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CONFERENCE REPORTS

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Yeats in Ireland, 2006

Liliana Pop (Cluj, Romania)

*"I would count the swans but it hurts my eyes"*

(Michael Longley)

This is not a regular conference with the conventional annual setting to celebrate a poet, but an event that goes back almost half a century, when a group of Yeats enthusiasts and scholars decided to celebrate their national poet in the setting made famous in his poetry. The syntagm 'national poet' in itself is problematic, since the setting is Ireland, and the poet has been celebrated for so long as the leading modernist English poet. Yeats is, nevertheless, the poet who, with no knowledge of the Irish language, proclaimed, early in his writing career, that his 'subject' was 'Irish'. And to a very large extent it is owing to him that Irish folklore and locations, and Irish culture in general, stopped being a regional matter and became a significant presence in world cultural heritage.

'Yeats in Ireland' is not just an annual academic event, nor simply part of the literature curriculum of every Anglo-Irish Literature department. And the *Yeats International Summer School*, held in Sligo every year since 1959 is proof of that. The generous two-week format of the Summer School brings together the most respectable and respected academics in Yeats studies, from Ireland, the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, but also from Japan and other countries that Yeats's poetry and theatre is connected to. The 'students' themselves come from very different backgrounds: undergraduates with a general interest in literature, doctoral students with a particular interest in Yeats, aspiring poets who want to "learn" their "trade", and even 'cultural tourists' of all ages on a self-improvement spree.

Whatever their starting point and interest this year, they all benefited from the amazing pooling of the best academic minds across the world in matters Yeatsian, each of them taking turns to deliver the two morning lectures, while others conducted the afternoon seminars. This year's event was run under

the auspices of a new directing team, Professor Patrick Crotty (University of Aberdeen) and Professor Maureen Murphy (Hofstra University, New York). Between the two of them they made the school into a scholarly, charmingly engaging, quick-paced, quick-witted 'event'.

The antinomic pattern on which Yeats constructs his whole creation encourages his readers, i.e., his critics, to read him in antinomic ways, at the level of individual readings and of the more complicated resulting pattern of the different individual responses – hence the incredible diversity of points of view on his work. One of the most impressive characteristics of a poet who declared himself 'the last Romantic' is that over a period of half a century he continually metamorphosed himself, honing his oeuvre into 'complete works'. Diligence turning into work ethic. This aspect incites Patrick Crotty to a close reading of the whole poetic output which demonstrates, convincingly and, I would say, congenially, that the idea of obdurate work underlies the whole span of Yeatsian poetry at the thematic level. His lecture "Yeats and Work" revealed the obstinate craftsman from early youth, thematising the often dramatic choice between art and life, self-scrutinizing his advance into a living monument.

"Making Poems Last", as the possible double reading of the title suggests, is a subtle incursion into Yeats's late work. By focusing on the categories of closure, form and voice, Edna Longley (Queen's University, Belfast) developed the idea of poetic structure becoming a thematic presence in Yeats's poetry from 1935. The critic's *esprit de finesse* unfolded the difficulty of turning knowledge into good poetry; of tipping the balance from rhetoric to poetry, by renouncing public harangue in favour of introspection. Yeats's last poems proved, under Edna Longley's scrutiny, to be poems that both can and



cannot provide an objective correlative for the rhetoric used. The logical conclusion of the demonstration was that Yeats's best poetry at the end of his career was that which explicitly dramatized work in progress.

"Yeats and Work" and "Making Poems Last" – what an affinity in the titles – was followed by the evidence of the "XYZ Notebooks", an editor's work on Yeats' work in progress (David Holdeman, North Texas University). In a somewhat similar vein, but starting from a totally different perspective, Margaret Kelleher, University of Maynooth, spoke about anthologies and Yeats's own work as an anthologist. From the initial enthusiasm for reconstructing the authenticity of an Irish folk tradition, Yeats created the anthology as a census, as a map, i.e., a critical geography, as a museum, i.e., an idea of history. In the end Yeats the anthologist evolves towards the sense of the necessity of a Delphic self-knowledge and a consequent refusal to be anthologized. One of the reasons—his awareness of being the most important English voice.

