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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 at gabriela.oaklandova@gmail.com.

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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interview

Interview with Peter Grundy Irena Headland Kalischová

*This interview was conducted as an email exchange between myself and Peter Grundy just a few days before his expected visit to Brno. Peter Grundy is a well-known linguist, who has spent most of his career teaching at various universities both in the UK and overseas. He says “My main interests are in language teaching methodology and in pragmatics”, and these are evidenced in his bibliography: he’s written books and articles on ELT along with university coursebooks including *Doing Pragmatics* (3rd edn. 2008). He has been a regular visitor to the English Department at PdF MU over the past few years; he was a plenary speaker at the linguistics conferences in 2011 and 2012 and will be running a workshop in April 2013.*

Q: On your last visit to the Faculty of Education, in Sept 2012, you were one of the plenary speakers at the conference on English as the Lingua Franca of the Modern World. In your lecture, you often referred to Barbara Seidlhofer’s book *Understanding English as a Lingua Franca* (2011), and one of the quotes read “So English could not actually function as an international language at all if it were simply adopted rather than adapted”. How do you, personally, feel about the “adaptations”, and do they affect your own use of the language?

PG: The point Barbara Seidlhofer makes is that learners adapt English to their own needs rather than adopt a native speaker variety. And the first part of your question, if I read it right, implies that I might find this unsettling. But, I ask myself, why would anyone want to adopt the language that I speak? After all, they

aren’t me, they are themselves. And why would I want someone else to pretend to be me? Or pretend to be one of those fictional British characters in a ghastly coursebook? Only I suppose if I think being me or being a fictional British character from a coursebook is better than being them, which, of course, I don’t. On the contrary, I welcome users who adapt English as a means of showing their own identity.

As to the second part of your question - do the adaptations of others affect my use of English? - as Barbara Seidlhofer claimed some years ago in *ELT Journal*: well, I suppose everybody’s use of language is liable to have some small effect on our own use, language being a virus which mutates as it passes through its human hosts.

Can I also add a footnote about adopting language? I suppose the only people who might think others should adopt their language would be people with a strong sense of the relationship between language and nation, and a consequently narrow view of what constitutes a standard variety. It’s not difficult to think of languages that are closely associated with nations, and of course the names of languages and nations are often cognates. Moreover, we know from recent European history that nations sometimes choose not to include groups who speak languages or varieties that differ from the supposed national language. But of course, the putative relationship between language and nation doesn’t signify for English: speaking English doesn’t make you British, and you can be British without speaking English. This means that if you are a so-called native-speaker of English, you don’t have the kinds of identity and ownership issues that plague speakers of some other languages.

Q: Do you see any change in the role of native speakers in an EFL classroom?

PG: I don't wish to be provocative - oh well, perhaps I do wish to be provocative: to be honest, I don't like the term 'EFL', which harks back to the days of the British Empire and is in serious need of deconstruction. If I wanted to learn Czech, I'd ask someone to teach me Czech, not 'Czech as a foreign language'. So why would anyone want to learn English as a Foreign Language when they might instead learn English? Of course, if I were an English-speaking linguistic imperialist who thought everyone should adopt my language, and if I made it impossible for them to do this because I defined it as a very strictly circumscribed variety which admitted no L2 phonological, semantic or syntactic variation, then I suppose I'd invent a term like 'English as a Foreign Language' precisely to describe their guaranteed failure to speak my variety of English.

So, to 'adapt' the question: In an age when English is so obviously used as a lingua franca, do I see any change in the usefulness or otherwise of someone like myself, who learned English from their parents rather than from a language teacher? No I don't, actually. I've never tried to teach anyone to use English as I use it. And when I look back to the beginning of my teaching career in 1968, even in that Prague Spring, those I taught probably wanted English more for intercultural than for cross-cultural use. And since I've always thought of English as a lingua franca rather than a foreign language, I've never thought it worthwhile to think much about the supposed differences between native and non-native speaker teachers. Of course I know that there's a lot of prejudice about: when I worked in Hong Kong, there were clearly students who preferred to have a native English speaker teacher - although what's meant by 'native English

speaker' is difficult to determine in Hong Kong, where I suppose discriminating students were often reflecting attitudes to ethnicity rather than language. And if I benefited from discrimination in Hong Kong (although who wants to be advantaged by discrimination, I wonder), I've also suffered from it: I get rather fed up when people say that non-native speaker teachers are better at the job than I am because they know more about learning the language. Or when people imply that as a native speaker I may be less intelligible than a non-native speaker because of my obstinate use of interdental fricatives. Each of us can be a good teacher or a bad teacher, and I don't honestly think our own first language should be taken into consideration.

Q: Recently, the topic in online forums at Masaryk University has been the worldwide trend of MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses); some students welcome this form of higher education, others condemn it. What's your view?

PG: There are some people who would have us forget the difference between making information available and helping students to understand that information. In my experience, understanding usually requires teachers and learners to interact closely. Now, many of those who make information available to students don't provide the associated learning opportunities which would enable the students to understand it. Moreover, even the kinds of modest learning platforms that we all use in our university teaching are beginning to have a pernicious effect, in that our students typically expect all the required reading to be available on the platform. But of course the reading that often benefits us the most is that which we discover for ourselves when we're in the library. Whenever I visit a university library, I still marvel at the huge amount of astonishingly academic

material that I stumble over almost by chance - and how this contrasts with the limited diet of ready-meals provided on the learning platforms that I prepare for my students.

Q: So you think there is still a future for teacher-training colleges and faculties of education and their students?

PG: As institutions make education more widely available and offer opportunities to those who in former times would have been denied access to the academy, they increasingly realize how fearfully expensive the provision of an adequate number of teachers is and how relatively inexpensive it is to dump a load of pre-digested material on a webpage. So we try to take short-cuts by devising self-study learning packages, which some people imagine will one day replace teachers. A few months ago, I was invited to a dinner where I found myself sitting opposite a senior representative of the world's leading provider of academic learning packages. When we got to the pudding stage of the meal, I asked him what he did when he didn't have anything to offer that exactly met the needs of a client institution. He told me that the situation never arose because his company had suitable academic materials for every learning need. Yes, it's true that he was drunk, but still you can see that idiots are moving into education and that they pose a threat to those of us who believe in training and developing real teachers. And the need for real teachers has never been greater. I was recently told by an expert in the British Council that the world has eleven million English teachers and needs fifteen million. (No doubt our drunken publisher friend wishes we had only ten, and indeed will work on governments to bring this about, since he thinks he can solve the problem with a learning package of doubtful quality.) So I hope the answer to your question is yes,

but in a world in which we no longer find butchers, greengrocers, newsagents and florists in the high street, perhaps teachers too will soon be relegated to a small section at the back of the knowledge hypermarket.

Q: Finally, as you will soon be running another workshop in Brno, titled Learning to Write, could you give us just a little hint whether it will deal primarily with the academic style as such, or academic English, or perhaps academic ELF?

PG: After the dystopias that your last two questions prompt, at last a chance to reflect on the opportunity to work together as a small group of people who really care about something important: helping our students to write effectively. In the workshop, I intend to focus not so much on what to write as on how to write it. Because I believe that our students bring intelligence, feelings, taste and aesthetic sensibility to the academy, I'll try to show ways of teaching writing that respect not only their academic needs but also their human qualities.

Every time I think about it, I thank providence, and one or two of my teachers too, that I'm a relatively literate person. As a teacher of writing, there's nothing I want more than to see my students surpass me in this. And when I run a teacher development workshop, I aim to share ideas that colleagues can use to help their students to surpass them too.

Finally, thanks for asking me these questions. I found them very thought-provoking (and much more useful than the opportunity to lurk on a MOOC).

Thank YOU, and we look forward to the workshop!

linguistics pages

Seven days without a pun makes one weak

Helena Havlíčková

The pun mentioned above has to be said aloud to discover that the words week and weak are pronounced in the same way. The English language is full of homophones like this, so no wonder that a great number of jokes arise from the domain of homophones.

Waiter, what do you call this?

It's bean soup, sir.

I don't care what it's been. What is it now?

The Czech language also bases jokes on homophones, although these are probably not so frequent.

Viš jak se rozmnožují počítačové viry?

No, nevím.

Pučením! Pučíš si disketu a máš to!

In this case colloquial Czech has been used for the same purpose. The problem in both languages (and in any other language) is in translatability. Just try to translate the Czech joke mentioned above. You will have to use two different words with different roots and different pronunciations. Homophones used in jokes are hardly ever translatable.

Fortune teller: Would you like your palm read?

Man: No thanks; I like the colour it is now.

