

CZECH

LANGUAGE

NEWS

**Newsletter
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of Teachers of Czech**

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Czech Language News is a newsletter published twice a year by the International Association of Teachers of Czech (IATC). The editorial office is currently at the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, Harvard University. The newsletter serves as a forum for research, teaching, information and organization of Czech language instruction, in the broader context of Czech studies. *CzLN*'s mission is to contribute to the promotion of interdisciplinary and international cooperation as well as to integration of theoretical and applied aspects of language study. *CzLN* is an open exchange of information and ideas and the editorial board welcome ideas and submissions for inclusion in the next issue.

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It has been an odd few months in which our world seemed to pause and shut down to all outside activities: stores shut, schools locked, our public spaces empty aside from the occasional badger wandering across the railway station concourse or herds of deer munching their way through abandoned parking lots, and universities of course functioning only on Zoom and Google Meet. And yet, as you'll see here, plenty was going on on the inside, and hence *Czech Language News* is able this issue to introduce our new post-lockdown look. We have a new collaboration with Akropolis publishers in Prague that will help modernize our design. We hope you will find the excellent content unchanged, of course — but please let us know what you think.

In the current issue, you'll find articles on teaching Švejk (by Abigail Weil) and an interview with František Čermák, founder of the Czech National Corpus Institute (by Kateřina Šichová), as well as a piece on Interslavic (by Emily Herring) and a review of David Cooper's critical edition of the *Rukopisy královédvorský a zelenohorský* and other Czech Revival-era forgeries (by Andrew Drozd).

Over the past months, the pandemic has forced numerous sudden changes in our working practices. We've all learned to deliver instruction through the all-seeing lens of a laptop camera, negotiating dodgy wifi connections and uncooperative software, but there have been leaps beyond that as well. We would probably never have chosen them of our own free will, but periods of crisis can bring bursts of creativity and force us to do things differently, and sometimes this is possible precisely with the cohesive and motivated groups of students that you get with languages like Czech.

As examples, Ilona Starý Kořánová reconfigured her student play at Ústav bohemistických studií of Charles University to go on video 'lockdown-style'; our own students and staff here at Sheffield collaborated

to read Seifert's Věneč sonetů on camera; and I'm sure there are many others out there that we could all learn and draw inspiration from. Czech Language News would love to hear from you about how you made lemonade out of pandemic lemons. Won't you write and tell us for the next issue?

Neil Bermel
University of Sheffield

Slavic Esperanto: The Interslavic Language and its Use in *The Painted Bird*

Emily Herring

The premiere of Czech director Václav Marhoul's film *The Painted Bird* (2019) recently sparked a new wave of interest in the Interslavic language (medžuslovjansky jezyk).¹ Formally established by Czech professor Vojtěch Merunka and Dutch linguist Jan van Steenberghe through a merger of their respective language projects in 2017,² Interslavic — sometimes referred to as “Slavic Esperanto”³ — is an aggregate of the grammatical, orthographic, lexical, and syntactic devices most commonly employed throughout all of the Slavic languages.⁴ Yet the recent publicization of the language, in addition to the relative newness of the language itself, masks its participation in a long tradition of Pan-Slavic languages.

Some scholars suggest that the oldest Pan-Slavic language is Old Church Slavonic, dating back to the 9th century.⁵ Since that time, over seventy languages have appeared as the result of continued scholarly efforts to create a language that is understandable to all speakers of Slavic tongues.⁶ Many of the projects, like Interslavic, are based on Old Church Slavonic or are otherwise amalgamations of various Slavic languages.⁷ Yet Interslavic, unlike previous constructed Slavic languages, enjoys the unique benefits of a collaborative global space. The Interslavic community is able to convene on Facebook and in online forums to discuss questions of grammar, phonology, and orthography, among other topics.⁸ The Interslavic website boasts descriptions of the language's phonological inventory and grammar, in addition to dictionaries, books, and other reference material.⁹ Interslavic has even been one of the operating languages of the annual Conference on InterSlavic Language (CISLa) and the journal SLOVJANI.info since 2017.¹⁰

It is easy to see why Interslavic has been employed as the general operating language of the conference and journal. Speakers of Slavic languages quickly understand Interslavic words — the language's infinitive form of “to write,” for instance, is *pisati*¹¹ (cf. Czech *psát*, Polish *pisać*, Russian *писать*, Ukrainian *писати*, Belarussian *пісаць*, Serbo-Croatian *pisati*, etc.¹²). These and other cross-linguistic correspondences suggest that Interslavic is not a modified version of any single Slavic language; rather, it is a tool that recognizes the interplay between an entire group of languages.¹³ That specific quality inspired Marhoul to incorporate Interslavic in *The Painted Bird*: as the first film to ever employ the language,¹⁴ *The Painted Bird* deftly avoids the politicization that would accompany the use of Russian, Ukrainian, Czech, or another Slavic language.¹⁵

Based on Jerzy Kosinski's 1965 eponymous novel, the film features dramatic, brutal depictions of war-torn Eastern Europe.¹⁶ The horrors that the young, Jewish protagonist encounters as he wanders that bleak landscape provoked audience walkouts during the film's world debut at the 2019 Venice International Film Festival¹⁷ and have led to heated discussions among journalists and members of the public.¹⁸ Due to be released to the general public in July 2020,¹⁹ the film is already notable as a shortlisted nomination to the Oscars International Feature Film category,²⁰ as the recipient of a 91% rating on the Rotten Tomatoes website²¹ and, of course, for its adoption of the Interslavic language.