In the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Yeats's turmoil in his private life, his erotic tribulations, are embedded in the Celtic, even Ur-Celtic stories that he was discovering. Yeats's Renaissance 'sprezzatura' redeems them as literary works (Maureen Murphy's research into Yeats's cultural nationalism). A minute examination of the use of Irish "Places and Place Names in Yeats's Poetry", by Nicholas Grene, of Trinity College, Dublin, brought out the deliberate choices that Yeats made, between the authentic and the poetic sonorities, in favour of the latter. Nevertheless, these names, which appear for the first time in poetry in English, by their very strangeness, confer the quality of the uncanny to the familiar. Anne Margaret Daniel's analysis (Princeton University) of the writing and re-arranging of the "Winding Stair and Other Poems" investigated the interesting topic, so relevant for a modernist, of the relationship between the monumental, congenial to a poet who saw Michelangelo as his alter ego, and the fragmentary, as exemplified by his younger friend, Ezra Pound.

The idea of Yeats's modernism, one of the most debated Yeatsian topics, was presented in a new light in Seamus Deane's lecture. The critic diagnosed the initial anti-modernist attempt of Yeats's poetry to re-enchant the disenchanting modern world. An excursion into Walter Benjamin's epitome of the urban space, the Paris Arcades, in a Marxian-Lukácsian interpretation, caused Seamus Deane to conclude that Yeats, too, shared the modern drive to invest commodities with a life of their own. Yeats

was presented as an artist facing in two directions, but finally soldering the insoluble contradiction between the 'heroic individual' and the 'redeemed community', even if only for a moment.

An investigation of a very different kind, into a diary lost for 90 years, the diary of Robert Gregory's widow, provided the American scholar James Pethica with a new look at the Robert Gregory elegies. By adducing this un hoped-for testimony Pethica found the reason for the unusual tone and economy of "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory", the reason this elegy turns into a hymn to the author, to lie in his sense of mastery and virility.

Yeats's European connection to Modernism through the "French Connection" was the object of an elegant, scholarly approach to the role of sound in French Symbolism and the way in which Yeats turned this into an Irish issue (Adrienne Janus, University of Aberdeen). Yeats's connection with the arts, through his personal interest in painting (R.S.Patke, University of Singapore) also brought in the important work of his brother Jack (Hilary Pyle, art critic); and Yeats's connection with the theatre and with the European Expressionist movement (Michael McAteer), but also his congeniality with the Japanese Nô plays, was attested to through the ministrations of Lafcadio Hearn (Tetsuro Sano).

As T.S.Eliot noted as early as in 1940, after the poet's death, Yeats continued to be a poet who would influence the generations succeeding him. Whether they contest him or accept him, they all admire him (Brian John, on Yeats and Thomas Kinsella). Similarly, John Goodby (University of Swansea) investigated an affiliation that seems less likely, but convincingly, analytically demonstrating its reality in the notion that the poetry of Dylan Thomas owes to Yeats its verse structure, syntax and, during the last period of his life, its theme.

The living stream of Yeats's influence, propounded by scholars, was enacted at this summer school by the eminent domain of the poets. Through readings of their own poetry it could almost be said that they thematised the different aspects of the Yeatsian canon. James Fenton, who also opened the Summer School, with a defense of Yeats as a continuator of English tradition, offered a fascinating performance of his poetry, in a rhythmical *tour de force*. One couldn't really tell the dancer from the dance in his poetry of spare words, whimsical humour and political involvement ("Blood and Lead", for instance). Understanding of the countryside (the bard Moya Cannon); the personal notes of Sinead Morrissey, self-entranced in her reading; Maurice Riordan's subtle appropriation of other poetic

voices, to speak either of familial immediate experiences, or of geological duration.

