



CZK 20

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editorial

Dear readers,

*I hope you will enjoy this issue, as ever.
If you feel inspired by any of our articles, or whatever else,
please feel free to contact us.*

*You might like to send us your comments or suggestions for articles,
or, indeed, the articles themselves.*

With thanks

*Your editor
Gabriela Oaklandová*

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Founding Editor: Jeremy Garlick

Managing Editor: Gabriela Oaklandová

Editor: Andrew Oakland

Graphics: Petr Najvar

Staff Writers: Pavla Buchtová, Rita Collins, Irena Headlandová Kalischová, Irena Hůlková, Martin Němec, Andrew Oakland, Lucie Podroužková, Jaroslav Suchý, Sonia Šamalíková, Nad'a Vojtková

Contributors: Zuzana Pilátová

the messenger

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e-mail: gabriela.oaklandova@gmail.com

news from the department

Sonia Šamalíková

introduces herself

After starting a long spiel about myself (people just love talking about themselves, don't they :)), I thought I would prefer not to waste the readers' precious time, and opted for a more concise format. Here is the outcome:

- grew up in Blansko, now live in the centre of Brno
- no husband, no children (yet?)

Studies, completed successfully:

- Silesian University in Opava: Foreign Language Teaching for Primary Schools - English (Bachelor's degree)
- University of Pardubice: English Language Teaching (Master's degree)

Studies, never completed:

- Silesian University in Opava: Information Studies and Librarianship
- Charles University in Prague: English and American Studies
- Lancaster University (UK): Language Testing

Work experience:

- Moravian Karst caves - tourist guide; Defence Language Institute - head of the English testing department, later head of the whole testing section

Languages:

- Moravian (mother tongue), Czech, English, Spanish, German (sehr schlecht!), and Russian (even worse); started to learn and gave up later: French, Italian, Esperanto, Swedish, Hungarian, Romany, ... have to admit that English is not the worst language to learn, after all :)

Hobbies:

- travelling (preferably far away and warm), motorcycles (own two), tattoos (have a few), films (Lynch, Michalkov, Almodovar, among others), cooking and eating vegetarian food
- love cats - having lost my beloved Dustbin, I am now looking for a new furry flatmate - if you happen to have a black kitten to give away, let me know please!

and if you want to know more about me - just ask ;)

interview

Brno's Dan Trávníček (40) heads X Production, s. r. o., an arm of which publishes a wide range of new music. In his free time Dan coaches international tennis stars of the future and spends romantic weekends in Barcelona and Třebíč. Before finding his goal in life he studied Geography and Physical Education at the MU Faculty of Education. Gabriela Oaklandová caught up with him where Brno-město becomes Brno-venkov.

What kinds of music do you publish?

We release the kinds of music we enjoy; we don't ask ourselves questions about style or genre. The main thing is that they sound - and sometimes look - good to us.

What are you working on at the moment?

At the moment we're working hard on putting together our new website. And we've recently completed a CD called "Best of X Production" which will appear in the November issue of Filter magazine. Anime are in the studio and we're finishing off the latest Scissorhands album ... and then there's The Stylists and The Pooh. No time to get bored. Perhaps the best surprise for our legions of women fans is that we're working on a new album by Sunshine!

So you publish the kind of music that appeals to you. Could you tell us a little more about your own tastes in music?

If I were to give you the full answer we'd be here for ever. But a few acts come to mind ... Placebo, Talk Talk, Pearl Jam, the Dave Matthews Band, Duran Duran, Ultravox, Johnny Cash, Depeche Mode ... My ears are open to everything. And my tip to you - give Purescence a listen, or the new Anime!

What made you decide to publish music?

I reached the point where I could no longer stomach what I was hearing on the radio. Instead of just complaining, I thought, why don't I try to do something about it? What's the point of sitting on our backsides moaning about how worthless it all is? The only thing we could do to change things, was to release stuff that was better than the stuff served up on the airwaves.

You produce a lot of original music in CD format. Many commentators claim that the CD is in its dying days; some even claim that recorded music per se does not have much of a future. How do you see - and how are you anticipating - changes in the market?

We publish vinyls as well as CDs. Of course it is important for us to adapt what we do to new technologies. We are "old school" in a number of ways, but we have worldwide distribution for our catalogue on itunes, Music, Napster and wherever else we can arrange it. But our main focus is on bringing out music which is attractively packaged in the classic manner - as I said, we're rather conservative chaps (with a very modern way of looking at things) ... And I've just remembered we need to complete our

telephone formats - they'll have everything on them!

Some cities have a reputation for high-quality popular music production. Do you think Brno will ever join this elite?

I think of Brno as something like Sleepy Hollow. But I love it here and don't think of it in terms of its status. Are you imagining us developing a scene like Bristol's in the early nineties? My děláme Czech super cool music from Europe and we are from Brno. [*There was no call for the Messenger to translate this last sentence. Ed.*]

What have you published this year?

This year we've published a great range of stuff: Skyline, Bullerbyne, Petr Venkrbec, a vinyl by Die Alten Maschinen with the legendary Devo ... there's so much of it ... Jay Diesel, for example. Tons and tons of great music. Have a look at our website.

How do you set about finding the kind of act you think would be right for X Production? What practical steps do you take in order to get them to sign for you?

He came, he heard, he published. Or he googled, he heard, he published; or he got a recommendation, or an e-mail, or an MP3, and he published. We never publish stuff we don't like. It's not just up to me: there's a team of us which decides what it likes. Sometimes we have raging arguments about whether to take something on or not. That's all part of the fun.

Do the musicians you publish mostly sing in English?

99% of our stuff is in English. We're looking at the world market; and besides, we tend to prefer music sung in English. Not that we have anything against the mother tongue!

Do they get any help in the language area?

For sure. From friends, colleagues ... many of the bands have contacts abroad. And this is important: our bands need to be clued-up language-wise because we don't want to release anything embarrassing or meaningless. I know there are occasional inconsistencies in pronunciation, but with any luck not all of our listeners are English teachers. And the internet and modern studio technologies can work miracles!

Anyway, if a performance is persuasive and exciting, what does it matter if the performer's pronunciation is non-standard? Take Bruno Ferrari, for example - an absolute magician!

And we shouldn't forget that a lyric in English means an act can be sold abroad, where the competition is far greater. This is a great thing.

Ah, Bruno Ferrari - What is he like in person?

Bruno is a very amusing guy. He is a demonic, charismatic disco king. Recently he's been investigating a fusion of metal with the chanson. An amazing listening experience. But you've heard some of our stuff, so you can imagine the kind of thing I mean...

linguistics pages

Review

Irena Hůlková

Dontcheva-Navratilova, O. Povolná, R. (eds.) (2008) *Discourse and Interaction*. Volume 1, Issue 1. Brno: Masaryk University, Faculty of Education, Department of English Language and Literature, 174 pp.

Discourse and Interaction is a new linguistics journal devoted to the presentation and comparison of current research projects carried out not only in the Czech Republic but also abroad. It offers a wide range of topics dealing with aspects of negotiation of meaning in language and related stylistic and socio-pragmatic variation, and draws on the two volumes of the *Discourse and Interaction* series edited by the same team and published by Masaryk University on the occasion of two conferences on linguistics studies held at our department in 2005 and 2006.

One of the editors' aims is to bring the stylistic diversity, non-homogeneity, and socio-pragmatic variety of language to light, for these ought to be taken into account in the teaching of English in academic settings. The journal thus shows an important interplay between linguistic research and language teaching.

When looking at individual contributions in the present volume, it can be observed that they cover a variety of fields such as semantics, stylistics, pragmatics, critical discourse analysis and other related areas of linguistic research.