The amount of Interslavic that actually appears in *The Painted Bird* may be somewhat confusing to those who do not speak the language — in the film, Interslavic is spoken alongside Czech, Russian, and German.²² However, the Interslavic website run by van Steenbergen asserts that while “[t]here is very little spoken text in the film ... the vast majority of it is in Interslavic.”²³ Van Steenbergen cites, for instance, the following Interslavic dialogue from *The Painted Bird*:

“[Garbos] Tiho! Dost! Dost! (Quiet! Enough! Enough!)
 [Garbos] Otče. (Father.)
 [priest] Jest to gorše. (It's getting worse.)
 [Garbos] To je mně žalostno. (I'm sorry to hear that.)
 [priest] Blгодарju Tobě za tvoje předloženje. (I'm grateful for your kind offer.)

[priest] Naš Gospod bude Tvoju blagomilost nagraditi. (Our Lord will reward your kindness.)

[priest] Budeš to tu ljubiti. (You will like it here.)”²⁴

Many of these forms are easily recognizable to speakers of Slavic languages. Students of Russian may point out familiar words like “*Tiho*” or “*předloženje*” (in Russian, *тихо* and *предложение*, respectively, each synonymous with its Interslavic form). Czech speakers are no stranger to present-tense constructions that involve the verb “to be” (Interslavic and Czech both share, in addition to other forms, third-person singular *je*).

Interslavic also appears in visual media and songs throughout *The Painted Bird*. Posters on the film's set advertise various products, services, and events, including an “Evening with music and singing” (“*Večer s muzikou i pěvanjem*”).²⁵ In addition to visual media, there are two Interslavic songs in the film, including “*Dušo moja*.”²⁶ The songs and posters highlight the film's extensive use of Interslavic and give viewers a deeper sense of the world of *The Painted Bird*, which Interslavic has undoubtedly enriched.

As an auxiliary member of the Slavic language family, Interslavic may continue to be of interest to filmmakers and to linguists and other scholars as an object of study. At the very least, the language presents the academic community with the opportunity to investigate more deeply the cross-linguistic similarities that bind together the Slavic languages, which can only serve to enrich further work in the field.

Emily L. Herring is a PhD candidate in Slavic Languages and Literatures at Harvard University.

1/ Jan van Steenbergen, “A Short History of Interslavic.” Last modified March 30, 2020. <http://steen.free.fr/interslavic/history.html>.

2/ Ibid; Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. “Interslavic: How A Made-Up Slavic Language Made It To The Big Screen.” YouTube. September 19, 2019. Video, 2:57. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WlopfGDweTE>.

3/ Ibid.

4/ Current Time. “Mežslavjanskij jazyk: čto eto i kak ego ispol'zovat” [“Interslavic Language: What It Is and How to Use It”]. YouTube. September 27, 2019. Video, 3:09. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=whLyHzXImul&feature=emb_logo; “The Painted

Bird – The First Film in Interslavic.” Jan van Steenbergen. Last modified April 1, 2020. http://steen.free.fr/interslavic/the_painted_bird.html.

5/ “Welcome to the pages of the Interslavic language!” Jan van Steenbergen. Last modified September 22, 2019. <http://steen.free.fr/interslavic/index.html>.

6/ “Constructed Slavic Languages: Umětné slovjanske jazyky.” Jan van Steenbergen. Last modified April 1, 2020. http://steen.free.fr/interslavic/constructed_slavic_languages.html.

7/ Ibid; Jan van Steenbergen, “A Short History of Interslavic.”

8/ See, for example, the extensive forum located at <https://www.tapatalk.com/groups/slovianski/>.

9/ Jan van Steenbergen, “Welcome to the pages of the Interslavic language!”

10/ “Informacijny portal međžuslovjanskogo jazyka: Portal concerning the Interslavic language.” Accessed March 1, 2020. <http://interslavic-language.org/>; “Welcome to the pages of the Interslavic language!” Jan van Steenbergen, “A Short History of Interslavic.”

11/ As per the “Dinamičny međžuslovjansky slovník: Dynamic Interslavic Dictionary.” Jan van Steenbergen. Last modified March 15, 2019. http://steen.free.fr/interslavic/dynamic_dictionary.html.

12/ See the entries for various languages in R. G. A. De Bray, *Guide to the Slavonic Languages* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd.), 1951, 53, 111, 176, 350, 649. For Czech, see Lída Holá, *Česky krok za krokem* [Czech Step by Step] (Prague: Akropolis, 2016), 250.

13/ Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, “Interslavic”; “Welcome to the pages of the Interslavic language!” Jan van Steenbergen.

14/ Kate Erbland, “Holocaust Drama ‘The Painted Bird’ Lands at IFC Following Controversial Festival Run and Mass Walkouts.” *IndieWire*. September 24, 2019. <https://www.indiewire.com/2019/09/the-painted-bird-ifc-films-holocaust-drama-1202176181/>; Ian Willoughby, “Vojtěch Merunka — Developer of Interslavic Language Spoken in the Painted Bird.” *Czech Radio*. September 23, 2019. <https://www.radio.cz/en/section/one-on-one/vojtech-merunka-developer-of-interslavic-language-spoken-in-the-painted-bird>.

15/ Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, “Interslavic”; “Welcome to the pages of the Interslavic language!” Jan van Steenbergen.

16/ Xan, Brooks, “The Painted Bird review — savage, searing three-hour tour of hell.” *The Guardian*. September 3, 2019. <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2019/sep/03/the-painted-bird-review-vaclav-mahoul>.

17/ Kate Erbland, “Holocaust Drama”; Xan Brooks, “The Painted Bird.”