Michael Longley subdued the personal into crafted classical verse, tempering violence with observations of the quotidian, understating love of nature in delicate notations. (A handful of lucky students also attended his creative writing course.)

A theatre workshop was offered by Sam and Joan McCreehy, directors, who, on the stage of the Hawk's Well Theater, staged "At the Hawk's Well", on its 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary, with a generous welcome given to enthusiastic students, who worked for two weeks for one performance in front of a delighted audience.

The location of the summer school is essential for a poet like Yeats, who blends the personal into his poetry. It was an opportunity to visit the sites of his poetry (Lough Gill, site of "The Lake Isle of Innisfree"; Rosses Point, Glencar, places of "The Stolen Child"; Lissadell House, evocative of Eva Gore-Booth and Constance Markiewicz; Coole Park, and Thoor Ballylee, Lady Gregory's estate and Yeats's Norman tower; Ben Bulbin, guardian of his 'testament'; Drumcliffe churchyard, of his 'epitaph'

and his burial ground. All places of magic sound and associations that most students discovered or rediscovered with the delight of recognition. All through the generosity of the Yeats Society (Aleck Crichton, president, Stella Mew, CEO) and local volunteers.

Yeats in Ireland is not a once-a-year public event. It is a part of everyday life. At the time of the Summer School a Yeats Exhibition opened at the National Library in Dublin, to continue for four years. It displays, in an ingenious space, personal items of the poet and his family, friends and associates, pictures, recordings of the poet, short films, impressive and helpful electronic presentations of Yeatsian work in progress. And Sato's sword.

Being in Ireland to imbibe knowledge, information and insight related to Yeats's poetry, to listen to scholars, to poets reading their work, to see places connected to Yeats, I could internalise what I had known for a long time. That different cultures have different literary propensities and different kinds of literary eminence. That Ireland is a country of poetry. W.B. Yeats is a permanent presence in Ireland, with a highlight in August, in Sligo.

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**"Drama and/after Postmodernism" – 15<sup>th</sup> Annual CDE Conference 2006**

Augsburg, Germany, 25-28 May 2006

*Heiko Stahl (Mainz, Germany)*

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"What was Postmodernism?," Malcolm Bradbury asked provocatively over a decade ago. But are we really past the post? And if so, is this also true for the domain of the performing arts? What makes contemporary drama and theatre distinctly postmodern? Augsburg, Bertolt Brecht's city of birth, provided the stage for dramatic and post-dramatic discussions aimed at answering some of these questions. Hence, "Drama and/after Postmodernism" was the field explored at this year's annual conference of the German Society for Contemporary Theatre and Drama in English (CDE), which was hosted by Martin Middeke and Christoph Henke of the Augsburg University English Department. Participants included the playwrights Richard Bean and John Binnie, the theatre critic Aleks Sierz, the prominent keynote lecturers Brian Richardson, Hans Thies Lehmann and Johannes Birringer, actors from the Clyde Unity Theatre (Glasgow), BandBazi Circus Theatre (Brighton), and the Anglisten-theater Augsburg as well as various other scholars and theatre practitioners from around the globe.

For the fourth time, CDE was proud to present a

scholar with the biannual CDE Award for Outstanding Research in the Field of Contemporary Theatre and Drama: Mark Berninger (Mainz) was honoured for his distinguished work on British and Irish history plays. Berninger convincingly argues for the necessary re-evaluation of the term 'history play' and grounds his findings on the close examination of over 130 contemporary plays by dramatists such as Howard Barker, Peter Barnes, David Edgar, Brian Friel, Michael Frayn, Frank McGuinness, Tom Stoppard, and Timberlake Werten-baker. He includes metahistorical, meta-scientific and meta-dramatic texts as well as posthistorical drama and travesty. Mark Berninger's dissertation will be published in the CDE Studies-series as "Staging History – Neue Formen des Geschichtsdramas in Großbritannien und Irland seit 1970."