Telling jokes to foreigners is a difficult task. Listeners hardly ever laugh, as the phenomenon of jokes is strongly dependent on cultural, social, political, geographical, historical ... and other backgrounds. Foreigners have not shared

our history, habits, culture ... our jokes are alien to them, as theirs are to us.

Jim: I've just had my appendix out.

John: Will you have a scar?

Jim: No thanks, I don't smoke.

How similar the pronunciations of scar and cigar are! Can we translate the two homophones and still keep the meaning of the joke? Sometimes careless pronunciation can help the purpose of the pun.

I like European food so I decided to Russia over there because I was Hungary. After Czech'ing the menu I ordered Turkey. When I was Finnished I told the waiter 'Spain good but there is Norway I could eat another bite'.

Generally the aim of translation is to provide equivalence in meaning between two languages. As seen above the task sometimes cannot be carried out. Exact equivalence does not exist, of course. There is always some loss of information. Besides the reasons mentioned above there are also rhythm, puns (homophones can function very well here) and cultural allusions. The success of the translation then depends on how well it reflects the needs of the people for whom it was made and of course on the purpose for which it was made. When translating we can be focused on accuracy and knowledge of the subject, e.g. in pragmatics. In other cases aesthetic functions are crucial, as we want to keep the emotional aspect of the utterance and maintain some level of stylistic equivalence. Sometimes we need to stick to the cultural aspect of the original text. It seems that there is no task more complex than translation. Knowledge of the source and the target language is not enough. A translation is a work of art that demands empathy.

And homophones as puns?

*He drove his expensive car into a tree
and found out how the Mercedes bends.*

*The one who invented the door knocker
got a No-bell prize.*

*It's better to love a short girl than not a
tall.*

*A bicycle can't stand on its own because
it is two-tired.*

*Smaller babies may be delivered by stork
but the heavier ones need a crane.*

A criminal's best asset is his lie ability.

*England doesn't have a kidney bank, but
it does have a Liverpool.*

They are real hard nuts to crack!



The jokes and puns used in the text come from:

<http://www.punoftheday.com/cgi-bin/disppuns.pl?ord=F>

How Texas Spoiled My Grammar

Lucie Podroužková

I'm fond of dialects and when I heard an actor saying, "When you're speaking Southern, you feel there's always sunshine around you", I was ready to be seduced by the y'all of my temporary Texan home. A few weeks into my stay I was already pronouncing all my r's and was transfixed by what my mentor, a 61-year-old Scarlet O'Hara beauty in elegantly matched clothes, pearls and all, did with her ai sounds. "Wha-aa?" she would say, "You should tra-aa," - with two to three different notes on the a's. My son, too, would leave the daycare each day with a "ba ba-aa" rather than "bye bye". He was learning completely different English from mine. "Mami," he would say at home, testing the day's new vocabulary on me, "viš, že ko:r?" "Ano," I said, "ka:". "Ne", he would insist, "ko:r". He was indeed right. The way his teachers and other boys pronounced "car" sounded much more like "core".

The lexical treasures I packed in were fewer. I didn't get to hear so much of the notorious "I was fixin'" but was hugely diverted by the use of the verb "visit", employed as a synonym to "chat". "It was nice visiting with you", all my Texan friends concluded a phone call with. But it was grammar that got me most.

Last year it took me by surprise that my decently fluent and accurate second-year students would make mistakes in something as trivial as the use of the present simple versus the present continuous. "We cram so many exceptions in Syntax," they informed me, "that we get muddled." Fair enough, I thought, and made use of the "teachable moment". Imagine my shock when my Texan students began submitting essays that included sentences such as:

This article is stating that ...

The author is talking that ...

The paragraph is showing ...

The essay is arguing that ...

I didn't go as far as to use the same kind of revision exercise as in my Brno class, but I just as well could have. Then one day, when the air-conditioning in the school was set to a particularly unbearable degree, I grumbled about it to a passing colleague. Clad in an all-season outfit, she replied to naïve, frozen me, who had arrived in the subtropics with a suitcase of summer clothes, with: "See, I'm loving it". It dawned on me at that moment that what I was encountering may not just be McDonalds and my students' often deprived educational background but perhaps a genuine feature of contemporary American English. My Texan students simply interspersed their written discourse with the way they spoke. My students back home may not have been confused by Syntax after all; perhaps they had just picked this up from American movies. The prepositions were all "wrong", too, and I quickly grew wary of interfering with them in my students' essays. In Texas, for example, you never have a "one-to-one lesson". Rather, you take a "one-on-one".

I've returned home with the kind of mongrel British American English/Czenglish native speakers laugh at, and lots of colloquial grammar structures that will continue to puzzle Czech students, who so long to learn authentic everyday English but need to pass their tests as well. How I will go about all this, I don't know. But I'm kind of loving it anyway.

methodology pages

“Compensatory strategy is when, for example ...”

Helena Havlíčková

Most of us must have heard the strange construction above, which ignores the special rules definitions are governed by. To rid our 1st year Master's students of bad defining habits, we briefly tried some simple, funny definitions in a Didactics lesson.

A **classroom** is a place nobody looks forward to entering but everyone looks forward to leaving.

An **exam** is a formal device that serves to remind you that your study efforts are not intensive enough.

An **exam** is a short period of time ruled by the teacher for the torturing of students.

An **exam** is an event for which you prepare for a long time, which is over in a few minutes, and then it takes ages before you get the results.

A **teacher** is a person who often wants his/her students to do all the tasks in time but never does this him/herself.

A **teacher** is the only person who is always right apart from your mother.

A **school library** is a place where students have to read, because everything else is prohibited there.

Krmítko is a place where students get a hot, sweet escape from school reality limited only by the size of the cup.

Krmítko is the last safe place on Earth where students can gather the rest of their strength by brainstorming before an exam or presentation.

Technology is a number of machines that never work when you urgently need them.

Technology refers to things that have been invented to make our lives easier, but in fact they often complicate it.



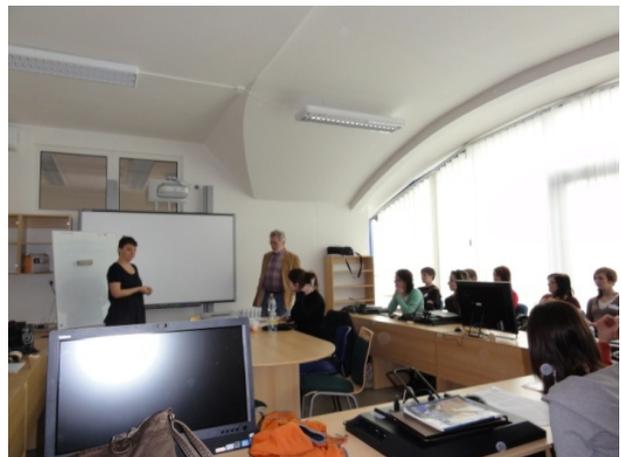
An unusual day for ordinary high-school students

Jitka Kučerová, Anna Čejková

On March 21, thirteen students from the Bishop's High School in Žďár nad Sázavou had the honour of visiting the Department of English Language and Literature at the Faculty of Education in Brno. We were welcomed by Mrs. Vojtková and after she had explained to us the system of study at the Faculty of Education we took part in real classes! We really enjoyed being in lessons taught by Mr. Mike George and Mrs. Buchtová. The lesson in History of the U.S. was very exciting and so different from what we study in our English classes. We experienced a way of studying at university that was very interesting for us, as future university students. Afterwards we talked to Mrs. Hanušová, who informed us about the Entrance Exams.

We would like to say thank you for making this possible.

Jitka Kučerová, Anna Čejková 3.B
(Biskupské gymnázium Žďár nad Sázavou)



My subject and my future job

Eva Hašková

I believe that language is an immensely efficient and powerful tool. It enables people to communicate with each other, to share their opinions and to express their feelings. Sometimes we do not even need to produce an utterance, but thanks to our body language we can express a great deal of things and ideas.

We acquire a language at a very early age by imitating our parents. From them we learn our first words and gestures. However, this phase begins with some unidentifiable noises such as babbling, squawking or chattering and through them we start to speak. As we get older, we produce utterances, begin to understand the meanings of words and build up a language system. It is not enough to imitate our surroundings; we also need to learn rules, tenses, vocabulary etc. That is why acquiring a language is a long and gradual process and even when the process is not finished we try to acquire other languages.

In order to use a language properly we need someone to guide us as we acquire it. To be honest, this is not an easy task. We have parents or friends from whom we can learn a lot of things but it is the teacher whose job it is to take care of our deeper language education and from whom we are supposed to receive knowledge. I would say that in addition to knowledge of tenses, vocabulary and fact the teacher's job is to make us love the language and show us its magic and how beautiful and awe-inspiring it can be.