18/ “Stellan Skarsgård: posle fon Triera ja znaju, što takoe žestokost’ i ljubov’” [“Stellan Skarsgård: After Von Trier I know what brutality and love are”]. *RIA Novosti*. September 6, 2019. <https://ria.ru/20190906/1558365672.html>.

19/ “The Painted Bird.” IFC Films. Accessed April 20, 2020. <https://www.ifcfilms.com/films/the-painted-bird>.

20/ “92nd Oscars Shortlists.” Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. Accessed April 20, 2020. <https://www.oscars.org/oscars/92nd-oscars-shortlists>.

21/ “The Painted Bird.” Rotten Tomatoes. Accessed April 20, 2020. https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/the_painted_bird.

22/ “The Painted Bird — The First Film in Interslavic,” Jan van Steenbergen.

23/ Ibid.

24/ Ibid.

25/ Ibid; Alice Linhartová and Vojtěch Merunka. [Večer s muzikou i pěvanjem]. N.d. Digitized poster. http://steen.free.fr/interslavic/the_painted_bird.html.

26/ Ibid; see the text of the song at http://steen.free.fr/interslavic/the_painted_bird.html.

Jaroslav Hašek's *The Good Soldier Švejk*

Abigail Weil

Jaroslav Hašek's magnum opus *Osudy dobrého vojáka Švejka za světové války* (translated by Cecil Parrott as *The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the World War*¹) presents a variety of challenges to an instructor. Its core premise—that the Czech nation was forced to fight, and even die, to preserve an empire to which they did not want to belong—simultaneously comments on, exaggerates, and simplifies a complex historical moment. Its protagonist lacks relatable psychology. It is excessively long and discursive. And finally, although this does not complete the list of challenges but only presents what I am able to address in this paper, its vernacular language is difficult to render in translation. I will address each of these challenges in turn, but I would also like to issue a warning. The genius of *Švejk* is its humor, but in teaching the book to American college students, I have found that this brand of comedy often does not resonate. Nevertheless, the careful instructor can restore to *Švejk* its native strangeness and idiosyncratic comedy, ultimately bringing students to an appreciation of what Hašek accomplished with this unusual novel. Despite the challenges, *The Good Soldier Švejk* remains worth reading and teaching, not least because it was the first internationally renowned work of twentieth-century Czech literature. More importantly, *Švejk* encourages individual action and creative resistance in the face of insidious societal demands, an eternally relevant message.

1. Historical premise

Every chapter of *Švejk* is steeped in irony, but the novel's humor fundamentally derives from the premise of Czechs' antipathy to the Habsburg war effort. In fact, the initial response to the war was a complex combination of imperial loyalty, national ambition, and political philosophy. Hašek,

however, proceeds from the assumption that Austria-Hungary is doomed by its bureaucratic incompetence and, at least in the Czech lands, civic indifference, and this is played out largely in the interactions among the Czech characters and the Austrian characters who represent the state. For example, in scenes set in state-run institutions such as jails, a psychiatric hospital, and the army, the figures of authority (wardens, doctors, and officers) are Austrian, while the characters subject to their control (inmates, patients, and soldiers) are Czech.

When Hašek began writing *Švejk* in 1920, he reimagined the recent past to depict the dissolution of the Habsburg Empire as a historical inevitability. This was also the rhetorical approach of Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, who, both during the war and in his subsequent presidency, relied on the symbolism of the Czech effort to legitimize the fledgling nation-state, an ironic congruity given that the two spectacularly disagreed on most matters.

For students already possessing solid understanding of Czech history or World War One, the instructor can freely problematize Hašek's depiction. The first two chapters from Andrea Orzoff's *Battle for the Castle*² would be a useful optional reading about how the goal of Czech sovereignty did not develop until the war was well under way. But some knowledge of Czech history vis-a-vis the Habsburg Empire at the outbreak of the war is a prerequisite for understanding *Švejk*, therefore students should do some historical reading *before* they start on the novel. "The Flyspecks on Palivec's Portrait: Francis Joseph, the Symbols of Monarchy, and Czech Popular Loyalty" by Hugh LeCaine Agnew³ is a helpful text, as is "Everyday Empire, Our Empire, 1880–1914" from Peter Judson's *The Habsburg Empire: A New History*⁴. Assigning historical materials as secondary readings alongside the novel means that many students will read those texts *after* they've read Hašek's fiction, or not at all. If the syllabus does not allow for required historical readings, the instructor should devote part of a lecture to the geopolitical situation in Bohemia in the early 20th century.

2. Psychology

We know very little about our hero Josef Švejk, except what we learn in the famous first line of the novel: that he "had left military service years before, after having been finally certified by an army medical board as an imbecile,

and now lived by selling dogs—ugly, mongrel monstrosities whose pedigrees he forged." Švejk has practically no internal monologue, and he lies. There is a temptation to read him as an Everyman character, especially in the context of his status as a low-ranking soldier in a world war, but his idiosyncratic behavior argues against this approach. Students should instead be encouraged to focus on what details and stories about Švejk the narrator includes, and what he omits. Returning to the novel's opening line, what does it mean to be certified by an army medical board as an imbecile? What kind of person forges canine pedigrees, and what kind of people might be his customers, or his accomplices? What can we say about the society in which Švejk lives? How do people behave, relate to each other, and react to the incident with which the novel begins, the assassination of Franz Ferdinand? In the absence of legible psychology, we must look to Švejk's words and actions, and to the responses he inspires in others, for meaning. By focusing on these aspects, the instructor can show how Hašek depicted the fragmentation of both individual psychology and society at large.