In his keynote lecture "Plot after Postmodernism," Brian Richardson (University of Maryland) explored radical and subversive ways in which playwrights such as Caryl Churchill, Maiea Irene Fornes, Harold Pinter and Peter Handke seek to deconstruct traditional notions of the plot in drama and,

consequently, in dramatic theory. Hans Thies Lehmann (Frankfurt) carried the argument across the boundaries of conventional concepts of theatre and drama, when he spoke about “Word and Stage in Postdramatic Theatre,” diagnosing the disappearance of the text from the stage and the concrete negation of dramatic structures in the past thirty years. With his “Digital Performance (Theatre in its Post Medium Condition),” Johannes Birringer (London) moved away from the theatre/stage into the direction of conceptual art, where fashion and design meet performance and electronic media. Aleks Sierz (London) commented on postmodern dramatic phenomena by deconstructing the established format of conference presentations – instead of giving the paper himself, he had it staged by actors: “Attempts on His Life: Martin Crimp’s (Ab/Pre)sence in His Own Words” was a staged reading of conversations between himself and Martin Crimp, introduced and commented by Sierz.

The connection of Martin Crimp and Postmodernism was picked up by Clara Escoda Agustí (Barcelona) in her paper on “‘head green water to sing:’ Minimalism and Indeterminacy in Martin Crimp’s *Attempts on Her Life*.” Escoda illustrated to what degree the use of disruptive elements, ready-mades and literary pastiches place Crimp halfway between Modernism and Postmodernism. Margret Fetzer (Munich), in her analysis of *The Cut*, located Mark Ravenhill in the area between (Hyper-) Realism and Postmodernism in her presentation “Shocking and Mucking? Ravenhill’s Theatre Between Pain and Simulation.” In her interpretation of Rochelle Owen’s *Emma Instigated Me*, Kerstin Schmidt (Bayreuth) described the transitional fields of “The Theater of Transformation: Postmodernism and Feminist American Drama,” which overlap in their criticism of patriarchal structures and master narratives, respectively.

Michał Lachman (Łódź) and Markus Wessendorf (Manoa, Hawai’i) analysed the intersections of reality, history, politics and the stage. Lachman emphasised the hybrid character of verbatim drama as a form between conventional journalism and literary fiction in “The Colours of History or Scenes from the Inquiry into Verbatim Drama.” He concentrated on David Hare’s *Permanent Way* and *Stuff Happens* and on productions by the Tricycle Theatre – *The Color of Justice or Justifying War* and *Bloody Sunday: Scenes from the Saville Inquiry* (Richard Norton-Taylor) and *Guantanamo: ‘Honor Bound to Defend Freedom’* (Victoria Brittain / Gillian Slovo). Wessendorf, speaking on “Postmodern Drama Post-9/11,” demonstrated in which way a simulacrum of reality

and metatheatricity oscillate in David Hare’s *Stuff Happens* and Adriano Shaplin’s *Pugilist Specialist*.

Harold Fish (Mainz), Susan Blattès (Grenoble) and Laurens de Vos (Ghent) discussed the postmodern condition of identity-loss and the disappearance – and reappearance – of character distinctions in postmodern drama. Harold Fish’s “The Language of Monologue in 1990s Irish Theatre” illustrated the reduction of language, the demise of clearly identifiable characters and the fragmentation of meaning with reference to Conall Morrison’s *Hard to Believe*, Michael West’s *Foley* and Mark O’Rowe’s *Howie the Rookie*. “The Character in Contemporary Drama: Is Character Still a Relevant Concept?,” Susan Blattès asked accordingly, thus questioning the relevance of this postmodern phenomenon in the work of playwrights such as Howard Barker, Caryl Churchill, Martin Crimp, Sarah Kane and Harold Pinter. The dissolution of identity also featured in Laurens de Vos’ (Ghent) – “Spectres in Stoppard: Ros and Guil’s Fear of Losing Ontological Stability;” here, De Vos argued that Stoppard’s protagonists reveal the theatricality of the human subject by regaining their identities in a form of transcendental eternity – or in death by absence.