In my opinion, when the teacher is really determined, likes the language for itself as well as to teach it, and is able to give good explanations and a lot of practice through creative activities and tasks, the students will see the value in

this. Also, I would hope they would feel the pleasure of learning and appreciate the teacher's efforts, and that this would encourage them to learn more. In the end, learning languages must be stimulating and fun and the teacher should enable learners to explore not only the language itself but also the cultures and parts of the world in which it is used.

Students can easily see when a teacher is not being honest with them. Bad teaching habits and reluctance to teach can have disastrous results. I would say that teachers who are not enthusiastic about teaching should not teach at all so as not to spoil learners' experience or even discourage them.

I feel that I can judge both sides of the educational process. As a student, I consider myself lucky to have had great, determined teachers who obviously really cared. Thanks to them I am where I am now - able to read books, listen to the news and communicate with foreigners. And that is a most precious thing for which I will always be glad and also a thing I want my future students to discover for themselves.

A Teacher Assistant in the UK

Iva Plháková

My name is Iva Plháková and I am a Comenius assistant from the Czech Republic. The second part of this short self-introduction changed my life, broadened my horizons and helped me to enrich my teaching skills.

I consider myself lucky that I was chosen to go to the United Kingdom to work as a teacher assistant. Some of you may wonder how I managed to do that? The answer is simple. I enrolled for the assistantship via NAEP, the Czech National Agency for European Educational Programs, and got a grant from the European Union to spend a few months in Newcastle upon Tyne.

I would recommend this stay to everyone as it has been the best experience of my life so far. As an assistant, I help children to learn but I also teach so I am getting more experience and thus becoming more confident in my profession. In addition to this, I am defining and reshaping my own teaching approach, beliefs and style under the influence of the British school system. At school, I am improving my language skills and enriching my vocabulary. Moreover, I support children with SEN so I can apply all the theoretical knowledge from my studies in practice.

What I like the most, is the fact that my school is very multicultural, which enables me to experience first hand different values, priorities, customs and traditions of various cultures and nationalities. For instance, I have had a chance to celebrate Eid, get mehndi, wear a sari, learn Bollywood dances and eat traditional Indian, Asian and Muslim food. Of course, it is also British culture I live every day. I have been to a football match and several times to the theatre, which I enjoyed very much because I was

able to use what I have learned at my university about English literature to make comparisons between plays and books. I also had a great time celebrating Halloween, Bonfire Night and Remembrance Day.

All in all, I really cannot come up with any negatives about the assistantship. I love every single day of it because I am constantly learning and experiencing something new.

For more information about the Comenius assistantship, please visit <http://www.naep.cz/>. The deadline for your application is 31st January 2013.

Pictures:



At the musical Oliver



Mehndi on my hand



Eid celebration refreshments



Bonfire Night



Meeting the Lord Mayor



With my friends

Wind in Your Hair - a Course about Freedom and Responsibility

Bára Vichtová

It is pleasant, attractive and it can give you a kick as well. Do I want it? Am I afraid of it? Is my freedom really only mine? What responsibility do I have for it? Do I really want to attend a course about freedom and responsibility?

If you have started thinking about your own freedom, at least a little bit, while reading these few lines, this could be a course for you. Or if you have attended one of the experiential courses in Fryšták organized by the Department of English Language and Literature and would like to experience another, or even if you are just interested in experiential education in general, it could be worth your while reading the rest of this article.

We are searching for ways to attain freedom of our own and achieve a balance in our surroundings. We offer you challenge, inspiration, support if you attend *Wind in Your Hair*.



kurz o svobodě a odpovědnosti



Within the course, we will experience the joy of freedom. Furthermore, we will find out:

- when we really live and feel free
- when our freedom slips through our fingers without our noticing and how to prevent it from happening
- that freedom has a hundred guises, some of which can allow us to fly, although some can hurt us or others
- that we are all responsible for looking after our own freedom
- where the boundaries of responsibility for our free actions lie

The course takes place in South Bohemia, the land of meadows, forests and ponds, from 12th to 23rd August 2013. It is aimed at people born between 1972 and 1993. The course fee is 6000 CZK. Further information can be found at www.psl.cz/vitrvevlasech or <http://www.facebook.com/VitrVeVlasech2012?fref=ts>.



The course is organized by members of the Vacation School in Lipnice, which is a respectable member of the global organization Outward Bound International. At www.psl.cz - the website of the organisation - you can discover, among other things, that “the main purpose of the Vacation School in Lipnice is to motivate people with various challenges and mobilize their courage and creativity, which is required for an active acquiring of experiences. Our program supports such experience that leads to positive change, increase in self-confidence and a responsible approach towards one’s own life, other peoples’ lives and towards the world in general”.

Motto of the VSL:

The world is a reflection of ourselves and every one of us displays its troubles and conflicts. Therefore, the key to their solution has to be sought within us.

DysTEFL (or Dyslexia for Teachers of English as a Foreign Language)

Šárka Dohnalová



Dyslexia for
Teachers of English
as a Foreign Language

DysTEFL - 518466-LLP-1-2011-PL-COMENIUS-CMP



One of the fears of a new language teacher entering a school is working with dyslexic learners. How can a person with a talent for languages work with people without this talent, even in their mother tongue, in a foreign language with rules as complicated and as difficult to read in as English.

What is more stressful for a new, enthusiastic graduate of the Department of English of the Faculty of Education than to be confronted by a learner who does not like the subject, cannot learn new vocabulary, mishears frequently and does not have a clue about easy grammar rules, to say nothing of reading and writing in the language.

How come these students seem more talented during oral exercises, when fluency is under the spotlight and when grammar rules do not count? How come these students seem hopeless when you give them a simple text to read or, even more dreadful, something easy to write?

How come these fluent speakers who do not mind asking questions and conversation cannot read words, while writing makes them tremble with fear?

If you are looking for answers, there is a group of specialists working together on a project led by experts in the field J. Niakowska (from Poland), J. Kormos (a Hungarian living in England) and A. M. Smith (from England). These three have invited other specialists in the field from

other European countries, including members of the Department of English at Masaryk University, to prepare a course for pre-sett (i.e. teacher trainees) and in-sett (i.e. practising) teachers to help them with their knowledge and recognition of dyslexia as well as understanding the problems linked with this so-called “learning difference”, such as phonological problems, and with the teaching the language skills to dyslexic learners.

The project started with a **needs analysis** in which almost 400 teachers were asked what they knew about dyslexia, its origins, symptoms and thus problems in language and foreign-language learning. The teachers in the survey were also asked if they wanted to know more about the problem and, if their answer was “yes”, what would be their preferred way of learning about the matter. As there were different answers the team decided to have three platforms: an **ONLINE COURSE**, a **MOODLE COURSE**, and a **FACE-TO-FACE COURSE**, i.e. three versions of the same input.

If you are interested in the self-study, online version of the course, you will find it at www.dystefl.eu together with more information about the project and the individual institutions that comprise the international project team.

The course, which was first written by the international team and then piloted (we were lucky that one of the experts, A. M. Smith, came to help pilot the course at the Faculty of Education of Masaryk University), is now being prepared with feedback from the first group for launch with the following topics:

- Unit 1. The nature of dyslexia
- Unit 2. Specific learning difficulties associated with dyslexia
- Unit 3. Identification of dyslexia
- Unit 4. The effect of dyslexia on foreign language learning

Unit 5. Accommodations of dyslexic learners in the foreign language classroom and overview of teaching techniques

Unit 6. Phonological and orthographic awareness in English as a foreign language

Unit 7. Techniques for teaching vocabulary and grammar

Unit 8. Techniques for teaching listening and speaking

Unit 9. Techniques for teaching reading and writing

Unit 10. The assessment of dyslexic language learners

So if you feel that you need more information, input or practice in the field and would like to study from home, you should visit www.dystefl.eu.

And if you feel that you yourself need more hands-on experience, the course at our department is called **AJB_DYST Dyslexia for Teachers of English as a Foreign Language**.



literature pages

How to enjoy more and more pages of poetry

Irena Příbylová

Poetry has been used as a means of teaching and entertaining children for many centuries. (Carpenter and Prichard, 1991: 416). However, Czech and Slovak teachers of the English language do not use poetry in their classes very much. Second-language pupils/students may be mature in their lives, but their knowledge of English may be comparable to that of pre-school children. This schizophrenia between real age and language knowledge perhaps prevents many teachers from using poetry in their classes. Also, unlike books of fiction, poetry cannot be simplified according to language levels and retold according to the number of words learned.