Some readers may view Švejk as a genuine "idiot," but, especially if they are reading Parrott's translation, many will understand his idiocy to be a ruse. If students do not come to their own conclusions on this topic after independent reading, it is worth spending some time to consider the evidence for both interpretations. (Hana Arie-Gaifman⁵, for example, views Švejk's seeming foolishness as intentional attempts to upend social order through game-play. Those characters with whom he gets on well, such as Otto Katz and the one-year volunteer Marek, are those who understand the unspoken rules of Švejk's game, while those who are frustrated by him, like Lieutenant Dub, are unable or unwilling to engage in this sort of play.) The more interesting question, however, may be what Hašek does with the concept of idiocy in the context of war-time Prague and the military. What is the relationship between Švejk's idiocy, be it real or feigned, and his epithet, the "good soldier"?

A discussion of Josef Lada's illustrations can be very illuminating. Lada was a longtime illustrator of Hašek's stories during the author's lifetime and, although in its original serialized format *Švejk* was published without illustrations, his cartoonish pen-and-ink drawings made an indelible impact on the reception of the novel. You may ask the students to find textual evidence of Švejk's physical appearance; this is a trick question, because

there is none. The reader never even learns how old Švejk is. Ask your students to consider how the illustrations affected the way they imagined the protagonist or understood the tone of the novel. I like to contrast Lada's illustrations with George Grosz's *Hintergrund* series, set decorations for Erwin Piscator's 1928 dramatic adaptation of *Švejk*, and ask students how their experience of the book and opinion of its hero would be different if the text were accompanied by these images. In this activity, it's useful to develop lists of adjectives that describe the two sets of images, and see which words also apply to the novel.

3. Length

Obviously, unless you have the luxury of a semester-long "master class," your students will not be able to read *Švejk* in its entirety. (Then again, Hašek never finished the book, so why should they?) Depending on the pedagogical aims, the instructor may choose to assign either a long section from Part I, "Behind the Lines," or emblematic chapters from throughout the book. The chapters in Part 1 are shorter, more tightly plotted and frankly more coherent than those that follow, but Švejk does not properly enter military service until Chapter 10, "Švejk Batman to the Chaplain," about a hundred pages in. Therefore, if the instructor is most interested in Hašek's depiction of the army, for example, it would make sense to pick up the text at a later point. The picaresque nature of the book, as well as the fact that many individual chapters can stand on their own, creates freedom to design a reading assignment according to the aims of the course. Some of the richly meaningful, and memorable, chapters include:

- 1.1 The Good Soldier Švejk Intervenes in the Great War
- 1.2 The Good Soldier Švejk at Police Headquarters
- 1.3 Švejk Before the Medical Experts
- 1.7 Švejk Goes to the War
- 1.8 Švejk the Malingerer
- 1.9 Švejk in the Garrison Gaol
- 1.11 Švejk Goes with the Chaplain to Celebrate a Drumhead Mass
- 1.14 Švejk Batman to Lieutenant Lukáš
- 2.2 Švejk's Budějovice Anabasis

3.4 Forward March!

4.1 Švejk in a Transport of Russian Prisoners

In any case, the author's preface and epilogue to Part I should be included, as they teem with metanarrative commentary on the generic conventions of both history and fiction as literary forms.

4. Language

Hašek's ear for language make dialogue one of his great gifts, and this is on full display in the oral storytelling that predominates in *Švejk*. No English-language translator has yet succeeded in capturing the coarse and lively diction of Hašek's low-class characters, although Nakladatelství Karolinum has commissioned a new attempt by Gerald Turner which should be published by 2024, the centennial of Hašek's death. Until then, the instructor may rely, as I have in writing this essay, on Parrott's 1973 translation, although it is rather more stuffy than befits the subject matter. With students who speak intermediate to advanced Czech, *Švejk* is a prime text for illustrating spoken Prague Czech, which differs greatly from what they will have learned from textbooks.⁶ Great fun can be had with translating and/or performing the characters' dialogues and "pub stories." For example, the opening dialogue between Švejk and Mrs. Müller is both iconic and replete with common diction and colloquial vocabulary. Students might be asked to identify every example of non-standard spelling, such as the initial v-added to words that begin with o, and final -ej in masculine adjectives, and then discuss what quality this gives to the dialogue.

„Tak nám zabili Ferdinanda,” řekla posluhovačka panu Švejkovi, který opustiv před léty vojenskou službu, když byl definitivně prohlášen vojenskou lékařskou komisí za blba, živil se prodejem psů, ošklivých nečistokrevných oblud, kterým padělal rodokmeny. Kromě tohoto zaměstnání byl stížen revmatismem a mazal si právě kolena opodeldokem.

„Kerýho Ferdinanda, paní Müllerová?” otázal se Švejk, nepřestávaje si masírovat kolena, „já znám dva Ferdinandy. Jednoho, ten je sluhou u drogisty Průši a vypil mu tam jednou omylem láhev nějakého

mazání na vlasy, a potom znám ještě Ferdinanda Kokošku, co sbírá ty psí hovínka. Vobou není žádná škoda.”