In his paper on “Postmodernism as Diversion: Len Jenkin’s *A Country Doctor*,” Robert F. Gross (Geneva, N.Y.) illustrated the transformation of Kafka’s *Ein Landarzt* into a postmodern space/context of alienation and queerness. Literary and dramatic (meta-)criticism and dramatised literary theory featured in Ines Detmers’ (Dresden) – “Staging (Meta)Criticism: David Lodge’s Plays *The Writing Game* and *Home Truths*,” while Sarah Heinz (Mannheim) analysed the (in-)coherence and the dissolution of memory in “‘Funny thing, memory, isn’t it?’ – Constructing and Deconstructing Memory in Michael Frayn’s *Donkey’s Years*.” The deconstruction of truths and the limitations of a unified sense of subjectivity were the focus of Siân Adiseshiah’s (Lincoln) – “Still a Socialist? Political Commitment in Caryl Churchill’s *The Skriker* and *Far Away*.”

John Binnie’s (Glasgow) workshop on “Creating Monologues, Using Games, Trust Exercises, Reminiscence and Improvisation” provided the participants of this conference with the vital hands-on experience of theatre practice, while Uma Narain (Mumbai), in her special presentation on “Postmodernism and the Evolution of Self-Directed Teams,” illustrated the benefit of theatre exercises for the postmodern globalised business community.

On stage, together with Aleks Sierz and actors from the Anglistentheater Augsburg, Richard Bean (London) offered tangible insight into his play

*Harvest*, the winner of the 2006 Critics' Circle Award for Best Play. The winner of the Scotsman Fringe First Award 2005, John Binnie's *Breakfast at Audrey's*, was presented in a co-production by the Clyde Unity Theatre (Glasgow) and BandBazi Circus Theatre (Brighton). Finally, the Anglistentheater Augsburg staged *The Exonerated – Surviving Death Row* by Jessica Blank and Erik Jensen,

directed by Ute Legner.

The next CDE conference, "Non-Standard Forms of Contemporary Drama and Theatre," hosted by Peter Paul Schnierer, will be held at Ruprecht Karls University Heidelberg, May 17-20, 2007. A Call for Papers with detailed information can be found on the CDE-website at <[www.ContemporaryDrama.de](http://www.ContemporaryDrama.de)>.

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### **"Transcultural Britain"**

#### **17th annual conference of the Association for the Study of British Cultures**

Otto-von-Guericke-Universität, Magdeburg, 23-25 November 2006

*Ellen Grünkemeier (Leibniz Universität, Hannover, Germany)*

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Those who consider multiple topics, many parallel panels, some hundred international participants, and anonymity as essentials of an ideal academic conference would have been disappointed by this conference in Magdeburg – and also by the annual conferences of the Association for the Study of British Cultures in general. Not a mass event, the conference consists of successive rather than parallel panels, provides room for academic discussions among the participants and creates a friendly atmosphere – with get-together and conference dinner on successive evenings, the latter of which was preceded by a particularly delicious starter: Bernardine Evaristo read from her novel in verse *The Emperor's Babe* (2001), which brings to life early history of blacks in Britain.

On the first afternoon the conference started – as usual – with a graduate forum where young academics present their PhD projects to professors and to other young scholars and students in order to receive feedback on their contentions, outlines, methodologies, materials, etc. Presentations of work in progress are not restricted to a particular topic, whereas the annual conference focuses on a single theme, this time Transcultural Britain.

Bernd-Peter Lange (Magdeburg) opened the conference officially and introduced the main topic. The starting point of the conference was the assumption that British culture and identity are in flux because they have been shaped by cultural exchanges such as colonialism, migration, globalisation, continental and trans-Atlantic relations. The concept of transculturality analyses such cultural transactions and focuses on the production, proximity and heterogeneity of cultures. Unlike multiculturalism, transculturality does not take the existence of a 'core' British culture for granted from which minorities and subcultures deviate.