Most non-native teachers of English are familiar with classical poetry (anything from Shakespeare to Poe), and they believe this is what they should read with their students. One teacher attempts to analyze poems with students, focusing on metre and alliteration; another teacher uses the same material for practicing grammar, vocabulary, and conversation. It is like reading Comenius and Mácha with foreign students of the Czech language: very demanding, and missing the point.

Many non-native teachers prefer to work with poetry written by pupils/students themselves. This is very good; it supports creativity and imagination, and it gives the learning of the language a practical point. But still, it is difficult to start writing poetry out of nothing. You need some inspiration and role models first. You need a base to build upon. This can be achieved by reading and enjoying poetry for children and young readers in the English

language. Among many advantages, the most striking one is the fact that students are exposed to authentic language. Nothing is simplified, nothing is graded. Then the only problem - for a teacher - is to find the right material. Original poetry in English for children and young readers is entertaining; quite often it also fulfils our requirements for vocabulary, grammar, and form, plus it brings fun, surprise, melody, and rhythm to the reader. A contemporary issue for discussion comes on the top of it. There is no need for a "fear of poetry" (Flynn, 2009:76). In the following lines, you will find some tips for the resources found in the PedF MU English Library.

The Puffin Book of Utterly Brilliant Poetry (edited by Brian Patten, 1998) introduces ten contemporary writers of poetry, women and men of different ethnic backgrounds (including the editor). Each passage is beautifully illustrated (sometimes by the author) and provides a short interview with the poet. Spike Milligan, for instance, answers a question concerning nonsense poetry [a 5-line poem introduced as limerick by Edward Lear in the early 19th century]: "Nonsense is taking an absurdity to the point where the reader laughs, but he doesn't know why." (p. 9). An opening stanza for Milligan's poem "Silly Old Baboon" may be considered too direct, but we can laugh as well: There was a baboon/ Who, one afternoon, /Said, "I think I will fly to the sun."/ So, with two great palms/Strapped to his arms/ He started his take-off run. (p. 10).

Many contemporary poems have no regular form; they wind and twist across the whole page, accompanied by pictures. They provide a play with sounds as well as a visual delight. Spike Milligan's poem of this type is called "A B": A Bee!/ A Bee!!/ Is after me!!!/ And that is why/ I flee!!!/ I flee!!!/ This bee/

This bee/ Appears to be/ Very very/
ANG/ -ER/-REE (p. 12).

A good poem for young readers employs not only a specific perspective, but it comes with a surprising conclusion. In Milligan's "Kids" (who are naughty, and parents keep scolding them), the ending is as follows: If then we kids/ Cause such a fuss,/ Why do you go on/ Having us? (p. 20).

Benjamin Zephaniah is another poet interviewed and presented in the volume. He is known for combining his poetry with music and movement, for the use of a Jamaican variety of English, for being a political activist, a vegan and vegetarian, and for overcoming his childhood disabilities (being dyslexic, he left school at 13 unable to read and write). His poem "Talking Turkeys!!" opens this way: Be nice to yu turkeys dis christmas/ Cos turkeys jus wanna hav fun (p. 80). Zephaniah's video on YouTube, where he performs his "Turkeys", strikes an observer first as funny and entertaining. When the laughter dies, you get the message, and then you search for the text, in order to read the poem properly.

On a lighter side, there is an example of the poet's play with perspective and nursery rhymes called "Fair Play": Mirror mirror on the wall/ Could you please return our ball/ Our football went through your crack/ You have two now/ Give one back. (p. 83). In a more serious tone, the poet is able to work with just two sentences to comment on contemporary problems, such as in "Walking Black Home": That day waz/ A bad day,/ I walked for/ Many miles,/ Unlike me,/ I did not/ Return any/ Smiles. Tired, Weak/ And/ Hungry,/ But I/ Would not/ Turn/ Back,/ Sometimes it's hard/ To get a taxi/ When you're Black. (p. 90).

Zephaniah's poetry can touch young readers in many aspects. There are two

volumes of poetry by Zephaniah in the (PedF MU) English Library: *Funky Chickens* (1996) and *Wicked World* (2000). Reading them is easy, but translating them into Czech would present a great challenge. Zephaniah loves to play with words and meanings. Working with an English original we can see what is missing in the Czech book market for young adolescents: contemporary poetry.

Another source of inspiration is presented by two contemporary novels in verse. Yes, novels in verse! Both novels were published in Canada and are winners of the Governor General's Literary Award for children's literature in English. They are *The Crazy Man* (2005) by Pamela Porter and *Fishtailing* (2010) by Wendy Phillips. Both novels use free verse (that is: no rhyme!). The voice of the narrator always stays at a page; the next page brings another narrator or another scene. *The Crazy Man* works with one narrator, a girl; *Fishtailing* introduces the voices of four adolescents and two adults. Both stories have a complex plot. You will be surprised to find yourself reading more and more pages, and soon you will forget about your "fear of poetry" (Flynn, 2009:76).

Author Pamela Porter explained the benefits of the use of verse in a 2008 online interview for the Manitoba Library Association: "In writing workshop, we were told that, if you can say in three words what one might otherwise say in seven words, use three words. Be very careful of your line endings. The eye naturally falls for a slightly longer time at the end of a line than in the middle. Don't bury important words or images in the middle of the line. Put them on the end. I learned about slant lines and hidden rhymes and ways to build cohesion in a poem. 'Why can't you use all that to tell a story?' I asked myself. 'And wouldn't it be helpful particularly

for reluctant readers, like that person I was for a period of time? Make judicious use of white space, use condensed language and try to portray the story more in terms of images than elaborate description or dialogue.’”

Poet and performer Nikki Giovanni is known for performing her poetry to music, quite often jazz or gospel. She is editor of a volume called *Hip Hop Speaks to Children* (2008). It is a collection of African American poetry “with a beat”, as she says in the introduction. The reader gets a beautiful book with poems, song lyrics and illustrations, accompanied by a CD where you can listen to selected examples - poems written and read by Giovanni herself, by Eloise Greenfield, or by Maya Angelou. You can hear examples of hip hop music with lyrics by A Tribe Called Quest or Queen Latifah. Through archive recordings, you can listen to voices from the past, such as Langston Hughes and Martin Luther King. Hip hop is “one part story, one part rhythm”, Giovanni says in the introduction. After reading the book and listening to the audio, you will be eager to read poetry to the beat of music yourself.

It is easy to enjoy poetry and its contemporary forms. Its playfulness and rhythm make it user-friendly even for non-native speakers. It helps you get over the divide created by your age and your language level. In contemporary poetry, it seems, we can all be equal.

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translation pages

Introduction

Ailsa Randall

This year Irena Příbylová and I have been involved in an inter-faculty initiative, teaching a course called The Specifics of Literary Translation from English (Specifika literárního překladu z angličtiny), which was the brainchild of doc. PhDr. Zbyněk Fišer, Ph.D., from the Czech Department of the Faculty of Arts. We were teaching it as a group of 3 teachers, with Mgr. Zuzana Fonioková, PhD., from the Teresias Centre.

The main part of the continuous assessment for the course was a long translation from English to Czech. We chose a short story by Alasdair Gray called "The Trendelenburg Position", taken from his collection of short stories with the title *Ten Tales Tall and True* (1994). (You can find the book in the library on the 5th floor.) One of the interesting points about the story from a language point of view is the fact that it is set in Scotland and thus uses a number of Scottish words and phrases, the meaning of which may not immediately be clear to the average reader of English. We were interested to see how the students would deal with this when it came to translating the story.

As a reward, we promised the students that the best translation would be published in *The Messenger*. As we read through the contributions, we decided unanimously that the winner was Jana Vrzalíková. Here you may have the pleasure of reading her excellent translation and perhaps considering how you would have translated it yourself.

Enjoy!

Trendelenburgova poloha

Jana Vrzalíková

Navrhovaný název sbírky: Patero příběhů přikrášlených i pravdivých

Pojďte dál, pojd'te dál, paní Chigwellová. Posad'te se. Můj kolega se omlouvá, že se vám nemůže věnovat, jak jste byli domluveni, ale to nebude problém. Jeho ženu dnes ráno cosi nečekaně skolilo, a i když (zaplat' pánbůh) nemá zrovna smrt na jazyku, těžko by se mu soustředilo na vaše (zaplat' pánbůh) drobnější obtíže. Jeho myšlenky by se mohly toulat, ruce se třást, se mnou to bude jistější. Podle jeho rentgenových snímků tu máme dvě plomby, jedna z nich je pidi midi prácička a já jsem si natolik jistý svými dovednostmi, že vám slibuji, že vás nebude nic bolet, i když budu pracovat bez anestetik. Ale možná jste nervózní a stejně je chcete? Ne? Báječné. Zapínám motor - který sníží a nakloní křeslo - velmi plynule a hladce, takže vaše srdce a polokruhovitě kanálky neutrpí žádný šok ani podráždění. Trendelenburgova poloha - tak se říká poloze, v jaké se nacházíte, paní Chigwellová. Křeslo vás sveze tam a zase zpátky tak, že v žádném případě nemůžete omdlít. Kdopak je asi Trendelenburg.