The first article of this volume is written by Dontcheva-Navratilova and is committed to the investigation of "some functions of pronominal self-reference in political speeches in an international institutional context, thus aiming to contribute to the study of evaluation in political discourse" (p. 7). The analysis is based on a stylistic and pragmatic approach and its findings show that self-reference expressions as markers of evaluation play a key role in "enhancing persuasion and guiding the audience towards an intended perception of evaluative coherence in political discourse" (p. 21).

The succeeding contribution by Ferenčík asks whether current politeness models account for procedures social actors adhere to when involved in real-life interactions (p. 25). It uses authentic data from two radio phone-in programmes set in two different socio-cultural backgrounds and analyzes instances of authentic interaction that involve "power interruptions in which interactants appear to be engaged in the struggle for the achievement of mutually shared understanding of what constitutes (im)polite behaviour" (ibid.).

In their article on "expertise, control, and relational discourse in health care settings" (p. 39), Gyuró and Komlósi look into language use in expert

as well as lay discourse, which is realized by *interactive control sequences* (ibid.). Their analyses demonstrate how health professionals and patients communicate and control each other, and the authors conclude that there is a mutual influence on both parties. They add that “in order to reach co-operation speakers need to be aware of one another’s expectations and be able to negotiate how expectations can be achieved” (p. 50).

A contribution by Haase attempts to find agreement between functional and formal linguistics by means of Cognitive Linguistics so as to help to bridge the methodological gap (p. 51). The article therefore involves an integrative approach and discusses the notion of motivational adequacy. It also compares Cognitive Linguistics as a concept which is mainly functionally motivated with that of Optimality Theory, which is largely generative-formally motivated (ibid.).

A subject of topical interest is dealt with in the paper by Kačmárová, who compares Slovak and English language patterning and mentions some of the differences in Slovak-English communication connected with the observation of culture-related particularities, which are typical of any language. She points out that if we want to sound native-like in any foreign language, we have to follow the patterns of that particular language and leave behind what we find natural in our mother tongue (p. 71). It is language awareness and the ability to change one’s way of thinking accordingly, along with the need to follow common structures and occurrences (at

morphological, syntactic and lexical level) that really matter and help us master a foreign language.

The next article also looks into differences between the Slovak and English languages, doing so from a translational perspective. Miššíková offers conversational and translational analyses of maxim hedges in two parallel texts, the original text in English and its Slovak translation (p. 73). She comes to the conclusion that “in their respective context of a literary work, all hedges call for a pragmatic explanation” (p. 84).

Pavličková’s contribution deals with “the ways of addressing in legal discourse” (p. 87). The analysis focuses mainly on expressions referring to contractual parties and also to deictic expressions such as *this/these, that/those, here/there* as well as deictic items typical of legal documents, namely *hereby, whereby, and hereinafter*. The author concludes that the deictic expressions in question can be regarded as pragmatic, for “they show the relationship between the participants of legal communication, their relationships to both the context and the co-text” (p. 98).

In her contribution called “Exploring paragraphs from the outside”, Pípalová investigates some visible external parameters of graphic paragraphs in contemporary British English (p. 99). The study is based on a corpus analysis consisting of 2,070 paragraphs and it debates an interplay of different factors influencing paragraph length and other related issues (ibid.).

Povolná raises the question of why

there are so many different labels for the term 'discourse markers' and mainly focuses on markers typically used in spoken language, in particular clausal forms such as *you know*, *you see*, *I mean* and *I think*, some of which can also be regarded as discourse markers (p. 115). She arrives at the conclusion that the most appropriate label for the above clausal forms is 'interactive discourse markers' and adds that these contribute to "the establishment and maintenance of coherence" (p. 122).

The contribution by Štulajterová deals with a "stylistic interpretation of advertising discourse" and attempts to present certain productive linguistic patterns which help to attract readers' attention and awaken their interest in purchasing promoted products (p. 125). The author concludes that the language used in advertising discourse is persuasive and this force is achieved largely by expressive means and stylistic devices but also by the use of art, colour, and music (p. 128).

Tárnyiková's article is called "Clines of categoriality in sentence complexing" and it discusses the importance of due attention to both dichotomies and clines of categoriality when trying to fully understand the dynamism of multi-dimensional processes of sentence complexing (p. 129). Taking intricacies of sentence complexing in English into account, the author agrees with Halliday's (1986) notion of the sentence complex as representing "the dynamic potential of the system" (p. 135).

The succeeding paper by Válková is devoted to the issue of politeness strategies, namely structural properties

of English compliments and to the comparison of compliment topics in English and Czech along with different factors that influence the choice of compliment response (p. 139). It has a section on "Compliments in language teaching", in which the author looks at two different coursebooks (*Landmark* and *Proficiency Masterclass*) in terms of teaching compliments and compliment responses. She concludes that even though compliments and compliment responses are an inseparable part of language teaching, their consistent presentation in the textbooks above is not sufficient (p. 145).

Finally, Weisser's contribution presents a survey of different types of non-grammatical units (i.e. "textual units that do not follow the rules of the standard grammatical 'sentence types'" - p. 147) along with their various functions and demonstrates their importance for naturally-occurring dialogue. The author comes to the conclusion that they play an important role, not only in natural language processing but also in applied linguistics and language teaching (p. 157).

To conclude, it should be pointed out that all the articles are carefully peer-reviewed - first by the editors for suitability and then by two reviewers, who send back detailed comments and suggest acceptance (with the possible need of a rewrite and resubmission) or rejection. The board of reviewers comprises renowned linguists from the Czech Republic and abroad, who ensure that only high-quality and relevant papers contributing to current linguistic research are published.

Review

Irena Headlandová Kalischová

Dontcheva-Navratilova, O., Povolná, R. (eds) (2008) *Discourse and Interaction*. Volume 1 Issue 2. Brno: Masaryk University, Faculty of Education, Department of English Language and Literature, 138 pp.

In spring a devoted pair of editors from this department, namely Olga Dontcheva-Navratilova and Renata Povolná, produced a second issue of *Discourse and Interaction*, which has only recently celebrated a great success: it has been transformed from a collection of essays into a full-bodied journal with an international board of reviewers, and is gradually gaining credit and recognition from the academic public. This issue covers a whole range of topics and the contributions include, among others, six papers (three in the main part and three reviews at the end) by members of staff at this department. Let us take a closer look at some of the articles.

In *Secondary Religious Discourse: Sermon as a Distributional Macrofield*, Martin Adam remains faithful to his field of expertise, i.e. the theory of FSP (remember his two-part series on *The Prague School of Linguistics: A Students' Nightmare or an Inspiration?* in the last two issues of *The Messenger?*) and presents an analysis of scripted homilies, interpreted as distributional macrofields

and displaying typical dynamic-semantic features.

Irena Hůlková addresses the reader with a question in the title of her paper, *Conjuncts versus Disjuncts: What Exactly Distinguishes the Two?*; she readily provides the answer in the form of a useful overview of different terminology (and categorization) used by different leading grammarians, specifically Greenbaum & Quirk, Biber, and Huddleston & Pullum. She concludes with an interesting discussion of the appropriateness of the term “disjunct”, since as she puts it “... the word suggests properties this group of adverbials does not actually possess” (p. 51).

The issue of (non-)native academic writing is the focus of Radek Vogel's investigation called *Sentence Linkers in Essays and Papers by Native vs. Non-native Writers*, based on a corpus of twenty 500-word essays written by Czech university students reading English as their major subject. The outcome of the analysis supports his original hypothesis that non-native writers tend to “overuse sentence linkers as an easy and ready-made tool to achieve cohesion of a text” (p. 119).