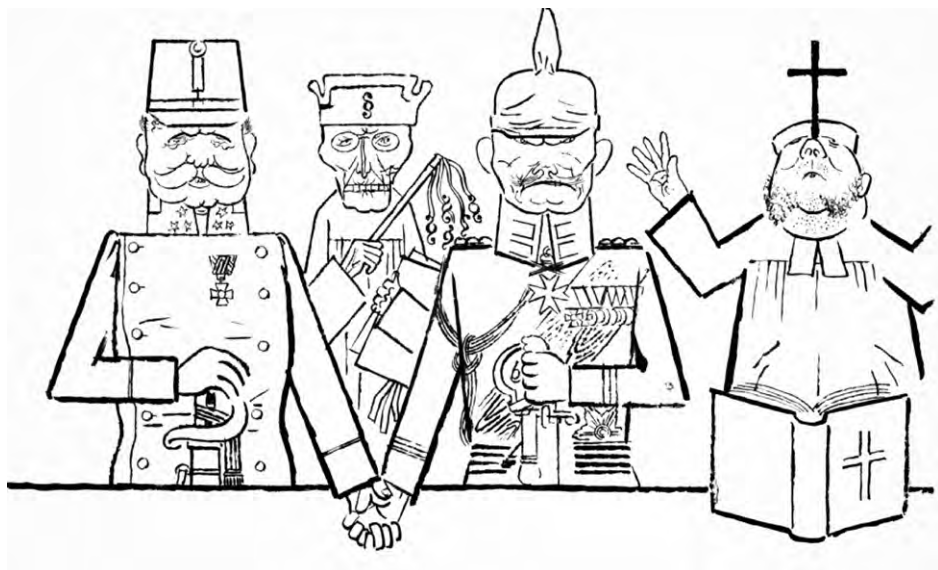
From these ideas on how to teach Hašek's *Švejk*, I have omitted Hašek himself. The author's life, by turns riotously comic and piteously tragic, is truly a fantastic story. Even students who are not charmed by *Švejk* usually see the humor in stories from Hašek's life, such as his fabricated science magazine *World of Animals*, or his invented political party, *Strana mírného pokroku v mezích zákona* or the *Party of Moderate Progress Within the Limits of the Law*. Although it is not necessary for understanding *Švejk*, and even risks distraction, the legend of Hašek can be brought in if only to get students invested in the novel. In this case, it would be advisable to fold some of his life story into the pre-reading lecture. Unfortunately, there is a dearth of reliable English-language biographical writing on Hašek; Robert Pynsent's "The Fun of Jaroslav Hašek"⁷ gives a good overview of the author, but because it is the afterword to *Behind the Lines: Bugulma and Other Stories*, a good chunk of the article is devoted to those texts.

Unlike the historical context, Hašek's life does not have to be fully understood for one to appreciate this novel. However, there is one circumstance in which it behooves the instructor to dwell on the figure of the author: teaching *Švejk* while in Prague. Working on summer study abroad programs, I've had the opportunity to design a walking tour of Hašek's Prague, a creative exercise for trying to imagine the city as it was in the early twentieth century. I've held class in the tavern U Kalicha, an old haunt of Hašek's that features prominently in *Švejk* and that has launched a thousand *Švejk*-themed restaurants. I've brought students to view the Hašek monument, installed in 2005 in the working-class Žižkov neighborhood; it is in some ways a parody of the monumental equestrian statue of Jan Žižka, in whose shadow it stands, and of all military monuments. If you find yourself in the enviable position of being in Prague with students who can devote multiple hours to *Švejk*, by all means, indulge in the Hašek legend. It is well worth telling, if only just for fun.

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Illustration by Josef Lada.



Illustrations by Georg Grosz.

1/ Jaroslav Hašek, *The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the War*, trans. Cecil Parrott (New York: Penguin Books, 1973).

2/ Andrea Orzoff, *Battle for the Castle: The Myth of Czechoslovakia in Europe: 1914–1948* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

3/ Hugh LeCaine, Agnew, “The Flyspecks on Palivec’s Portrait: Francis Joseph, the Symbols of Monarchy, and Czech Popular Loyalty.” *The Limits of Loyalty: Imperial Symbolism, Popular Allegiance and State Patriotism in the Late Habsburg Monarchy*, edited by Lawrence Cole and Daniel Unowsky (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007), 86–112.

4/ Peter Judson, “Everyday Empire Our Empire, 1880–1914,” *The Habsburg Empire: A New History* by Peter Judson (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2016,) 333–384.

5/ Hana Arie-Gaifman, “Švejk — the Homo Ludens,” *Language and Literary Theory: In Honor of Ladislav Matejka*, edited by Benjamin Stolz, I. R. Titunik, and Lubomir Doležel (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1984), 307–322.

6/ The key text on the differences between written and colloquial Czech is Charles Townsend, *A Description of Spoken Prague Czech* (Columbus: Slavica Publishers, Inc., 1990).

7/ Robert Pynsent, “The Fun of Jaroslav Hašek (1883–1923),” *Behind the Lines: Bugulma and Other Stories* by Jaroslav Hašek, translated by Mark Corner (Prague: Carolinum Press, 2012), 200–218.



František Čermák

V zimě tohoto roku oslavil kulaté životní jubileum jeden z předních českých lingvistů a nejvýznamnějších světových frazeologů, zakladatel Českého národního korpusu, profesor František Čermák. Už z výčtu gratulantů z řad jeho kolegů na narozeninové oslavě by bylo možné vyčíst obrovský záběr profesní působnosti Františka Čermáka, z dáreků pak jeho další záliby a zájmy. V rozhovoru s ním se dotkneme obého.

Pane profesore, kdybychom se na úvod doslovně vztáhli k názvu našeho časopisu: Co je nového v českém jazyce?

Zcela povrchně jde o aktuální tvorbu žertěřů a srandistů, velmi chvályhodně na adresu pochmurných pohledů nad koronavirem, viz příklady níže (obr. 1). Jinak se jazyk vyvíjí normálně, tj. průběžně a v oblasti slovníku podle potřeb.

