to make, because they are fundamental to my argument about colour relationships: that the same colours related in different ways could give a different range of effects.“ (Bridget Riley on Silvered-striped Compositions)

Her most impressive works include Circular Movement, Movement in Squares, based on Blaze, Coloured Greys, Blue Dominance, Green Dominance, Red Dominance.

I definitely recommend a visit to this exhibition. It taught me a lot about art today and its progress. It is a real inspiration.

## Othello – Cheek By Jowl

Irena Crhanová

Cheek by Jowl is one of the ten greatest theatre companies in the world. This London company was established in 1981 by Declan Donnellan and Nick Ormerod. Cheek by Jowl has changed the British theatre with its unique productions of classic plays and dynamic performance, music and dance. The company has won many international prizes and is known in over 40 countries. On September 18th and 19th 2004 a Czech audience had an opportunity to see their excellent production of Shakespeare's Othello in Brno's Mahen Theatre.

Othello is a Moorish military leader working for Venice's forces. For love, Othello secretly marries Desdemona, a daughter of Venetian nobleman Brabantio. When Desdemona's father hears about the marriage, he is upset and soon becomes furious. But it is Iago who is the obstacle to their happiness. Jealous of Cassio's position, Iago makes up a plan to destroy Othello and Desdemona. He devises a trick

with a handkerchief to persuade Othello that Desdemona is cheating on him with Cassio. Othello is overwhelmed by this revelation and kills his lovely wife. When he learns that it was just a trick to destroy him, he vows to get his revenge.

The Cheek by Jowl performance was outstanding in many points. Firstly, the new production of the classic play was a new experience for the audience. This unusual and modern production was closer to the spectators and had the kind of impact on the audience it must have had in Shakespeare's day. The newness of the play's conception was a fine example of how an old theme can be rewritten in a creative way. Secondly, I was surprised by the performance itself, and in particular the way in which the set was designed with a minimum of props and costumes as a support for the acting itself. The performance was so volatile that more props would have interrupted one's concentration on the plot and acting. The actors were always on the move, running and dancing, which made the performance enormously dynamic. Moreover, the use of space was incredible. Whenever certain actors were in the spotlight, the rest of the cast stood around them on the stage like statues. The regular location of the actor on the stage seemed natural and helped the actors to move from one scene of the action to another. Next, the actors played their characters with such energy and ease. It was a wonderful experience to watch them, especially the magnificent Nonso Anozie, who played Othello. I was absolutely fascinated by this actor; his gestures, his appearance (he is a black man) and his outstanding voice captivated me from the first. I liked the fact that the company was made up of "black and white" actors together, which is not the case with many other companies.

Shakespeare's Othello as performed by Cheek by Jowl was the best performance I have ever seen. Even though I had difficulties in understanding the dialogue, I was totally fascinated by the performance of the actors. This was the greatest cultural experience of my life.



## **The Bear Educational Theatre alias**

### **Jackie and Giant**

Hana Varmužová

Jackie and Giant is an interactive theatrical performance in English for primary-school children aged 5-11. It was performed by the Bear Educational Theatre in Bezbariérové divadlo Barka on October 4<sup>th</sup>. It was one of the cultural events I attended as part of my Meeting Cultures Seminar, and I can say it was also one of the best.

The Bear Educational Theatre is an organization that produces interactive theatre for learners of English, particularly for younger ones. It tries to teach English in an entertaining and highly motivating way. The performances are really interactive and children are called upon to communicate with native-speaker actors. Students are actively involved with the story rather than only passively watching the show.

The performances of The Bear Educational Theatre are prepared for different levels of English. Some of them are more suitable for younger pupils, others for older ones. Teachers can get a list of vocabulary and grammar beforehand to pre-teach their students at school before the performance.

Jackie and Giant is the exciting story of a young girl called Jackie who needs the help of children to escape from a “Bad Giant” and become a friend of a “Good Giant”. Both these characters are excellently played by one actor. The Giants can only speak in English and Jackie, who knows both English and Czech, helps the children to translate what the Giants say. All the children actively help Jackie in communicating with the Giants, and some of them even appear on the stage. There is a short and fun workshop after the performance to revise the basic grammar and vocabulary of the play.