Prof Josef Schmied from Chemnitz University of Technology makes a regular appearance at conferences held at this department and is usually one of the core contributors. In the current article he comments on a comparative study of lexical hedges in two types of medical texts, which he carried out on material taken from specialised international

journals on the one hand and a popular science magazine on the other. The conclusion, drawn on both quantitative as well as qualitative analyses, is quite unambiguous: "... due to their frequent use in popular as well as specialised articles, hedges constitute a central element of successful communication in medical scientific writing ..." (p. 97).

The same setting is explored from a different point of view by Miroslav Černý in his *On the Manifestation of Negative Politeness in Doctor-Patient Interaction*, which deals with negatively polite strategies and their occurrence, frequency and characteristics as these can be observed in material taken from a corpus of conversational texts recorded in consulting rooms.

Markéta Malá's presentation - *Participial Adverbials in Spoken Academic Corpora: "Gonna Have a Hard Time Getting Through"* - is to a certain extent related to the above-mentioned contribution by Hůlková (it also deals with adjuncts and disjuncts, among other things). Malá reveals a tendency in academic spoken monologue (lectures, colloquia, etc.) to use "fixed lexico-grammatical bundles" (p. 54), i.e. lexicalized participial constructions or lexico-grammatical associations.

The unifying feature of the next three articles could generally be described as a comparative study between Czech and English. The titles are rather self-explanatory: Blanka Babická's *The Passive Voice in English and Czech and Some Implications for*

Teaching, Milan Smutný's *Czech Equivalents of English Compound Substantives*, and Alice Tihelková's *Towards a Syntagmatic Bilingual Dictionary for Specific Purposes* (i.e. a Czech - English one).

Finally, a purely grammatical structure and its distribution across text types is covered in the paper by Rita Rafajlovičová (*Postmodification by Relative Clauses in Texts of Different Degree of Formality*) while Daniel Nkemleke brings up the issue of the word *please* as one of the so-called pragmatic particles (*Please-Requests in Cameroonians and Kenyan Private (Social) Letters*).

The volume concludes with four reviews, three of which present books recently published: the first, written by Dontcheva-Navratilova, introduces a study by Kačmárová titled *On Conveying Strong Judgements in Conversational English*, then Kačmárová herself speaks favourably of Urbanová's monograph *On Expressing Meaning in English Conversation - Semantic Indeterminacy*. Equally positive is Povolná's appraisal of *Intonation in English and Czech Dialogues* by Chamonikolasová. The fourth paper features *Topics in Linguistics*, the first issue of a newly established journal (reviewed by the author herself).

Owing to its great repertory of topics, this issue of *Discourse and Interaction* has the potential to cater for the needs of most linguist readers. The papers included in this volume may inspire many a thought and discussion.

Linguists from all over the world meet at our department

Irena Hůlková

The Third Brno Conference on Linguistics Studies in English *Coherence and Cohesion is Spoken and Written Discourse* was held in Brno on 22 - 23 September 2008. The host institution was our department again and the whole event turned out to be a great success.

The participants not only from the Czech Republic and neighbouring countries but also, for example, from Canada, Great Britain and the USA introduced and shared the outcomes of their current linguistic research in the field of discourse cohesion and coherence, i.e. surface and content integrity of written or spoken text.

We were honoured to welcome renowned personalities in the field of English language research such as Karin Aijmer from Sweden and Piotr Cap from Poland, who had agreed to be the keynote speakers and deliver plenary lectures at the conference. All contributions presented on this occasion will be published either in the *Conference Proceedings* or in the linguistics journal *Discourse and*

Interaction, the latter of which came into being in our department at the beginning of this year and will be published every other year.

The conference was organised in connection with our research carried out within the framework of a five-year project called *Coherence and Cohesion in English Discourse* financed by the Czech Science Foundation, the aim of which is to establish the notions of cohesion and coherence as constitutive elements of human communication and use theoretical findings for analysis of different genres in written as well as spoken English. The members of the organising committee were Olga Dontcheva-Navratilova, Irena Hůlková, Martina Malášková and Renata Povolná.

The next conference on a similar theme is planned for September 2010.

literature pages

READER DEVELOPMENT:

How to Get Students Reading Again

Lucie Podroužková

It may sound like an old story. It has long been known that reading is a key skill and activity to successful learning and wholesome education. Reading is described as a receptive skill in ELT, a definition now seen critically by some since it may imply a passive approach, requiring the reader's submission to the text rather than their active involvement. But reading establishes partnership: it demands constant interaction and both immediate and subsequent reflection. When reading, the reader makes predictions and forms hypotheses, which are continually verified in the reading process.

Research has shown that extensive reading is immensely beneficial for language development, with tangible results in all areas of language competence (see e.g. Krashen, 1993, Elley, 1991, Davis, 1995). Yet these outcomes appear to have but little impact on English teaching in the Czech Republic. Surveys among both teachers and student teachers² indicate limited awareness of the role reading should play in and outside the classroom. On average, student teachers consider reading as a "superstructure", a worthy and possibly even enjoyable activity that their life fails to accommodate: "Nowadays literature is something that is far to me. I have not any time for it. Sometimes I am sad because of it but literature is a luxury that I cannot

afford."³ Teachers, when asked about the place reading occupies in their classes as well as their private lives, tend to answer along the same lines. A disheartening number (around 80%) claim in our research⁴ that the textbook they work with contains no literature reading (which in some cases, e.g. the *Headway* series, is not a qualified statement) but do not at the same time see the need for a specific reader or literature textbook that would compensate for the gap. Teachers using *Opportunities* were generally more conscious than others of the literature-related activities presented in the textbook but argued that the curriculum was too tight to incorporate them. The survey has further disclosed that English teachers remain unaware of the overlap in reading between English and Literature lessons, failing to explore the potentials of cross-curricular links. Generally speaking, reading is seen as marginal and is only employed for the sake of the grammar and vocabulary that can be mined from the text. Teachers argue that their pupils are no readers, which they register as an unchangeable fact. Reading literature is then understood as an embellishment rather than essential aspect of language competence.

Reading in class has been discredited: many teachers still believe reading means pupils reading aloud, the merits of which are challenged repeatedly but which remains a dominant method of reading in Czech schools. Silent reading instils a sense of unease in many an enlightened and experienced teacher. A certain awkwardness is understandable: silent reading in class is a private activity performed within a social space and the silence governing the classroom while it is going on is

often misinterpreted as inactivity. For these and other reasons, reading has become overshadowed by more overtly interactive or vocal activities.

English examination results⁵ testify to a steady decline in reading skills. Since it is assumed that by a certain age everybody can read, there is very little appreciation among teachers as to what reading skills involve and as a result, little or no attention is paid to cultivating them.

Sadly, literary academia has on the whole neglected to promote reading and develop reading skills. Postmodern theories, wary of literature's alleged ambition to change people and transform the world, do not admit value judgement into their discourse. But value judgement and personal response are precisely what makes people read in the first place. Postmodernism has attempted to open up literature to spheres previously thought of as unworthy. Popular literature has begun to make its way into literature departments but it remains questionable whether more people read, or read more now than before. On the contrary, it appears that rather than taking literature down from its pedestal, as frequently advocated, scholarship has simply elevated some of its other manifestations, detaching it further from the reader. As one commented: "Most reviewers drive me round the bend. If you manage to cut through all the pretensions and in-jokes, you still can't find out what the book's about."⁶

Internal research has shown that most students (67 out of 75 respondents in a study year) still want to be perceived as readers and about half state they read or occasionally read poetry. But the range of their reading is more or less confined to popular genres:

detective stories, romances, biography and popular non-fiction bestsellers. Agatha Christie, Andrew Morton's *Diana: Her True Story*, *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus* by John Gray, *Why Men Lie and Women Cry* by Allan and Barbara Pease, Danielle Steel, Arthur Conan Doyle, and a number of works of fiction predominantly for children and teenagers (Terry Pratchett, J.K. Rowling, Sue Townsend, Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden*) were the items most frequently listed as the last book read. In response to a query about their reading in contemporary British fiction, few could name beyond J.K. Rowling. The chasm between the literary canon and the nature and intensity of their reading has grown so wide that as a consequence, students find literature classes extremely demanding and much as they may enjoy them, they fail to perceive their relevance.