Jedním z narozeninových dáreků pro Vás byla básnička, jejímž tématem bylo Vaše překládání základního díla Ferdinanda de Saussura, *Kursu obecné lingvistiky*. Tato knížka s překlady sto let starých textů v češtině vyšla už ve třech vydáních (nyní je mimochodem vyprodaná). Kdy a kde jste se s myšlenkami tohoto lingvisty seznámil a co Vás přimělo k jejich překladu? To už je historie: měl jsem hlavně jako učitele Vladimíra Skaličku (spolu-vydal jsem celé jeho dílo) a pilně chodil jako student i mladý asistent na jeho páteční semináře, kde se de Saussure zmiňoval často. Později jsem se dověděl, že jeho žena Alena jeho zálibu v de Saussurovi promítala do domácí přezdívky „náš Ferdinand“. Takže jsem se k řadě jeho „uznavatelů“ přidal v jisté době i já. Zájem o de Saussura byl obecně dán celkovým ovzduším Pražské školy. Měl jsem jako student to štěstí na dva ze zakládajících členů – vedle V. Skaličky i hodně B. Trnky, a často jsem býval jediný nebo jeden z hrstky studentů. De Saussura znali tenkrát všichni, ale bohužel na základě prvního jeho překladu (německého, Lommel), obecně i terminologicky nešťastného; francouzský originál zanesl do Prahy až Karcevskij. Osobně já sám jsem se směrem k němu zahleděl až na základě

L. Hjelmsleva, který na něj často odkazoval. A k překladu mě původně vyzval právě profesor Skalička. Nicméně celkové ovzduší ve světové lingvistice ukazovalo na potřebu strukturalismu, synchronie a funkce, což se daří výrazně realizovat až dnes na základě korpusových dat. Takže jsem nakonec ve své osobě propojil všechny hlavní strukturalismy: pražský (jako žák a člen), ženevský a kodaňský (jako překladatel), jejich srovnání je moc zajímavé. Amerického Bloomfielda tenkrát nikdo neznal, sám pak neprávem byl odstrčený Chomským...

Kurs od de Saussura není tedy Váš jediný překlad odborné lingvistické publikace.

Ne, vlastně mu předcházela můj překlad z dánštiny – kniha *Omkring sprogteoriens grundlaeggelse*, česky *O základech teorie jazyka* od již zmíněného čelného strukturalisty Louise Hjelmsleva. Jen dodávám zcela mimořádný rys: Jak překlad Hjelmsleva z dánštiny, tak překlad de Saussura z francouzštiny vyšly opakovaně, což jiná národní lingvistika nedokázala, Američané ještě ani vydavatelsky neopakují svého „slavného“ Chomského a už se orientují jinam.

V poslední době vzniká mnoho překladů důležitých lingvistických textů a učebnic, viz například řada *Lingvistika* v nakladatelství Karolinum. Na druhé straně: mnohé zásadní práce bývaly a dosud mnohdy jsou recipovány přes angličtinu, ať už jako jazyk originálu nebo překladu. Například v odborných kurzech se studentům často předkládají ke studiu texty v angličtině. Nestačí to? Pro první a jistě dobré seznámení ano. Pro druhé, vědecktější, spojené s rozbořením (zvláště pro lingvisty, ale nejenom), je to málo (já jsem kvůli poznámkám Ferdinanda de Saussura musel načíst vlastně celou malou knihovnu...).

haranténa – nucený pobyt dětí doma
naroušitel – člověk, pohybující se na veřejnosti bez roušky
upchrchlík – migrant s koronavirem
mateřirouška – rouška ušitá maminkou
nákazník – návštěvník obchodu, potenciálně nakažený koronavirem
koronovační klenoty – roušky a respirátory

obr. 1: Několik nových slovíček z internetu z doby prvních týdnů s koronavirem

Od problematiky překladu není daleko k pomůckám překladatele. Vy sám se dlouhodobě zabýváte lexikografií, tedy teorií a praxí zpracování slovní zásoby do slovníků. Čeština se díky Vám může pochlubit frazeologickým slovníkem, který je podle mého názoru i v mezinárodním měřítku naprosto jedinečný. Váš opus magnum – pětidílný *Slovník české frazeologie a idiomatiky*. A kromě toho jste také autorem či spoluautorem několika dvojjazyčných, překladových slovníků. Jak se bohemista, anglista a nederlandista dostane například k psaní česko-laoského slovníku?

Slovník české frazeologie a idiomatiky jsme spolu s kolegy dávali dohromady několik desetiletí a je zřejmě největší svého druhu vůbec. Původně vznikala jako plnění manka dat pro výuku studentů z ciziny, kam patřila ale i detailní analýza deseti tisíc nejčastějších slov češtiny, která se stala podkladem pro učebnice a skripta. Při tom postupem času vzniklo cosi jako česká frazeologická škola. No a u těch dalších slovníků to bylo různé, ale v pozadí byla potřeba porozumět potřebám a problémům studentů a usnadnit jim život. Ten *Česko-laoský slovník* byly původně tři diplomky laoských studentů bohemistiky dané dohromady.

Často zmiňujete, že Vás hodně ovlivnila výuka cizinců. V čem?

Na to jsem zčásti odpověděl výše. Ale znalostí a studiem slovníku jdete i do historie, nejen ale slovníku, i celé kultury. A to je nekonečný svět...