Nebo byl. Vypláchněte si. Ukažte, at' se - juknu - dovnitř. Podívejme! A pokud byste chtěla kýchat, kloktat, škytat nebo se vysmrkat, jen zvedněte prst levé ruky a já téměř okamžitě přestanu s tím, co zrovna dělám, tak tedy začneme. Chigwellová. Chigwellová. Máte anglické jméno. Nu ano, dnes je lidí, jako jste vy, ve Skotsku hodně, ale já si v žádném případě nestěžuji. Vadí vám, že pořád mluvím? Ne? Dobře. Pravděpodobně si uvědomujete, že to dělám proto, aby se vaše představitost netoulala, jak by k tomu měla sklony, kdybych pracoval

v naprosté tichosti. Na situaci, přiznejme si to, při níž musíte zcela nehybně ležet, zatímco vám cizinec v bílém plášti - at' už je jak chce kvalifikovaný - provádí věci, které nevidíte, v otvoru ve vaší hlavě - mezi čelistí a mozkem; uvnitř této pidi midi dutinky, již vrtám - v kosti vaší lebky, je cosi neodmyslitelně zlověstného. Ani přítomnost slečny Mackenziové, mojí asistentky, by vašemu podvědomí nemusela zabránit ve vymýšlení podivných fantazií, kdybychom my zubaři, podobně jako holiči, profesionálně netíhli ke klábosení. To mi připomíná kreslený vtíp, který jsem zahlédl ve vázaném vydání starých čísel časopisu Punch: holič říká znučenému aristokraticky vyhlížejícímu muži zabořenému do křesla, „Jak byste si přál ostříhat, pane?“ a on odvětí, „V poklidu rušeném pouze šmikáním nůžek.“ Někdy se přistihnu, jak povídám naprosto ztřeštěné věci, zcela absurdní věci, jen abych se vyhnul tomu hrobovému tichu, ale pokud by vám bylo milejší, jen zvedněte dva prsty pravé ruky a já zmlknu. Vám ale moje tlachání vyhovuje? Dobře, znovu si vypláchněte.

Ne, ani můj nejhorší nepřítel by mě nemohl obvinít z toho, že bych byl skotským nacionalistou. Neschvaluji koncept Skotska ani Irska, ani jednoho z nich, ani Anglie, Argentiny, Pákistánu, Bosny a tak dále. Podle mě jsou národy, stejně jako náboženství a politické instituce, díky moderní technologii přežitkem minulosti. Jak kdysi moudře řekla Margaret Thatcherová, „Žádná společnost neexistuje,“ a co je národ, když ne velký, tučný příklad naší neexistující společnosti? Margaret to vymyslela správně - ODNÁRODNIT! ZPRIVATIZOVAT! Až budou všechna národní zařízení zprivatizována, Britské ostrovy už nebudou politickou entitou a já prohlašuji, chvála bohu, chybět nám nebudou. SSSR zmizel. Doufám, že USA a VB budou následovat jeho příkladu.

Minulý týden (otevřete trochu víc prosím) mi jeden člověk řekl, „Když se odmítáte nazývat Skotem - nebo Britelem - nebo konzervativcem - nebo socialistou - nebo křesťanem, za KOHO byste se označil? V co věříte?“

„Jsem fanoušek oddílu Partick Thistle,“ pověděl jsem mu, „a věřím ve virtuální realitu.“

Znáte Partick Thistle? Je to nesektářský glasgowský fotbalový klub. Rangers FC z valné většiny vedou a podporují protestantští fanatici, Celtic FC katoličtí, ale hymna fanoušků týmu Partick Thistle zní takto:

*Do držky všem katolíkům,
Protestantům taky,
Pěsti židům i muslimům,
Nejlepší je Partick...*

Má milá slečna Mackenziová se tváří velmi nesouhlasně. Mám tušení, že se slečně Mackenziové nezamlouvá můj zpěv. Nebo je možná zbožná. Jste zbožná, slečno Mackenziová? Neodpovídá. Je zbožná.

Vynikající. Vypláchněte si. Na řadě je druhá plomba a já trvám na tom, že vám píchnu včeličku, ale ani to neucítíte. Cítila jste to? Samozřejmě že ne.

Moje žena se mnou nesouhlasí. Je skotská nacionalistka a socialistka. Dokážete si představit absurdnější kombinaci? Ta ženská je starostlivka. Dělá si starosti s přelidněním, s průmyslovým znečištěním, s jaderným odpadem, s užíváním drog, se zločinností, s hladinou moří, s ozonovou dírou.

„Pouze demokratická vláda vnímavá k vůli většiny může tyto problémy vyřešit,“ tvrdí ona.

„Jak se jí to podaří?“ já na to.

„Zkonfiskuje velké podniky, které nás otravují a ochuzují a okrádají o zaměstnání, a zisky použije na veřejné práce, vzdělání a zdravotní péči,“ odpoví.

„Toho se nedožiješ,“ povídám jí,

„protože bohatí lidé tomu nepřejí a chudí si to nedokážou představit. Pouze pár prostředníků, jako jsi ty, věří v takový nesmysl.“ (Pravděpodobně jste uhodla, že je učitelka.)

„Kolem roku 2000 se tyto problémy vyřeší správnou pokrývkou hlavy. I takový moderní klobouk se širokou střešou, jaký nosí Australané, Texasané a Mexičané, tě ochrání před rakovinou kůže. Kloboučníci by je měli propagovat v televizi. K ČERTU S OZONOVOU VRSTVOU - NOSTE KLOUBOUKY!“

Klobouky, paní Chigwellová, klobouky. Začátkem 20. století je nosili všichni: cylindry pro vyšší vrstvy a vysokoškolsky vzdělané, buřinky pro průměrníky, bekovky pro dělníky. Člověk s odkrytou hlavou vzbuzoval skoro stejné pohoršení jako nudista, protože nebylo okamžitě možné určit jeho místo na společenském žebříčku. Mám za to, že klobouky vyšly z módy, neboť jsme prošli fází volnosti, rovnosti a bratrství - nebo jsme si to alespoň namlouvali. Ale už ji opět opouštíme a ke konci století bude mít každý pokrývkou hlavy. Bude na tom záviset jeho přičetnost. Nenudím vás? Neměl bych změnit téma? Nechtěla byste hovořit o něčem jiném? Ne? Tak či tak si vypláchněte.

Kloboukem budoucnosti se - podle mého názoru - stane bezpečnostní helma se širokým okrajem, s připojenými klapkami na uši a mluvítkem, které by šlo sklopit, aby se dalo využít jako mobilní telefon. Součástí bude také hledí, jako měla stará brnění nebo jaká dnes používají svářeči, a když si ho stáhnete přes obličej, vnitřek funguje jako televizní obrazovka. Energie potřebná k provozu těchto zařízení by se mohla pumpovat přímo z činnosti uživatelova srdce - nevyžadovalo by to více námahy než sejítí patra schodů. Klobouky od sebe odliší počet programů, které si člověk může dovolit. Bohatí jich budou moci mít neomezeně, ale i bezdomovci

a nezaměstnaní z toho budou mít užitek. Nejsem jedním z těch bezcitných lidí, kteří opovrhují nezaměstnanými, protože se celý den dívají na televizi. Bez nějaké formy zábavy by se ještě více uchylovali k drogám, zločinu a sebevraždám, než jak tomu bylo doposud, avšak videohelmy jim zajistí bohatší zábavu, než kolik nám jí v současnosti nabízí zastaralé krabicovité televize, jež už podle mě vypadají prehistoricky - pozůstatky doby dřevěné a skleněné - PVR - Před Virtuální Realitou. Slyšela jste o virtuální realitě? Ano? Ne? Je to helma podobná tomu, co jsem právě popsal. K ní patří oblek vybavený elektronickými tlakovými ploškami, takže sledovaný televizní svět můžete nejenom vidět a slyšet, ale také cítit. Slečna Mackenziová se na mě škaredí, protože ví, co se chystám říct, a má dojem, že by vás to mohlo pohoršit, poněvadž to souvisí se sexem. Ale slibuji, že mi přes rty nepřejde jediné neslušné slovo. Helmy vám poskytnou nejen vjemy ze života a pohybu v krásném vzrušujícím prostředí. Také, pokud byste si to přála, vám dopřejí vizuální a pocitový zážitek milostného dostaveníčka s partnerem dle vaší volby. Pro vás by to třeba mohl být Clint Eastwood, paní Chigwellová. Pro mne Anna Magnani, ačkoli to dokazuje, jak jsem starý. Na každého odborníka, který si pamatuje Annu Magnani v Hořké rýži, čeká za dveřmi důchod. Nebo senilita. Obávám se, že to stejné platí pro Annu. Ne, že bych ji někdy viděl v Hořké rýži - to byl film s hvězdičkou. Svou první lásku jsem poznával jen díky jejím plakátům a reklamním fotografiím. Říkám si, jak asi Anna Magnani vypadá dnes?