At the forefront of the concept of reader development, a buzz term which comes from the realm of library services, is its reader-centred nature: "It starts with the reader and the individual reading experience, not the author, or the subject, or the theme of a book." (www.branching-out.net). According to Branching Out, a British reading agency, its three main goals are to:

- 1 increase people's confidence and enjoyment of reading
- 2 open up reading choices
- 3 offer opportunities for people to share their reading experience

Reader development thus coincides with the goals of extensive reading, reaching out from libraries and schools to other spheres of life (families, village communities, hospitals, prisons etc.).

The rewards of reading, though

widely acknowledged, are not always easy to measure. Some data, however, are surprisingly convincing. In Britain, follow-up research on Bookstart, a project whereby children were given a book at birth and another at their eight-month check-up, has concluded that not only do these children do better at school (in humanities as well as sciences) but that books contribute significantly to their mental health. In 2004 a renewed initiative was launched entitled Government Books for Babies, with three books distributed at eight months, eighteen months and at the age of three. The National Reading Campaign lists over 60 reader development projects, devised by various organizations (libraries and reading agencies such as Opening the Book, Branching Out and Time to Read). Most of the programmes target children and teenagers (see e.g. Summer Reading Challenge and Boox) but more attention is gradually drawn to adult reader development. A study carried out by Vital Link documented that people frequenting libraries find employment more easily (by 60%) and are economically more successful than those who do not. Conversely, two out of five unemployed in Britain lack basic literary skills.

In the last decade, the English-speaking world has witnessed an upsurge in reading groups, which number over 50,000 in Britain and around 500,000 in the USA. Their members realize the complex impact of reading⁷:

- 3 It broadens our horizons
- 4 It's a new vehicle for exchanging ideas
- 5 I am more sensitive to the opinions of others
- 6 Complete strangers have made new friends
- 7 I have gained a lot of confidence

- 8 I feel I'm learning something new
- 9 I read books I would have never chosen for myself
- 10 I have become a Reader

Inclusion, diversity and self-esteem are an integral part of the reading experience. Reading builds a natural bridge between school and home and serves as an ideal vehicle for nurturing both intellectual and emotional growth. But how do we integrate reader development into the curriculum? What follows are some of the ways in which reading may be boosted within university programmes:

- 1 inclusion of reading groups into literature courses
- 2 introduction of Independent Reading courses: students choose four or five books from a particular field, read them on their own and then discuss them with the tutor and other students on the mood-link-a or as a reading group; and of Supporting Reading courses, which give students time and opportunity to read set books for compulsory literature classes (see Masaryk University English study programmes)
- 3 re-structuring literature classes in order to grant more space to readers and reading experience rather than focusing on authors and works only
- 4 inclusion of creative writing tasks, which provide another kind of hands-on experience with literature
- 5 incorporating into literature teaching drama techniques, which mediate emotional experience within a safe framework
- 6 inclusion of attitude questions in reading activities
- 7 reading should be an essential part and requirement of every course

One of the basic principles of extensive reading, according to Bamford

and Day (2004), casts “the teacher as a role model of a reader”(Bamford and Day, 7). It has always been assumed that future teachers (and university students in general) are avid readers. Since we may no longer rely on this presumption, if we do want to enhance reading and reading skills in schools, we must begin with cultivating reading among student teachers.

Notes

Reading is a broad term. Due to my bias as a literature teacher I will mostly refer to reading in the narrower sense of reading literature.

² English language students at the Faculty of Education

³ A student response to what literature is and what it is for (see the mood-link course to Introduction to Literature, at <http://moodlinka.ped.muni.cz/course/view.php?id=536>.)

⁴ A questionnaire distributed to participants at the 2005 ELT Signposts conference.

⁵ This was a final English language examination for English language students (2003, 2004). Of all the exercises included, scores in the reading comprehension part of the examination were the lowest (the other parts were multiple choice, sentence transformation, cloze test, listening and speaking). In the first exercise, students were asked to read a text and then choose the best possible answer from A-D. In the second, their task was to read the text and then answer the questions in their own words. Almost everyone failed in this part, with average scores of around 20%.

⁶ In: Riel, Fowler, 1999, p. 49.

⁷ Selected quotes by reading group members, In: Hartley, J., 2002.

BAMFORD, J. and DAY, R.J. *Extensive Reading Activities for Teaching Language*. Cambridge: CUP, 2004.

DAVIS, C. “Extensive reading: an

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methodology pages

Study Visit to Oviedo, Spain (March 2008)

Nad'a Vojtková

As I am very much interested in early language learning and CLIL (content and language integrated learning), I applied for an NAEP (Národní agentura evropských projektů) grant, which supports study visits for education specialists and decision-makers. I succeeded in getting the support and took part in a visit to Oviedo in Spain together with 14 other participants from 12 European countries.

The focus of the study visit was on improving foreign-language learning, especially at an early age, and specific attention was paid to projects including CLIL (content and language integrated learning).

The host institution aimed to provide ample examples of good practice in Spanish schools, and this initiated discussion among the participants, who compared their own contexts with the situation presented in Oviedo. There were three elements in the programme - the introduction of the state (Asturian)

educational policy, with a clear explanation of the rationale for teaching foreign languages (FL) at an early age and promoting CLIL in schools; practical examples of what was happening in the classrooms; and finally discussions about how those two elements differ in individual countries. An additional dimension to the visit was the cultural element, where we could learn about the culture of the host country.

The whole programme was well-designed and well-balanced, when one considers the time allocated to it. I would like to describe the individual strands of the visit:

Setting the local educational context and an introduction to the participants' countries (the first and part of the second day of the visit)

The individual participants introduced their own countries and educational contexts, paying special attention to issues relevant to the topic of the study visit.

I personally was impressed by the effort that the Spanish and Asturian governments had put into language education, not only in terms of stating the policy clearly but also in investing money in teacher development. Teachers in all schools were devoted to the projects they had got involved in and they appreciated the support of the government very much. Their commitment to further professional develop-

ment was admirable. In my opinion, one of the most important factors that motivated teachers to get involved in the projects and further training was the clear statement of the national educational policy and the sense of direction which was clearly stated by the educational authorities. Also very useful was the systematic teacher development with clear objectives. This is inspirational not least to the Czech Republic, where we also invest a lot of money in FL teaching, but where the overall policy is not so transparent for teachers and there is no systematic structure for teacher development.

I was very pleased to learn that the majority of countries participating in the study visit have adopted the Common European Framework of Reference and that the European Language Portfolio is the basic working document for their foreign-language teaching policy.

School visits

I appreciated very much the opportunity to see the whole range of schools, not only the primary schools. However, it was very difficult to find time to visit all of them within the time allocated.

All teachers and school heads were very friendly and co-operative and they tried to help us as much as possible, but the lack of time did not allow us to spend much time with them and to discuss common burning issues. We were introduced to school policy by the heads

and after that we observed some lessons.

I would like to mention the schools that impressed me most.