In her keynote, the London-based Afro-Caribbean

artist Sonia Boyce addressed issues of race, difference, diversity, the gaze, and the body. She showed a film clip in which she discusses works by several visual artists, including her own piece "Street Responses" (2006). Portraying diversity and urban life in London she argues that difference becomes a new norm in metropolitan life. Black British art was also the subject of a paper by Ingrid von Rosenberg (Dresden). Other presentations analysed trends towards transculturality in literature (Annika McPherson, Bremen; Susanne Schmid, Frankfurt/M.), in British cinema (Christina Wald, Augsburg) and television (Gerold Sedlmayer, Passau), in ethnic music (Oliver Lindner, Leipzig) or in football (Christian Huck, Erlangen/Nürnberg). In their joint paper Sigrun Meining (Dresden) and Ralf Schneider (Bielefeld) focussed on the processes of culture, and the repositioning of cultural conditions. Critical surveys of the debate about 'Britishness' were provided by Peter Bennett (Hannover), who reviewed the new requirements for UK citizenship, and by Holger Rossow (Rostock), who asked what room there is for Britishness in the face of devolution, multiculturalism, Europeanisation and globalisation.

In the second keynote talk, John Hutnyk, senior lecturer at the Centre for Cultural Studies, Goldsmiths College, University of London, dealt with politics and creativity in music, ethnicity, hybridity, diaspora, and terrorism. He exemplified his thoughts with the British South Asian band Fun-da-mental and its band leader Aki Nawaz.

As may be gathered from this short report, the topic "Transcultural Britain" spawned a variety of issues, ideas and examples that were addressed in the contributions, questions and discussions. In spite of this broad investigation the concept of transculturality did not become as clear as one might have hoped for. Several definitions of transculturality seemed to co-exist, but they were not always

explicated or used for starting a productive debate. Further discussion could also address the question of how far and in what cases transculturality may offer a more meaningful strategy for analysing (British) culture than multiculturalism, interculturality, hybridity, etc.

The next annual conference of the Association for the Study of British Cultures will be held at the University of Salzburg on 22-24 November 2007. The main topic will be "High Culture and/versus Popular Culture". For further information, please visit <<http://www.britcult.de/>>.

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## 21<sup>st</sup> Vilem Mathesius Lecture Series

27 November-8 December 2006, Prague

*Nataša Milivojević (Novi-Sad, Serbia) & Biljana Radić-Bojanić (Novi-Sad, Serbia)*

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The Vilem Mathesius Lecture Series, organized twice a year until 1999, and yearly since then, consists of a two-week programme and offers courses taught by prominent Western and Czech scholars. The courses are attended by students from Central and Eastern Europe, as well as by Western students and scholars interested in that year's topic. The courses frequently focus on prominent theoretical approaches to language structure and language use, as well as on the philosophy of language. The lecture series traditionally incorporates a short conference dealing with the prominent linguistic issues at hand.

The 21<sup>st</sup> Vilem Mathesius Lecture Series, organized by the Institute of Formal and Applied Linguistics, Faculty of Mathematics and Physics, Charles University, was held 27 November-8 December 2006 in Prague, Czech Republic. It was divided into two large segments coinciding with the two weeks of the programme. The first week covered a number of separate lectures and workshops, ending with a two-day conference held on Friday and Saturday, 1-2 December. The second week offered seven different courses on various aspects of corpus and computational linguistics. The basic framework for the courses was provided by the latest findings in the field, offering theoretical as well as empirical insights into corpus annotation and handling large corpora for linguistic purposes.