Mnozí kolegové jsou toho názoru, že frazeologie je v případě výuky cizinců jakási třešnička na dortu. Tedy: pokud vůbec, tak učit frazeologii až ty nejpokročilejší. Já si naopak myslím, že ve výuce cizích jazyků by se měla frazeologie akcentovat mnohem víc – pokud tedy přijmeme širší pojetí frazémů jako kombinací založených na nějaké anomálii včetně tak zvaných frazémů pragmatických, vázaných na určité situace. Jak to vidíte Vy? Souhlasím s Vámi. A když se zamyslíte, je i spousta idiomů, které jsou vysoce frekventované už v jádru slovníku (*vyjít vstříc, jít do toho...*). Frazeologie je větší pojetí (nepočítal bych do ní třeba víceslovnou terminologii, jak leckdo dělal v Rusku, ani ne věci pouze „krásné“, tj. metaforické či obrazné). Moje pojetí je obecné a založené na anomálii, především kombinatorické (některá slova formálně i významově), protože některá slova (a nejen ta) se vyskytují jen s několika málo jinými, což je v příkrém protikladu k tomu, na co jsme ze zbytku jazyka zvyklí. V jistém (tomto) smyslu lze takto dělit

vše v jazyce, lexikonu, všechny kombinace, na pravidelné (mající za sebou pravidla formální i sémantická) a nepravidelné/anomální, což je frazeologie a idiomatika (kde ta pravidla nejsou a ani být nemůžou, nestačila se vytvořit, protože neměla podklad v dostatečné analogii mnoha výskytů). Omezená kolokabilita/spojitelnost platí ovšem pro každé slovo, jen si to neuvědomujeme, žádné se nepojí se všemi jinými. To je obecně základem celé možné nové lingvistiky a studia významu.

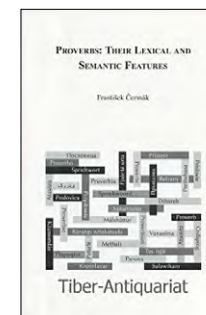
Když člověk s Vámi mluví, dozví se často i to, „co je ještě potřeba udělat“. Teď jste to taky naznačil. Tak co ještě je například ve frazeologii pole neorané? Snad víc ten onomaziologický přístup, spojený s funkcí, tj. proč (v kontrastu k jinému) se říká to či ono. Ale úzus se nesnadno mapuje sevřeně, jde spíš o jednotlivosti.

A co třeba tzv. kognitivní aspekty frazeologie, jak se jimi zabývala například Elisabeth Piirainen? A ona stále diskutovaná „obraznost“? K tomu v češtině mnoho fundovaných publikací nenajdeme.

To je ale jen další dílčí a částečný popis, občas zajímavý, ale nevyčerpávající, jako celý kognitivismus vůbec.

Řadu let jste vedl Ústav českého národního korpusu, který jste i založil. Dnes si už lingvisté asi ani nedovedou svou práci bez jazykových korpusů představit. Jak to tehdy bylo?

Velké jazykové komunity mají i tu výhodu, že se více lidí dělí o práci, i detailně. Malé, kam patří i čeština, tu výhodu nemají a leccos vyzkoumaného či napsaného jim chybí. Pokud jsem nechtěl myslet jen na sebe (a čist anglicky, francouzsky, rusky aj.), musel jsem si chybějící z toho, co jsem potřeboval a chtěl, vytvořit sám. Odtud tedy – o tom jsme už mluvili – mé překlady z největších lingvistů nebo výzkum a popis frazeologie, ale nakonec i vlastně relativně „celý“ jazyk v podobě *Českého národního korpusu*, pro který jsem získal řadu spřízněných lingvistů odjinud, nakonec jsem získal i granty a začátkem 90. let založil ústav, který *Český národní korpus* buduje a také vytváří nějaké výzkumné aplikace. Korpus měl mimo jiné tvořit bázi pro nový výkladový slovník češtiny, kterého je stále potřeba a který dosud chybí. Zároveň vznikl, původně ze zájmu o mluvený a opomíjený jazyk, i *Pražský mluvený korpus*, na který jsme nabalili další, vznikl i velkolepý



mnohojazyčný korpus *InterCorp*, vše hodně užívané a oceňované ve světě i doma. Co vše v korpusu (dnes už nejen synchronním) lze najít, záleží na tom, jak se člověk zeptá, vždycky je ale, pokud chci dospět k významu a úzu, třeba se napřed zeptat nějak na formu a ze získané konkordance vysoudit to další, zvláště význam. Je to zásadní zdroj informací, jehož miliardy slov, vždy v kontextu, jsou dnes základem pro výzkum, slovníky, výuku aj., vždy ale ukazují skutečný úzus, nejen ten do nedávna do nebes vynášený spisovný (ten je dnes ostatně v menšině). Samo hledání v korpusu, čte-li si v něm člověk chvilku, je krajně zajímavé až dobrodružné, ale vždycky přitažlivé, vzbuzuje hlad po dalším poznání.

Tím jste mi trochu nahrál na poslední otázku, kterou zároveň uzavřu pomyslný kruh. Mezi dárky k Vaším narozeninám byly i detektivky, které máte rád. My dva spolu sdílíme lásku k Agatě Christie a já se Vás vždycky, když se o detektivkách bavíme, zapomenu zeptat: Máte raději příběhy s Herculem Poirotem nebo je Vám milejší Miss Marple?

To je těžké, mám rád obojí. Autorka je chytrá ženská, uvažuje a píše jasně a liší dobře muže od ženy...