Na chvilku mě omluvte, než si opláchnu ruce. Blížíme se k závěru. Stále všechno v pořádku? Dobře. Zase tedy začneme a pamatujte si, plácám pouze nesmysly, nic než nesmysly.

Klobouk zítřka - audio-vizuální helma, ať už s oblekem nebo bez něj -

vás nejen vpustí do vzrušujícího světa vaší volby; zároveň odstřihne tu špinavou, nepříjemnou budoucnost, se kterou si moje žena neustále dělá starosti. Poskytne účinky marihuany nebo tvrdých drog bez újmy na zdraví. Samozřejmě že inteligentní lidé jako jste vy nebo já, paní Chigwellová, ji využijí na víc než jen únikovou zábavu. My si díky ní budeme povídat s přáteli a vzdělávat se. Čtyřletým dětem se helma přizpůsobí, aby se mohly ocitnout v prostorné, příjemné třídě, kde je krásní, moudří a hraví dospělí naučí všemu, co jejich rodiče chtějí, aby věděly. Školy i učitelé se stanou minulostí, neboť několik stovek herců s dobře napsaným scénářem bude moci vzdělávat celou planetu. A pomyslete na to, kolik se ušetří za dopravu! Když hodina skončí, mohou si helmu sundat a tadá - jsou opět doma. Tedy pokud je rodiče nepřepnou na program s paní na hlídání.

„No dobře!“ přeruší mě žena, která mne až doposud poslouchala, „ale co bezdomovci? Tvoje helmy je neochrání před mizerným počasím ani otráveným vzduchem.“

„Mohly by, pokud se zkombinují s vhodným oblekem,“ povím jí.

„V tropických zemích, jako je například Indie, bezdomovci žijí a spí bez větších obtíží na ulicích. No a ví se, že naše armáda má sklady nacpané obleky a dýchacími přístroji navrženými tak, aby umožnily přežití na planetě Zemi poté, co všichni přijdou kvůli poslední velké jaderné válce o domovy. Jenže poslední velká jaderná válka se odkládá na neurčito. Proč tedy k těmto oblekům nepřidat hledí virtuální reality a tlakové plošky a nerozdat je chudým? Naladíme je na program samoanské pláže s partnerem jejich volby pod hvězdnatou oblohou a oni spokojeně stráví deštivý den v sutinách vypáleného sídliště a vypláchněte si prosím. Dalších pár

hodin nekousejte nic tvrdého. Křeslo vás zrovna navrací do méně strmé polohy.

Na shledanou, paní Chigwellová. Sestra vám předá účet a možná byste si měla domluvit další návštěvu - asi za šest měsíců. Ať už bude budoucnost lidstva jakákoli, pravděpodobně se neobejde bez zubařů.

Boční poznámky u čísel stran:

103 otevírání intimních dutin

105 protispolečenská hymna úžasného týmu

107 klobouk budoucnosti

109 virtuální realita, protilek na všechno

Komentář k překladu

Celkem jsem vytvořila tři úplné verze překladu.

První variantě předcházelo čtení celé sbírky se stručnými poznámkami k jednotlivým povídkám.

K Trendelenburgově poloze jsem si při prvním náhledu zaznamenala úvodní obraz zubaté ryby (u ostatních povídek ilustrace někdy výrazně doplňovaly děj), fakt, že se jedná o povídání zubaře při práci a podstatná část řeči se zabývá budoucností spjatou s virtuální realitou.

Po dočtení sbírky jsem text povídky prošla znovu, důkladněji a během čtení jsem si dohledávala neznámá slova a koncepty pomocí různých internetových anglicko-českých nebo anglických výkladových slovníků, případně pomocí specializovaných stránek jako u informací o klubu Partick Thistle. Text jsem v dané chvíli zhodnotila jako mnohomluvný monolog, který se zabývá několika nesouvisejícími tématy. Toto pojetí se již do konce mé práce v základě příliš neměnilo, pouze se prohloubilo poznání, jak moc mluvčí své okolí řečově utiskuje (v konečném efektu absolutně, situace se stává absurdní, groteskní, tedy v určitém smyslu komickou) a že o předkládaných námětech hovoří jen zdánlivě zasvěceně,

ale reálně má jeho řeč spíše přidech nepřilíh vzdělané samolibosti. Po tomto ustanovení vyznění povídky jsem vytvořila první verzi překladu. Ve větách jsem ponechávala více možností řešení oddělených lomítka, sporné a nevyhovující pasáže jsem pro osobní potřebu zvýrazňovala žlutě a červeně a některé kratší celky, jako například fotbalový popěvek, jsem ponechala v originále.

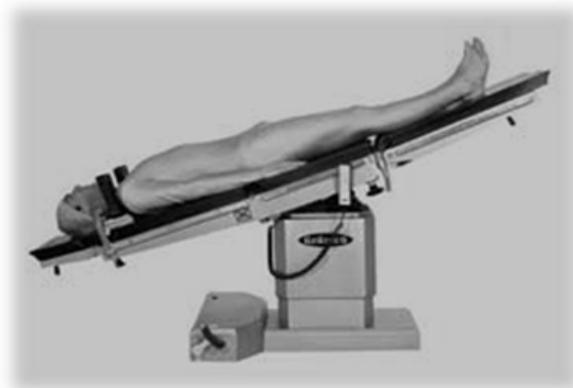
Před vytvořením druhé verze jsem absolvovala konzultaci s magistrou Ailsou Randall, kde jsme probíraly, jak by na rodilého mluvčího působila skotská slova a některé fráze či sousloví, u nichž nebyl zcela zřejmý český ekvivalent, například „good riddance“, „middling people“ nebo „professional man“. Konzultace mi pomohla více vnímat humorný aspekt textu a časté jazykové hříčky i nezvykle užití výrazy.

Při práci na další variantě překladu jsem se vracela k poznačeným pasážím, opětovně zvažovala jejich smysl a vyznění a vymýšlela elegantnější, přirozenější řešení. V této fázi jsem také sepsala několik pracovních verzí popěvku, který jsem se rozhodla převést funkčně nikoli doslovně. Cílem tedy bylo najít slova, která by v podobném rozsahu vyjadřovala silnou negativní emoci vůči katolíkům, protestantům, židům a muslimům a naopak silný, kladný vztah ke klubu Partick Thistle. Proto své řešení, byť hraničí s aspektem fyzického násilí, který se v originále explicitně nevyskytuje, pokládám za přijatelné.

Patrně ústředním tématem mé konzultace s doktorkou Zuzanou Foniokovou bylo, jak řešit chybu mluvčího v souvislosti s herečkou Annou Magnani a filmem Hořká rýže, v němž v aktuálním světě hraje nikoli Anna Magnani, ale Silvana Magnano. Paní doktorce vděčím za přesvědčení, že tento omyl není potřeba v českém překladu nijak zdůrazňovat, neboť ve

fikčním světě povídky by tato skutečnost mohla být pravdivá a dále ani v originále není čtenář na záměnu explicitně upozorněn a může ji přehlédnout, pokud si film nedohledá.

Zpracovala jsem připomínky a k finálním úpravám jsem se vrátila až za dva týdny - časový odstup mi umožnil opravit některé stylisticky nevhodné konstrukce, kterých jsem si předtím kvůli příliš úzkému sepětí s textem nepovšimla. Konečnou verzi jsem rovněž předložila několika rodinným příslušníkům, požádala je o komentáře a některé návrhy na drobnější úpravy jsem zaintegrovala (například vynechání výrazu „sdružení“ v souvislosti s Partick Thistle). Celý text jsem pak naposledy pročetla a tím jsem proces překládání ukončila.



“The Errant Killer” by Jan Váchal Andrew Oakland

The superintendent had plenty of time to study the houses in the immediate vicinity: the barouche was going very, very slowly. Although the sun was shining, as yet it was giving off no warmth. Spring had reached London only a few days earlier, and although one could feel it in the air, a warming blanket over the legs was a wise precaution.