During the play children practise basic grammar (*to be*, questions, verbs) and learn many new phrases and items of vocabulary, such as: *What is your name?, I'm sad, good, bad..., Are you a child? Hide!, Where is he?, What are you doing?, crying, fishing, swimming, singing, juggling ...* The children also sing many English songs such as: *Head and Shoulders, If you are happy and I will have a little fishy.*

I liked this performance very much and I can recommend it highly to all who are interested in events of this kind - especially to those who teach children and want to make their classes more entertaining and interesting.

For more information see:

[www.bearproject.cz](http://www.bearproject.cz)



## amy jarvis's style diary

**7am** Ooh, what a nice party we had yesterday. Just imagine a beautifully sunny Sunday afternoon, lying on the grass, other people's kids running round and screaming, drinks ...

**7.10am** Though could do without the adults screaming.

**7.15am** Wonder what it is about some of these people on maternity leave. You just keep seeing them and they're all happy and stuff and one day they appear and you can see that they've drifted off somewhere else.

**7.20am** Somewhere not that nice. You'd think that having a child and so feeling the hand of the Almighty on your own skin and stuff would naturally help you into the Land of the Wise. But some of these adults are in a different place entirely! Some are heading in quite the opposite direction...and they weren't even that thick to start off with. Why, then? Why?

**7.25am** Was beautiful. Was lying in the sun and all that and all of a sudden heard this screaming. Thought it was kids, so was not that bothered, but it kept on and on, plus I thought the screaming voices were a bit sort of deeper than those of kiddos. So I sat up and there it was! One of my best friends hitting another woman and screaming: "Don't you ever take that spade again. It's mine!"

**7.30am** I dunno ... I'm in a bit of a weird position cos several of my friends aren't talking to each other, for a variety of reasons, like: You just turned up without phoning. Your child hit mine and you didn't hit him/her back. Your child walked into my favourite plant and it's been knackered ever since....Oh, grief! Have to get up otherwise will be late...was good that some of friends had yet to go all childish so could enjoy a few drinks with them....right, uuup!

**7.35am** Good God! Can't believe it...Oh, no! Have got this cat's face on my own face and can't get it off..

**7.40am** Bugger! Am still a cat!

**7.45am** How did the bloody cat get there without me noticing?

**7.50am** Not that it isn't nice.... Right, have to phone work. Can't possibly work like this!

**12 noon** My flat. Turns out I'm not the only one with something on my face. Had to invite five friends for a crisis meeting. Mysterious!

**1pm** Good grief! Still don't know!

**9pm** It's weird! Still don't know and cat's face still there. Oh, noo...what am I going to do?

**poetry page**

**An evening reflection (2004)**

David Havel

Hot sun on a warm beach  
Swimming in the clear blue sea  
Recalling my trip to Croatia  
In September  
(September, I'll remember)

In a hazy shadow  
In a daze  
Does anything more than photos remain?

The events make history  
& everyone's a part of it  
My life was enriched

Focusing on the sound [æ]  
**Sam a fool and vandal**

Zuzana Košťáková

On one shoulder a big rat,  
On the other a fat cat.

Don't wonder he is sad  
And as well a little mad.

He is a big softball fan,  
Watches it whenever he can,  
Watches TV softball matches  
On every channel that he catches.

This man Sam,  
Likes chicken ham.

He is hungry and ham he lacks,  
So he thinks and packs,  
Takes a backpack and his hat,  
On his shoulders the cat and rat.

On a street Sam sees banks,  
Has to say "many thanks".

He wants money (the cash is  
One million pounds) from a lady  
With long eye-lashes.

Sam talks about his friends - a gang:  
"Do be careful, they come and bang!"

Sam can buy ham and sandals,  
Now belongs to fools and vandals.

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*the messenger*

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