The Infant and Primary School in CP Ventanielles (Spanish-English Integrated Curriculum Project) - it was an excellent example of good practice, CLIL in action, a very inspiring working environment with a lot of visual support, committed professional teachers. The school is located in a disadvantaged area, and pupils from different family backgrounds are all fully involved in learning.

CP San Felix in Candás (a primary school with ICT and CLIL) - a small local school, at which pupils use ICT from a very early age. It was very interesting to observe part of a lesson in which 4th level pupils were working on a project about inventions. They were so absorbed in their work on laptop computers that they did not pay much attention to the observers. There was an interesting discussion about how much the pupils should be encouraged to post their private information on school websites.

I also found IES Alfonso II (a secondary school with Spanish for immigrants) very inspiring, even though it was beyond the focus of the study visit. I was impressed by the well-designed scheme for involving immigrant children and their parents in education, especially in terms of their language development.

Discussions with colleagues from the study visit group

From the beginning of the visit, the participants from 12 countries established a very lively working environment. The hard work of the local organiser contributed to the successful co-operative atmosphere and facilitated informal discussion among participants. In spite of the very busy programme we spent our free time discussing burning issues in language education. Some of these were universal for all the participants, for example:

- provision of initial and further primary language teacher education (eg. language competence the primary teachers should achieve, and how)
- mentors in schools (teachers supervising trainee teachers in schools)
- transitions from primary to secondary levels
- assessment schemes in participating countries
- use of ICT for learning purposes
- learner autonomy
- further professional development for teachers

What could we learn from the host country's experience?

In the Czech Republic we could apply the gradual introduction of primary CLIL, which would be accompanied by systematic teacher education both in language and methodology. The

introduction of CLIL should be based on research and pilot studies in a limited number of pilot schools. The teachers should undergo systematic training both in their country and in the country of the target language. Special attention should be paid to the selection of pilot schools and the recruitment of the teachers who would start the project. They should be informed about the commitments before the project starts and all the objectives should be clear and transparent. Participation in the project should be acknowledged by the school authorities. The funding of the project should enable the school and participating teachers to hire new staff, who would cover lessons when project teachers were taking part in training sessions. Faculties of Education providing initial training should co-operate with the pilot schools closely and should design their courses in line with the findings of the research. There should be a closer link between Faculties of Education and institutions providing further professional development for teachers. And, of course, the teachers who decide to participate in the project have to have the support of the authorities and the community; they shouldn't feel despised for introducing an innovative approach to teaching.

To conclude, the study visit was a great experience for me, both professionally and personally.

No Longer Free and Easy

IDIO(ma)TIC expressions can be fun

Jaroslav Suchý

Once upon a time (four years ago), I was a “Practical English” teacher at the Faculty of Arts, Brno. As usual, I had students produce feedback at the end of the semester and this is one of the suggestions I received: “compose a song on idioms”. Challenged by this I tried, and this is what I produced.

I borrowed the tune from Miky Ryvola (Bedna od Whisky - Empty Whisky Box). Thanks Miky.

I used idioms found in a bottomless source of them - Leo Jones' well of such expressions called New Progress to Proficiency (CUP, 2001). Cheers mate.

The idioms are underlined. Have fun and try to sing along (sometimes it is not so free and easy ...)

No longer free and easy,
And off the beaten track
A halter made of strong rope's
Part and parcel of my neck
No more airs and graces
An open and shut case
Rough and ready tie will soon
Put me through much disgrace

Chorus:
So hang me high, let me rock
Let me rock to and fro
This time won't be up and about
Or as fit as a fiddle, too,
I'll reach the gates of heaven
Hopefully safe and sound,
If heavenly angels put
My feet back on the ground.

Put two and two together
Can't put me at my ease,
They set a trap for me
And that trap won't release.
To put you in the picture
Without using no knife
They'll kill me - lovely creature,
Put a stop to my life.

Chorus

As pretty as a picture
And just as good as gold
I wanted to live by her side
And with her to grow old
Another guy as strong as a horse
Took her away from me
She was as free as the air
It's touch and go, you see.

Chorus

When we met for the first time
We were as warm as toast
It was love at first sight
She was my life, my boast
I gave her a bunch of flowers
We climbed a range of hills
And then a flight of stairs
And that was overkill.

Chorus

My life is no longer,
No more cut and dry,
For her full and ruby lips
I am now gonna die.
For that pack of cards that
I should never have played
My story's as old as the hills
As old as love and hate.

Chorus

translation pages

by Martin Adam and Zuzana Pilátová

"I am an intellectual but at the same time I am not very clever..."

says Adrian Mole in one of his Diaries. One should think that this must be a pretty difficult life. And the difficult life did not make it easier for students of "Translation seminar B", where we dealt with the famous novel by Sue Townsend called The True Confessions of Adrian Albert Mole which also contains the specially written bonus, Adrian Mole and the Small Amphibians, first published in August 1991.

Sue Townsend, with The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole Aged 13 3/4 (1982) and The Growing Pains of Adrian Mole (1984), was Britain's bestselling author of the 1980s, and the first translations were published in Czechoslovakia at the time. All the translation jobs were done by Helena Hartlová but since then there have not been any attempts to "update" the translations.

Translating Adrian Mole's Diary is not an easy job, as the language of the teenager is soon transformed into the language of a "not very smart but intellectual" young man. Luckily, we can easily imagine the troubles in the life of an intellectual and therefore we have been able to concentrate on searching for the best equivalent expressions, trying to transfer the original into modern, colloquial Czech.

Here you can read a sample translation by Zuzana Pilátová, one of the "translation" students who has found her way to the heart of Adrian through colloquial expressions and word order. Enjoy it.

(MaN, Brno, October 2008)

Young Adrian Mole

1 January, 1st

Tuesday January 1st 1991

I start the year with a throbbing head and shaking limbs, owing to the excessive amounts of alcohol I was forced to drink at my mother's party last night.

I was quite happy sitting on a dining chair, watching the dancing and sipping on a low-calorie soft drink, but my mother kept shouting at me: 'Join in, fishface,' and wouldn't rest until I'd consumed a glass and a half of

Mladý Adrian Mole

1. ledna

Úterý, 1. ledna 1991

Důsledkem požití nadměrného množství alkoholu, který jsem byl donucen vypít na matčině večítku, vstupuju do nového roku s abnormální bolestí hlavy a rosolovitýma nohama.

Bylo mi docela fajn. Seděl jsem si na židli z kuchyně, pozoroval tanečnický a usrkával nízkokalorický nealko. Avšak matka na mě neustále pokřikovala: „No tak se přidej, prd'ochu!“ a nenechala mě na pokoji, dokud jsem nevypil půl litru

Lambrusco.

[...] It wasn't long before I found myself on the improvised dance floor in my mother's lounge, dancing to 'The Birdie Song', in a line with Pandora, the love of my life; Pandora's new lover, Professor Jack Cavendish; Martin Muffet, my boyish stepfather; Ivan and Tania, Pandora's bohemian parents; and other inebriated friends and relations of my mother's. As the song reared to its climax, I caught sight of myself in the mirror above the fireplace. I was flapping my arms and grinning like a lunatic. I stopped immediately and went back to the dining chair. Bert Baxter, who was a hundred last year, was doing some clumsy wheelchair dancing, which caused a few casualties; my left ankle is still bruised and swollen, thanks to his carelessness. Also I have a large beet root stain on the front of my new white shirt, caused by him flinging one of his beetroot sandwiches across the room under the misapprehension that it was a party popper. But the poor old git is almost certain to die this year - he's had his telegram from the Queen - so I won't charge him for the specialist dry cleaning that my shirt is almost certain to require.