The horse stopped in front of a house that differed from those around it by nothing but the colour of its paintwork. This was a predominantly middle-class district populated by small businessmen, civil servants, the better-off staff of banks and multinational companies, and many small-scale rentiers.

But the superintendent's destination was an exception to this. Although the house's occupants were of the middle class in terms of their property, they had taken a fall from the upper. This terraced house in a quiet, rather dull street was the residence of a real lord, Sir William Port Grace-Harding. And the reason for the superintendent's calling at his 'seat' was not social. It was murder.

The superintendent stepped from the barouche, passed through a tiny front garden and mounted five steps to reach the door. From a distance the house had looked slightly shabby, yet it had retained a certain antique charm. At close range it was poverty with a fresh coat of paint. His Lordship's comings and goings through this door must have depressed, perhaps even humiliated him.

The superintendent lifted the knocker and - with great caution, as if fearing to inflict damage - gave three raps on the door, which opened immediately.

“Please come in, sir,” chirruped the maid, who looked as though she didn't

belong there. She was wearing a spotless, freshly starched apron and a pleasant smile. “The constable is waiting for you at the end of the hall.”

“Thank you,” said the superintendent, unconsciously returning her smile. Then he made his way down the hall and through the house.

A tall, thin officer introduced himself. “Constable Sandler, sir.”

“Superintendent Morrell. Good morning, constable.”

The constable cleared his throat while gesturing at the floor behind him.

“Is this your first murder?”

“Yes, superintendent, I'm afraid it is. Good morning to you, too, sir, although we can't say the same for him.”

Routinely the superintendent bent over the corpse. The victim, who was lying on his front, was a grey-haired man in late middle age. He was wearing the kind of tailcoat worn only by servants and butlers. There was a large knife protruding from under his left shoulder.

“It seems that the perpetrator surprised him from behind. I see no signs of a struggle.”

The constable nodded.

“Do we know who he is?”

“Yes, sir. His name is James During. He was His Lordship's butler.”

“And where is His Lordship?”

“In the drawing room on the first floor. They're all there.”

“Whom do you mean by 'all'?”

“His Lordship, His Lordship's wife Lady Annabel, Lady Annabel's baroness sister Victoria Anna, and His Lordship's son, also called William Arthur Grace-Harding. And their maid.”

“The one who opened the door to me?”

“No, superintendent. We borrowed her from the neighbours.”

“I see. I could tell straight away that she didn't belong here.”

"We've gathered all the suspects, meaning those who were in the house overnight, in the drawing room, under the supervision of one of our officers."

"Well done."

"Thank you, sir."

"Has the coroner been yet?"

"Yes. The cause of death is quite obvious, so we're more concerned with the time the crime was committed. According to the coroner the butler was killed yesterday between eleven and twelve p.m."

"So he might have happened upon a thief."

"Perhaps," the constable conceded. "But if so, it was nobody local."

"It's general knowledge throughout the neighbourhood that His Lordship is penniless, I suppose."

"Indeed, sir. It's also well known in the criminal underworld."

"So non-local thieves are out of the reckoning, too, eh?"

"In these parts everyone knows everyone else. A stranger would be spotted immediately. In any case, he wouldn't come to a house like this in search of a rich nobleman. But it can't be ruled out entirely, of course."

The superintendent began slowly to look around. "What do you know about the dead man?"

"Not much, superintendent. Although he was in His Lordship's service for many years, he kept himself to himself. In this he was like his master - he rather looked down on other servants in the neighbourhood who served only 'ordinary people'."

"His Lordship behaves in such a way to his neighbours?"

"He ignores them. He is perfectly proper, but he has nothing to do with them. He leaves the house as seldom as possible. As far as I know, he goes to a club that is not in this district and

sometimes all of them drive out of London."

"Might the butler have had enemies?"

The constable shrugged. "As I said, no one much cared for him, but I'd be surprised if anyone wanted to murder him."

"What does His Lordship live off? How does he pay a butler and a maid? And it must cost something to maintain this house."

"His Lordship has a small estate somewhere north of London. From what I hear, it's not much more than a small farm. There's a tenant there, but how much money it brings in, I've no idea. Not much, I suppose. A lady who lives across the street says that when they come back they always bring eggs, vegetables, sometimes even potatoes. So at least a part of the payment they receive is likely to be in kind."

"I'm starting to feel almost sorry for His Lordship."

"It's an old family, mentioned in the oldest chronicles. There were times when they were very close to the royal family. His Lordship's ancestors held many important offices."

"Sad indeed. But it brings us no closer to our murderer."

"Indeed not, sir. I should add that as far I know, His Lordship retains one permanent source of income."

"Really?"

"Many years ago he lent his name to a certain whisky."

"Of course! I was sure I knew the name from somewhere! Lord Harding whisky, eh?"

"You know it, sir?"

"I've heard of it, constable."

"I once had occasion to drink it, sir. It was disgusting."

"That bad, eh?"

The constable frowned. "It is. At least it was. Six months ago the distillery

got a new owner. Who knows, maybe it's better now."

"So His Lordship gave his name to a second-rate spirit for the money, did he?"

"Undoubtedly, sir. It's not even sold in this country, it's for export to the colonies, where apparently it sells quite well. Thanks to His Lordship's name. The natives love the feeling that they're drinking something enjoyed by the aristocracy in Merrie Olde England."

"While an Englishman would be so repelled by it he'd pour it down the toilet."

"Indeed, sir."

"Where's the distillery?"

"Not far from here. Down by the river."

"Very well, constable. Pay them a visit and make an appointment for me with the new owner."

"Yes, sir."

"Meanwhile I'll have a look around the house and exchange a few words with His Lordship and his family."

"I should warn you, sir, that as yet I've failed to get a word out of them. They're all as lofty as the leather bindings on the Encyclopaedia Britannica."

The superintendent gave the constable a long, somewhat desperate look, letting him know that this was a case he could have done without. Then he waved a hand in resignation and set off on his tour of inspection.

Superintendent Morrell began his inspection in the company of the maid borrowed from across the street. His sole plan was to absorb the atmosphere of the crime scene. There was not a great deal to see: the house really was rather small. The ground floor comprised - apart from the entrance hall - only technical facilities, storerooms, a kitchen, and two small servant's rooms. The whole of the

first floor was taken up with a large drawing room and a small bathroom and toilet. On the second floor the lords and ladies had their rooms, which were little bigger than cupboards. The superintendent's more or less perfunctory tour took him through the ground floor and then the second. On the first floor he at last prepared to enter the drawing room. The supervising policeman returned his salutation before opening the large, heavily ornamented glass door, then obligingly closing it behind him.

"Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I have been charged by the Chief Constable of Police to investigate this case. My name is Superintendent Rupert Morrell."

To his surprise this announcement provoked no response. So thick was the silence in the drawing room, one could have cut it with a knife. His Lordship stood motionless at the fireplace. The ladies and the young gentleman were seated in deep club armchairs. The maid was standing by the window. All gave the impression of waxwork figures from Madame Tussaud's museum.

"I would like to ask you a few questions."

The only one to react to this was the maid, who winced slightly as if touched and turned her head to the window and the street beyond it. None of the others moved.

"Shortly before midnight yesterday James the butler was murdered. By the back door of the house. At that time all of you were in the house. Your statements on the matter are of great importance to me."

Even now no one moved.

The superintendent thought it necessary to demand their attention by raising his voice. "A murder has been committed in your house!"

“Do you mean to say that we are under suspicion, superintendent?” said Her Ladyship, having roused herself.

Morrell didn't care one jot for their hostile attitude. He decided to get tough.

“That's right, Your Ladyship.”

“Did you hear that?” twittered Her Ladyship. The beginnings of a smile appeared on her face. “The superintendent suspects us.”

Now the others, too, were inclined to smile.

“You, for instance, Your Ladyship. Did you have a motive for the murder?”

“Naturally, superintendent. James was always making a mess of the tea, he kept confusing the titles of our guests, he never put the post in order of importance, date or colour, and his Scottish accent was an assault on the eardrums.”

“And he had no interest in cricket,” said the young man in support of his mother. “Whenever I asked him how our chaps were getting on, he could never say. Would you yourself not have killed such a man?”

“I can confirm all this,” said His Lordship. “He was awfully unsociable. He didn't even bother with the Butlers' Club.”

“Two days ago I asked for some thread,” said Her Ladyship's sister, adding her tuppenceworth. “His tardiness was shameful.”

“Thread?” asked the superintendent, wide-eyed.

“Why, of course. I've made no progress on my embroidery for two whole days.”