The welcoming speech was given by Professor Eva Hajičová from the Institute of Formal and Applied Linguistics, Charles University. The opening lecture, entitled *Translation, Machine Translation and Evaluation*, was delivered by Professor Maghi King from the ISSCO, Geneva, Switzerland. The talk focused on issues concerning the interaction of human and machine-based approaches to translation as well as on the translatability of certain types of texts. Special attention was devoted to concepts such

as localization, compensation, corpus and rule-based translation and final orientation of the translated text. On 28 and 29 November, scholars belonging to the Prague Linguistic Circle held a two-day tutorial on Prague Treebanking. Professor Jan Hajič opened the workshop with an introductory talk on the interface between the surface dependency syntax and deep, tectogrammatical syntactic layer. This lecture was followed by related presentations dealing with grammemes, presented by Zdeněk Žabokrtský, and deep syntax, topic, focus, deep word order and coreference, presented by Professor Eva Hajičová. The first day of the workshop ended with another lecture by Professor Jan Hajič, this time on valency. The second day was dominated by more practical issues clustering around data annotation tools (e.g. TrEd, Bonito, Netgraph) and automatic processing of data, with the talks given by Jaroslava Hlaváčová, Jan Štěpánek, Jiří Mírovský, Petr Pajas, Ondřej Kučera and Otakar Smrž. The workshop on the advanced processing of Arabic, which was supposed to be held on 30 November, was regrettably cancelled, yet all the participants were given valuable insights into the automatic data processing of Arabic and other languages during a two-day conference entitled *Treebanks and Linguistic Theories*, held on 1 and 2 December at the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics.

The second week of the Lecture Series was devoted to a number of special courses covering different aspects of corpus and computational linguistics. Professor Martha Palmer from the University of Colorado at Boulder, who was also a keynote speaker at the *TLT* conference, gave three lectures on computational lexical semantics, where she explored the notion of verb classes and its exploitation within the general frameworks of WordNet and FrameNet. Professor James Pustejovsky from Brandeis University

presented the latest view of empirical approaches to compositionality, assuming a greater level of interaction between linguistic theory and handling large NLP corpora. One of the conclusions offered in the course was that it may be acceptable for theoretical views (e.g. generative lexicon theory) to be influenced and even partially altered by the relevant empirical data analyses. Professor Massimo Poessio of the University of Essex and the University of Trento gave three related lectures entitled *Empirical studies of anaphora and salience*, where he explored the notions such as anaphoric reference, ambiguity in anaphora and suggested possible treatments of such phenomena within linguistic theory and data processing. In addition, Professor Eugene Charniak from Brown University presented a talk entitled *New results in syntactic parsing*, reporting on the results of the latest research in the field, whereas Professor Fred Jelinek from Johns Hopkins University delivered a lecture on data sparseness, which is one of the central problems in the construction of language models, compensated for by the method of Random Forests. Ciprian Chelba from Google talked about spoken document retrieval, while Daniel Tihelka and Jan Romportl from West University, Plzen, in the Czech Republic presented their view of text-to-speech synthesis. An addition to the series of lecture was the meeting of the *Partnership for International Research and Education* (PIRE) held on the

afternoon of 4 December. The PIRE project links senior and junior researchers from Johns Hopkins University and Brown University with their counterparts from Charles University in the Czech Republic and the University of the Saarland in Germany. The international team, led by Professor Fred Jelinek, investigates formal representations of linguistic meaning for use in speech recognition and reconstruction and machine translation systems, the results of which were presented at the meeting.

To conclude, the 21<sup>st</sup> Vilem Mathesius Lecture Series was an outstanding academic event providing young scholars from Europe and the United States with insightful information which will beyond any doubt help them to re-evaluate and further their linguistic experience, research and knowledge. In addition, it should be stressed that the Prague Linguistic Circle and the Vilem Mathesius Centre have a longstanding tradition of *re-establishing and fostering effective contacts* between the present-day trends in linguistics in the West and contemporary efforts in Central and Eastern Europe. The organizers encourage students and young researches to join this significant linguistic community actively by offering a number of grants to the participants from Central and Eastern Europe, thus helping them to acquire a good orientation in recent trends in research.