[...] My father gate-crashed the party at 11.30. His excuse was that he wanted to speak urgently to my grandma. She is very deaf now, so he was forced to shout above the music. 'Mum, I can't find the spirit level'

What a pathetic excuse.' Who would be using a spirit level on New Year's Eve, apart from an emergency plumber? It was a pitiful request from a lonely, forty-nine-year-old divorcee, whose navy blue mid-eighties suit needed cleaning and whose brown moccasins needed throwing away.

červenýho.

[...] Netrvalo to dlouho a vlnil jsem se v rytmu ‚Kačera‘ na improvizovaným parketu v obýváku v řadě spolu s Pandorou, láskou mého života; jejím novým milencem, Profesorem Jackem Cavendishem; Martinem Muffetem, nevlastním otcem, který vypadá jakoby sotva ukončil povinnou školní docházku, a taky Ivanem a Taniou, což jsou Pandořiny bohémští rodiče. Krok s námi drželi i další přátelé a příbuzní matky, kteří už byli v dost podroušeným stavu. Když jsem byl v nejlepším, zahlídl jsem se v zrcadle nad krbem, jak divoce mávám rukama a tlemím se jak šílenec. Okamžitě jsem přestal křepčit a vrátil se ke své židli. Jiný tanečník, Bert Baxter, kterému bylo vloni sto, prováděl na svém kolečkovým křesle jakýsi nemotorný pohyby, jež neskončily bez následků; ještě teď mám kotník kvůli jeho neopatrnosti celej oteklej a samou modřinu; a taky bílou košili vepředu umazanou od červený řepy, kterou Bert rozhazoval po celý místnosti v domnění, že to jsou konfety. Ale protože ten starej mizera určitě letos umře - blahopřání ke stovce už od královny dostal - nebudu po něm žádat finanční kompenzaci za extra šetrný vyčištění, který ta košile fakt potřebuje.

[...] V 23.30 dorazil na večírek můj vlastní otec, aniž byl pozván. Vymlouval se, že nutně potřebuje mluvit s babičkou. Jelikož je dnes už úplně hluchá, musel otec překřikovat hudbu: „Mami, nemůžu najít vodováhu.“

Co je to za ubohou výmluvu? Kdo by, kromě instalatérské havarijní služby, používal vodováhu na Silvestra? Byla to jen žalostná prosba osamělého, rozvedeného čtyřicátníka v tmavomodrým obleku z 80. let, kterej se měl už dávno vyčistit, a v hnědejch mokasínách na vyhození.

'Any idea where the spirit level is?' insisted ray father, looking towards the drinks table. Then he added, 'I'm laying some paving slabs.'

I laughed out loud at this obvious lie.

[...] Pandora has been mine since I was thirteen years old and I fell in love with her treacle-coloured hair. She is simply playing hard to get. She only married Julian Twyselton-Fife to make me jealous. There can be no other possible reason. Julian is a bisexual semi-aristocrat who occasionally wears a monocle. He strains after eccentricity but it continues to elude him. He is a deeply ordinary man with an upper-class accent. He's not even good-looking. He looks like a horse on two legs. And as for her affair with Cavendish, a man who dresses like a tramp, the mind boggles.

Pandora was looking particularly beautiful in a red off-the-shoulder dress, from which her breasts kept threatening to escape. Nobody would have guessed from looking at her that she was now Dr Pandora Braithwaite, fluent in Russian, Serbo-Croat and various other little-used languages. She looked more like one of those supermodels that prowl the catwalks than a Doctor of Philosophy. She certainly added glamour to the party: unlike her parents, who were dressed as usual in their fifties beatnik style - polo necks and corduroy. No wonder they were both sweating heavily as they danced to Chuck Berry.

[...] As the clock struck twelve, everyone joined hands and sang 'Auld Lang Syne'. I looked around, at Pandora; at Cavendish; at my mother; at my father; at my stepfather; at my grandma; at Pandora's parents, Ivan and Tania Braithwaite; and at the dog. Tears filled my eyes. I am nearly twenty-four years of age, I thought, and what have I

„Nevíš, kde je ta vodováha?“ trval otec na svém, zrak upřenej na stůl s pitím. „Pokládám novej chodník,“ dodal.

Musel jsem se tý očividný lži nahlas zasmát.

[...] Pandora, kterou zbožňuju už od třinácti, kdy jsem neodolal jejím vlasům medový barvy, ráda dělá naschvály. Vzala si Juliana Twyseltona-Fifea, jen aby mě donutila žárlit. Jinej důvod prostě nemůže existovat. Julian je bisexuální poloviční aristokrat, kterej příležitostně nosí monokl. Snaží se bejt výstřední, ale moc se mu to nedaří. Je to naprosto průměrnej chlap se snobským přízvukem. A ani nevypadá dobře. Je jako kůň na dvou nohách. A co se týče jejího románku s Cavendishem, kterej se oblíká jak vandrák, tak nad tím zůstává i rozum stát.

Červený šaty s obnaženýma ramenama a výstřihem tak hlubokým, že jí prsa div nevypadly, Pandoře obzvlášť slušely. Při pohledu na ni by nikdo nehádal, že je teď dr. Pandora Braithwaiteová, plynně hovořící rusky, srbochorvatsky a dalšíma zřídka užívanýma jazykama. Připomínala spíš supermodelku, nesoucí se po molu, než doktorku filozofie. Určitě přidala večírku na kráse. Na rozdíl od svých rodičů, kteří se jako obvykle navlíkli do klasických kousků beatnickýho stylu 50. let - roláků a manšestráků. Není tedy divu, že se nadměrně potili, když trsali na Chucka Berryho.

[...] Jakmile odbila půlnoc, všichni jsme ruku v ruce zpívali „Valčík na rozloučenou“.

Pohlídl jsem na Pandoru, Cavendishe, matku, otce, nevlastního otce, babičku, Pandořiny rodiče, a taky na psa. Do očí se mně draly slzy. Je mi skoro dvacet čtyři, pomyslel jsem si, a co jsem udělal se životem? Jak píseň pomalu doznívala,

done with my life? And, as the singing died-away, I answered myself - nothing, Mole, nothing.

[...] She said, 'For Christ's sake, can't you have one poxy day off without permission? Do you have to kow-tow to that little commissar Brown?

I replied, with dignity, I hope, 'Pandora, some of us keep our word, unlike you, who on Thursday the second of June 1983 promised that you would marry me as soon as you had finished your "A" levels'

Pandora laughed, spilling the neat whisky in her glass. 'I was sixteen years old,' she said. 'You're living in a bloody time warp.'

I ignored the insult, 'Will you drive me to Oxford as you promised?' I snapped, dabbing at the whisky droplets on her dress with a paper serviette covered in reindeer.

Pandora shouted across the room to Cavendish, who was engaged in conversation with Grandma about the dog's lack of appetite: 'Jack! Adrian's insisting on that lift back to Oxford!

Bluebeard rolled his eyes and looked at his watch.

'Have I got time for one more drink, Adrian?' he asked.

'Yes, but only mineral water. You're driving, aren't you?' I said

He rolled his eyes again and picked up a bottle of Perrier. My father came across and he and Cavendish reminisced about the Good Old Days, when they could drink ten pints in the pub and get in the car and drive off without having the law on your back'.

odpověděl jsem si - nic, Mole, vůbec nic.

[...] Řekla: „Proboha, copak si nemůžeš vzít bez dovolení volno ani na jeden ubohej den? Musíš pořád tomu byrokratovi Brownovi podlízat?