“I reminded him about it several times,” said the maid keenly.

“He was unsuitable, you know.”

“He was *what*?”

“Unsuitable for these surroundings.”

The superintendent rubbed his nose gently. “Do you understand that murder

is a capital offence?”

At that they all burst into laughter. Laughter? This was a veritable explosion of merriment.

“Murder is a capital offence!” Obviously disconcerted by their reactions, Morrell was repeating himself.

“You think we don't know what punishment is? We're imprisoned in this house. Within these four walls.”

“James is dead. Stiff as a board! Do you understand? And it's my job to find out who killed him.” By trying to regain control of the situation, the superintendent succeeded only in increasing the overall merriment. “You,” he pointed to the maid, who continued to laugh for a few moments before pulling herself together.

“I think that Jim killed him, she said.”

“Who?”

“Three-fingered Jim. Jim Stuart. Hanged himself by his long johns in this very room. A hundred and fifty years ago. Been haunting the place ever since.”

“Of course! Old Jim!” His Lordship chimed in. The others nodded in agreement.

The superintendent looked around, helpless. And there was no help to be found.

“There's a clue,” beamed Her Ladyship. “The murderer is the one wearing long johns.”

Her Ladyship's sister expanded on this thought. “Unless he's dispensed with the evidence already and is missing his underclothes.”

“You're going to have to search us,” Her Ladyship rejoiced. “Let me be first.”

“Don't scare the superintendent,” spluttered His Lordship. “Or he'll run away and we'll have to look for the culprit ourselves.”

“Did none of you hear anything

suspicious in the night?" said Morrell in an attempt to get on with his work.

"Do you mean CRASH! BANG! or something like a thud?" replied the young gentleman.

"A scream, for instance."

"James would never have screamed. At most he would have countered, 'Now that, sir, is too much!'"

"Someone killed him! Tell me you understand!" shrieked the superintendent, surprising even himself.

"We know that, superintendent."

"The question is who."

"We all of us had a motive," confessed His Lordship. "Thread, cricket, post in a mess. You're going to have to choose."

"You could do eeny-meeny-miny-mo," Her Ladyship added. There followed another salvo of laughter.

"Perhaps we all killed him," improvised the son. "But that's nonsense, of course - he'd have looked like a pincushion. I think my aunt killed him. Because of the thread. One look at her embroidery would be enough to drive me to murder."

His aunt grimaced at this. "The maid killed him, so that she could do the work of two," she said.

The maid was obviously enjoying the situation: for the first and probably last time in her life she was on an equal footing with her masters. "I think it was suicide," she said.

The superintendent could not believe his ears. "You mean to say he stabbed himself in the back, just below the left shoulder?"

"Why not? He practised yoga." This was followed by a massive explosion of laughter.

"I suppose I shall have to take everyone's fingerprints," said the superintendent, his tone resigned.

His Lordship was quick to agree to

this. "Of course, superintendent. But I shall want mine back. I have only one set, you see."

"Who in this room was the last to see him alive?"

"The murderer, I expect." This comment almost caused a riot.

Her Ladyship stood up. "For goodness' sake, superintendent, arrest someone! Give us someone to envy!"

"Come on!" her sister joined in. "You have a body, a murder weapon and a house full of people without an alibi."

"So he does!" said His Lordship. "Hercule Poirot would have had the culprit long before now."

The superintendent was at his wit's end. Although he could have expected many things of this company, the last exchange had thrown him quite off-balance.

"Perhaps the superintendent here killed him."

"To give himself a case to solve."

"But he doesn't know how to catch himself."

"Or prove his own guilt."

The superintendent flapped his arms in a hopeless attempt to restore calm. "Has anyone ever told you that you're a bunch of lunatics?"

This question showed itself to be his most amusing yet. The situation and its actors were now bereft of all seriousness. In chorus the suspects indulged in a belly laugh of the most raucous type. Standing in the midst of an apocalypse, the superintendent did not know how to go on. He was saved by the opening of the door and the appearance of the officer on guard.

"Could you spare a moment, superintendent?"

The superintendent muttered, "I'll be back", which provoked another gale of mirth.

On joining the constable on the ground floor, the superintendent said,

"It's incredible how much fun they're getting out of James's death."

"I could hear it from here, superintendent."

"It seems the chap never smiled in his life, was a dreadful killjoy, a knight of the order the bad mood and a slave to his grumpiness. But his death has some weird meaning in this house that I can't get to the bottom of."

"There's nothing criminal about that, sir."

"So what have you got for me, constable?"

"The murderer. Your intuition was right, sir. When I got to the distillery I found Mr Collins, the new owner, sitting in his office. He was quite beside himself and covered in blood."

"Is he our killer?"

"Yes, sir. He confessed straight away and was obviously relieved to do so."

"The motive?"

"Money. But the death was a mistake."

The constable reached into a large bag and pulled out a framed photograph. "Lady Grace-Harding and James in front of the distillery. Taken at a party of some kind. The former owner had it hanging on the wall of his office. The new owner has never met His Lordship. His contract stipulates that he must pay His Lordship a large share of his profits for as long as His Lordship is alive. He decided to kill him but mistook the man in the picture with Her Ladyship for His Lordship."

"So we have our killer."

"But it wasn't as easy as he'd imagined. One wonders whether he'll ever recover his wits."

"Thank you, constable. Excellent work. You get things packed away here and I'll go up and say my goodbyes. I don't want to run away with my tail between my legs even though I've half a mind to."

"I understand, superintendent. Those upstairs don't treat you as their equal."

When the superintendent returned to the drawing room the party was still in full swing. They were all standing in a circle in the centre of the room, chattering and laughing.

"Are you having a good time?"

"Never better, superintendent. So have you made your choice? Or should we draw straws for it?"

"I just came to say goodbye."

"You mean you're not going to arrest us?"

"I'm sorry to have to spoil your fun. The culprit has been apprehended and my work here is at an end."

The babble and laughter died. They all froze, as if the life had gone out of them.

"It was nice to meet you and I hope that my presence in this house will never again be required."

His Lordship was the first to recover.

"Thank you, superintendent, for the propriety and tact with which you have conducted this investigation," he said in a chilling voice. He gave not the slightest hint of emotion. None of the others moved.

The superintendent turned on his heel and headed for the exit, leaving silence in his wake. A suffocating silence. On reaching the door he turned back and beheld again the frozen scene, his eyes resting in particular on His Lordship, trying in vain to meet his gaze. His Lordship did not even twitch.

"Would you not like to know, sir, who killed James and why?"

"No thank you, superintendent, there's no need for that. I'll read about it tomorrow. In my *Times*."

poetry pages

Ilona Serková

Love And Hatred

Love and hatred, now behold
 Tormenting my wretched soul.
 If I could go back in time,
 I would soon approach divine.
 But his silence, on and through
 Makes me feel myself a fool
 Looking, searching -
 All for what?
 For the joy of life and spit.
 Spit in face when things go wrong
 Joy to see, that all in all
 All will cease and all will end,
 Even sufferings and pain.
 When I lift my head once more,
 And I see the cornerstone,
 Then I know while all is vain,
 He is here and will remain.

You By My Side

My life is purified by fire
 And my desire
 is to be with you
 forever ever,
 let me be with you
 where you are!
 One sight of you,
 so comforting,
 your touch will make my heart melt.
 I cannot sleep
 I think about you all night long.
 Then there is joy, pure joy
 To know that you are here
 And always
 by my side
 so close, so near
 so tangible. I fear
 it will end one day, but
 should it then create a hill I cannot
 climb.
 I will..then there are airplanes, I will
 learn to fly!
 And you and I will join the sky!

Dancing

The dance, the wind, the movement,
 The utter torture deep inside.
 I cry, I smile, I jump, I lament,
 I will do everything just not to cry.
 When it is sunny, birds are singing,
 There is this ice-cube deep inside,
 It calls me home, I want to melt it,
 I will, then springs of water will come
 out.
 Thong thong, this music all around me
 Creates a movement - hands, and feet -
 I feel, I feel the world around me!
 It melts, it melts, I know it will.

Jaroslav Suchy

*Dear Reader,
 The following poem is based on words (in
 bold) that members of the On-Line-
 Poets' Society II (an on-line creative
 poetry writing course organized by me)
 agreed upon. The task was: "Choose as
 many words from the word pool we
 agreed upon to write a poem." Here's
 what I produced.*

Poetry's Death

Yellow **dandelions**, what a view
 A hill with **forget-me-nots** blue
 White **dove's** hideaway.

Poetry passed away.
 Lost to life.
 This was **unexpected**.

The last poet lost her drive
 And let it
 Die.

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