Odpověděl jsem jí důstojně, nebo v to aspoň doufám: „Pandoro, někteří z nás umí držet slovo. Ne jako ty, která jsi ve čtvrtek druhého června roku 1983 slíbila, že si mě vezmeš hned, jak uděláš maturitu.“

Pandora se rozesmála, až jí whisky vystříkla ze sklenice. „Bylo mi šestnáct,“ řekla, „ Sakra. Vždyť ty žiješ v úplně jiný časový dimenzi!“

Spolkl jsem její urážku. „Odvezeš mě do Oxfordu, jak jsi slíbila?“, vyštěkl jsem, když jsem jí lehce stíral kapky whisky ze šatů papírovým ubrouskem, kterej byl potištěnej sobama.

Pandora křikla přes celej pokoj na Cavendishe, kterej se zaujatě bavil s babičkou o nechutenství našeho psa. „Jacku! Adrian na tom odvozu do Oxfordu trvá!“

Profesor Šedovous obrátil oči v sloup a mrkl na hodinky.

„Mám ještě čas na další drink, Adriane?“, zeptal se.

„Ano, ale jen na minerálku. Řídíš, ne?“, poznamenal jsem.

Zase zakoulel očima a vzal si flašku mattonky. Pak za ním přišel otec a oba si nostalgicky zavzpomínali na zlatý časy, kdy vypili deset piv, nasedli do auta a odfrčeli bez toho, aby jim zákon šlapal na paty.

It was 2 a.m. when we finally left my mother's house. Then we had to call at the Braithwaites' house to collect Pandora's overnight bag. I sat in the back of Cavendish's Volvo and listened to their banal conversation. Pandora calls him 'Hunky' and Cavendish calls her 'Monkey'.

I woke up on the outskirts of Oxford to hear her whisper: 'So, what did you think of the festivities at Maison Mole, Hunky?'

And to hear him reply: 'As you promised, Monkey, delightfully vulgar'. I enjoyed myself enormously. They both turned to look at me, so I feigned sleep.

I began to think about my sister Rosie, who is, in my view, totally spoilt. The Girls' World model hairdressing head she had demanded for Christmas had stood neglected on the lounge window sill since Boxing Day, looking out onto the equally neglected garden. Its retractable blonde hair was hopelessly tangled and its face was smeared with garish cosmetics. Rosie was dancing earlier with Ivan Braithwaite in a manner totally unsuited to an eight-year-old. They looked like Lolita and Humbert.

Nabokov, fellow author, you should have been alive on that day. It would have shocked even you to see Rosie Mole pouting in her black miniskirt, pink tights and purple cropped top!

I have decided to keep a full journal, in the hope that my life will perhaps seem more interesting when it is written down. It is certainly not interesting to actually live my life. It is tedious beyond belief.

Ve dvě ráno jsme konečně odjeli. Po cestě jsme se zastavili u Braithwaiteových pro Pandořin kufřík. Seděl jsem na zadním sedadle Cavendishova volva a poslouchal jejich banální rozhovor. Říkala mu ‚hezounku‘ a on jí zase ‚melounku‘.

Vzbudil jsem se na předměstí Oxfordu, právě včas abych slyšel, jak šeptá: „Tak co říkáš na zábavu v rezidenci Moleových, hezounku?“

A jeho jak odpovídá: „Přesně, jak jsi slibovala, melounku, nádherně nekultivovaná. Náramně jsem si to užil.“ Oba se ke mně obrátili, a tak jsem dělal, že spím.

Začal jsem přemýšlet o své sestře Rosie, která je podle mě skrz na skrz zkažená. Česací hlava, kterou si přála k vánocům, stojí opuštěná na okně v obývacím pokoji už od Štěpána a vyhlíží do stejně opuštěný zahrady.

Blond vlasy má beznadějně zašmodrchaný a na obličejí rozmazanej nevkusnej make-up . Rosie předtím tancovala s Ivanem Braithwaiteem a to způsobem naprosto nevhodným pro osmiletý dítě. Hotová Lolita a staroch Humbert.

Kolego Nabokove, velký spisovateli, měl byste se dožít toho dne. I Vás by pobouřilo, kdybyste viděl Rosie Moleovou producírovat se v černé minisukni, růžových punčocháčích a purpurově červeným krátkým tílku.

Ve víře, že se můj život bude možná zdát zajímavější, když bude na papíře, rozhodl jsem se při psaní deníku nic nevynechávat. Žít můj život rozhodně zajímavý není. Je nudnej až hrůza.

travel pages

Montana, US

Rita Collins

Perhaps you have read about Montana in a book on the American Wild West or seen footage of it in some film. Maybe you even heard me talk about this state in one of your classes. Wherever your images of Montana might be from, I doubt if they can equal the magnificence of the plains and the mountains unless you have actually been there.

Montana is often referred to as “the last best place,” a phrase attributed to William Kittredge, who along with Annick Smith edited an anthology with that title. The book is over 1,000 pages long and contains hundreds of stories, poems and reminiscences about the state. Even with all those words, I am not sure it quite captures the essence of Montana. I will agree though that Montana is the best place. Before I try to convince you of that, you should have some basic information about the state.

Montana is large. It covers approximately 380,000 square kilometers. To give you some perspective on this, you could easily fit the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Romania inside the state's borders and still have room left over. Montana is sparsely populated. In the 2006 census, there were approximately 900,000 people living in the entire state. Again, to put it in perspective; in Montana that averages to 6.2 people per square mile. In the Czech Republic, the

population density is 337 people per square mile. Montana is tall. Well, not exactly tall but it does have some fantastic mountain ranges. The Rocky Mountains run through western Montana and there are several mountain peaks that stand over 3,000 meters high. And then there are the rivers....there are scores of beautiful rivers that run through Montana: the Yellowstone, the Missouri, the Flathead, and the Madison to name a few. Some of the rivers are wild and reckless, cutting through mountain passages like the Yaak River. Others like the Judith River meander gently across the eastern plains in the state.

Before settlers and trappers discovered the Montana territory and gave their own names to the rivers and mountains, numerous Indian tribes lived there, including the Sioux, Salish, Kootenai and Blackfeet. Nowadays there are seven federally recognized Indian reservations in the state representing seven different tribes. Evidence of these diverse cultures is seen throughout the state in such places as the public school curriculum, museums, in the arts and at gatherings such as Pow Wows¹.

As you might expect, this richness in the Montana land and her people inspires writers and artists. James Welch (1940 - 2003) is an internationally renowned Blackfeet author who wrote numerous books about the lives of Indians in this part of the country. Fools Crow and

¹ “A modern pow-wow is a specific type of event where both Native American and non-Native American people meet to dance, sing, socialize, and honor American Indian culture. There is generally a dancing competition, often with significant prize money awarded. Pow-wows vary in length from a one-day session of 5 to 6 hours to three days.” (Pow wows)

Winter in the Blood are two of many novels he penned that are tragic stories and yet show the humor that people must have to survive. Welch was awarded the French Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres medal as well as various American literary awards for his work. Ivan Doig is a contemporary author who has also written about Montana; his works include Dancing at the Rascal Fair, Bucking the Sun, and English Creek. Many of his earlier novels describe the people who moved to Montana from eastern states to find open land, job opportunities or adventure. Essayist Annick Smith was born in Europe and then moved to Montana as a young woman and stayed. She went on to write and publish several nonfiction pieces about the incredible place she adopted as home. She was also involved in the production of two films shot in Montana, *Heartland* and *A River Runs Through It*. Evelyn Cameron (1868 - 1915) was another European who fell in love with Montana and stayed. The photographs that she took at the turn of the twentieth century are a state treasure for the images they give us of those times.

Perhaps it is the expanse and ruggedness of the Montanan land that encourage a strong sense of individualism. Thus it is not surprising to find remarkable people who are part of Montana's history. Jeannette Rankin (1880 - 1973), the first woman elected to the US Congress, represented the state. She was elected in 1916 when many other states still did not allow women to vote. Despite having a role unique for her gender at that time, Rankin stuck by her principles and voted against the country's

entry into World War I. She said, "the first time the first woman had a chance to say no against war she should say it." Mike Mansfield (1903 - 2001) also lived most of his life in Montana when he wasn't representing his state in Washington, DC. Mansfield served as majority leader in the US Senate for a record-breaking sixteen years. He later was appointed US ambassador to Japan under President Carter.

I could go on as there are probably other people that you might have heard of but aren't aware that they are from Montana; people who made films, won Olympics medals, became television stars, or have their paintings hung in famous museums. Some of the Montanans I admire most are those who aren't well known. There is Eve Clowers, who moved to a remote area of western Montana when she was in her early 40s. She put money down on a piece of land thick with conifers. Over the years, she has managed to carve out a homestead there despite not having electricity or indoor plumbing. She has a few cows, chickens, pigs, turkeys, dogs and an occasional cat. She makes her own butter, sausages, bread and cheeses and grows an incredible vegetable garden despite the short summer season. Next to her pasture she dedicated a plot of forest to world peace. Eve maintains this quiet refuge and encourages visitors to walk along the paths and sit on a bench she built by the river. Every year she puts on a mid-winter party for children who enjoy sledding, skiing and then drinking some of her delicious hot chocolate.

Bernice Ende is a neighbor of Eve's up on the same mountain. Bernice taught

ballet to local children in an after-school program for ten years. When she first began teaching her dance classes in the community hall, she had to make a fire in the woodstove to heat the building. After some years, people in the community helped her raise enough money to install electric heat. In 2005, she stopped teaching ballet and took off with a horse and a dog to do a “long ride.” On that first trip across Montana and on through Idaho, Colorado and New Mexico, she covered over 3,000 km on horseback, stopping at communities along the way to give talks and inspire others with her grit. She is now completing her third “long ride” but will return this winter, as she always does, to her home in Montana.

Ray Jacobs was the 4th grade teacher in a small town in northwestern Montana for several years. When he wasn't teaching, he played music with friends in the evening. After he retired from teaching, he began making musical instruments in the small workshop that he built next to the log cabin that he also built. As Montana encourages people (and sometimes forces them) to do what they do best, Ray has crafted violins, guitars, dulcimers and even a banjo over the years.

Brenda Nesbitt lived with her husband and two children down a long, dirt road. When her children were in high school, Brenda decided that it was time for her to go to university and study creative writing. The first two years, she commuted to a community college 100 km from her home, driving back and forth daily. She completed the second two years of her Bachelor's degree through an

e-learning program and graduated with honors. She was accepted into a prestigious university program to do a Master's degree in Creative Writing. Although she died before completing that degree, some of her poetry has since been published in the anthology Poems Across the Big Sky. “Mother's Day, 1996” seems to capture her spirit.

Mother's Day, 1996

On Mother's Day, we ride
out in your pickup, to bring home
an over flowing load
of manure. Your truck buckles
under the weight. The tires
almost go flat. Driving
through town, I feel
all eyes upon us, staring,
like Mother's Day and manure
somehow relate, somehow
intertwine. At Montana Market,
you come into the store
and buy me a broom, asking
my opinion. At the check out counter,
we joke about how you know
how to satisfy a woman, you know
what a woman
really needs. We joke
and I turn my head away
to write out a check, smiling
unevenly.

I really do need
a new broom.

At home, you unload the manure
into the garden,
while I carry the groceries
into the house. Carry
in my new broom
like some prized treasure.
there is dirt on the floor, half swept
piles. The daughter
sits reading
on the couch. There is
so much to do, so much

that I don't ask for, so much
I have never asked for.
I put the groceries away, pick
up the broom, begin
another year of sweeping.

It is actually quite difficult to capture all the magical aspects of Montana that make it the best place. Is it so because of the wild mountains or the high, rolling plains or the endless sky that stretches across it all? Is it because of the eagles one can watch fishing along the rivers for salmon? Or the way Montanans work together in small towns to put on a summer rodeo or a fundraiser for the family whose house burnt down? Is it because of the splendor of Glacier National Park, where you can spot a grizzly bear ambling across an alpine ridge? Or the vibrant colors and sounds of the annual Indian Pow Wow in Browning, Montana? For me, it is a synthesis of all these things yet I don't need to be hiking in the high country or watching the amazing Indian hoop dances to feel that I am satisfied there. Sitting on the porch of someone's cabin listening to stories or savoring the music played by friends around a campfire under the star-filled sky is often enough. I hope someday that you decide to visit this part of the world to see for yourself.

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poetry pages

Modernist poetry calls for an active reader. And what can be more engaging and active than writing poems? Students in the American literature seminar wrote their own variations on poems by William Carlos Williams.

William Carlos Williams

This Is Just to Say

I have eaten
the plums
that were in
the icebox

and which
you were probably
saving
for breakfast

Forgive me
they were delicious
so sweet
and so cold

Variations on a Theme by William Carlos Williams

Šárka Nygrýnová

Yesterday
I realized
I don't love you
anymore

The two years
gosh
so long
so short

And I feel
hilarious
depressed
free

Kamila Roszak



Finding the way

I have finished your tea
waiting
It was cold
anyway
keep the mug
though
it's empty

Václav Hemerka

To Mr. e.e.cummings:

I'm so sorry that I doubt your talent
and that I can't see the hidden
meaning...

For sure you're a great poet,
while I'm just an ignorant being.

So stupid...

so stupid...

Šarka Kostelníčková

This Is Just to Say

I have written
a poem
that you won't
like

and which
definitely
won't captivate your
mind

I am sorry
I was in a hurry
so stressed,
such a sap.

Cecilie Kissová

You don't mind, do you?

The shoes were so pretty,
in the store window,
smooth black leather,
I had to have them.

I bought them yesterday,
even though,
it was our last money,
my dear - my honey.

I know you won't mind,
when you see them,
on my feet,
we don't have to eat.

Kateřina Koláčková

To whom I love,

just wait and I will do it,
just wait and you will see,
there can be nothing to it,
just the ocean, spring and sea.

Where is my home town, my brake,
where you shall always fake,
what can be done with those,
can you forgive the prose.

I will love you for ever,
just wait and you will see,
no scream and shout under pressure,
this hectic life will be.

This rush is always for nothing,
this rush is always for something,
stop and let it be,
just wait and you will see.

Martin Vaněk

I'm fed up with it,
Yes I was late, and why?
A shabby dosser on the tram,
He had vented his rage,
Ugh, that repugnant smell,
it lingers for days.

Sometimes I am so arrogant,
And even now I am.
To be Frank (I'm Martin though 😊)
I've modified my poem,
This ain't the original!
What a surprise!

Hope it doesn't put anybody off,
And if it does, who's to blame?
It's about being creative.
Perhaps I shouldn't have said
I didn't like the fridge-plum poem
I am committing the same crime myself!
Trust me!

Publish or Perish II

Jaroslav Suchý

Publishing's what they request
Unanimous they are, it seems
Blinded by reader's (in) digest (ion)

Little reality there's in teams.

I long for common sense
Sunshine (or clouds), fresh air, trees, song and dance

Hush babe, C, you've got your P see.

Observe the pictures of mountains and the sea
Rumor has it that people no longer need to meet

Pen-palling, chatting, sky-ping, u-tubing, mood-link, oh... what a treat
Everyone's on the face book or my space all the time
Roaming down the screen, wording another pretty rhyme

I long for common sense
Sunshine (or clouds), fresh air, trees, song and dance

Hush babe, C, you've got your P see.

the messenger

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e-mail: gabriela.oaklandova@gmail.com

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