Za rozhovor děkuje a všechno nejlepší do dalších let i za *Czech Language News* přeje

Kateřina Šichová

Prof. PhDr. František Čermák, DrSc. (nar. 1940 v Praze) vystudoval bohemistiku, anglistiku a nederlandistiku na Filozofické fakultě Univerzity Karlovy v Praze. Od roku 1963 pracoval v Ústavu bohemistických studií FF UK. Po Listopadu 1989 krátce působil jako vedoucí lexikografického

oddělení Ústavu pro jazyk český Akademie věd ČR. Od roku 1994 pracoval v Ústavu českého národního korpusu FF UK, který ve stejném roce založil. Je čelným představitelem a propagátorem korpusové lingvistiky v Česku a *Český národní korpus*, který se svým týmem vybudoval, patří k největším jazykovým korpusům na světě. Za jeho další životní dílo lze považovat *Slovník české frazeologie a idiomatiky*, v němž aplikoval a propojil svoje pojetí frazeologických jednotek jazyka a slovníkové tvorby. Ve své odborné činnosti se dále věnuje lexikologii a lexikografii, sémantice, morfologii, otázkám tzv. jazykové kultury nebo typologickému zkoumání jazyků. Je členem mnoha odborných sdružení a redakčních rad odborných časopisů v ČR i v zahraničí.



The Queen's Court and Green Mountain Manuscripts: With Other Forgeries of the Czech Revival. Edited and Translated by David L. Cooper. Ann Arbor: Michigan Slavic Publications, 2018. Bibliography. Index. 234 + xxx pages. Cloth.

Although they played an enormous role in the Czech National Revival, were the source of a bitter polemic, and have been subjected to enormous scrutiny, *The Queen's Court and Green Mountain Manuscripts* (*Rukopisy královédvorský a zelenohorský*, RKZ) have not been given the attention they deserve in English-language publications. Indeed, prior English translations are rare and the last one is from more than a century and a half ago. Yet the manuscripts, “discovered” in the 1810s and purporting to be from the distant Czech past, whatever one thinks of them, are an essential part of modern Czech culture. To this day, all visitors to Vyšehrad in Prague who see the statues *Záboj and Slavoj* and *Lumír and Song* or all those who attend the National Theater's production of Smetana's opera *Libuše*, which are based on material in the manuscripts, are very much witnesses of this process of national revival. Unfortunately, however, much of this aspect of Czech culture has been inaccessible to the English-language world. David Cooper has taken on the important task of filling this lacuna.

In this volume, Cooper also includes the texts of two other manuscripts discovered in the same era: “Song beneath Vyšehrad” and “Love Song of King Václav.” Cooper provides the reader with a bilingual edition of all four manuscripts.¹ The Czech text is provided on the left with a translation into English on the right. Cooper also provides the reader with a valuable selection of materials from the reviews, criticism and polemics in English translation. For example, he includes excerpts from Josef Dobrovský's “Literary Fraud” and his review of the texts published in *Prawda Ruska* (both from 1824) and Šafařík's and Palacký's defense of the manuscripts from 1840. Materials from the later period include excerpts from T. G. Masaryk's criticism and Julius Grégr's defense.

In addition to these texts, Cooper provides much supporting material. Any reader new to the subject will be well informed on the topic of the manuscripts and the subsequent controversy and well prepared for further exploration. In the introduction he gives the reader the necessary background regarding the discovery of the manuscripts and Dobrovský's immediate skepticism with regard to the *Green Mountain Manuscript*. He also covers the mounting attacks on the authenticity of the manuscripts as well as the Czech patriotic defense that continued well into the 1870s and 1880s. There is no direct evidence regarding the identity of the possible forgers, but Cooper discusses the circumstances. He names not only Václav Hanka and Josef Linda, but also Václav Alois Svoboda and the painter František Horčíčka as suspects. However, those who have argued for Hanka, Linda and Svoboda as the forgers have had to stumble with the problem that the RKZ are at a much higher poetic level than anything else these men published under their own names. Thus, Cooper also cites Karel Krejčí's argument that Josef Jungmann should be considered a possible participant (xx–xxi). Since he is planning to devote further attention to the manuscripts, indeed another book, Cooper does not cover developments in the twentieth century: for example, the various scientific tests performed on the manuscripts.

Within the text of the translations Cooper provides footnotes with key linguistic, historical, and geographical information. Cooper also provides a valuable set of additional notes at the end of the manuscripts section. These notes draw heavily on the work of a contemporary literary historian¹ and provide much more detail for each poem. The note for the poem “Oldřich and Boleslav,” for example, is two pages long (128–30). All readers should appreciate the summaries of the poems he provides as well as the historical and cultural background. Cooper also points to possible sources for the manuscripts, including analogues found in the Russian songbooks known to Hanka and his contemporaries (for example, M. Chulkov's *Sobranie raznykh pesen*).

In the Translator's Note, Cooper poses an extremely interesting and amusing question: “How should one translate fake Old Czech poetry into English?” Thankfully, Cooper resists the urge to try to reproduce entirely the antiquated language of the manuscripts. He argues, correctly, that there is little point in this, stating that the “false antiquarian aspects far from



Rukopis Královédvorský.

exhaust the interest of the originals” and that “[t]he antique language form can be suggested by a few strategic archaisms in English” (xxiii).

The bigger task Cooper faces in his goal of translating the manuscripts is preserving “the elements of oral poetic forms that they manifest” (xxiv). Translating verse from one language to another is never an easy task, but it is made all the more difficult here by the fact that despite the rather small number of poems in the manuscripts, there is a wide variety of verse forms. For good measure, most of the Czech poems are syllabic in nature, a form for which there is no native tradition in English. After considering several options, Cooper has chosen to use a line with four stresses because of its relation to native English folksongs and ballads (xxv). Since the poems in the manuscripts are very pointedly unrhymed, Cooper also preserves this feature in the English translation.

Cooper's choices in term of approach to translation are quite successful. For this review, I performed an additional reading of the translated English

text without glancing at the Czech original. Judged on its own terms, the English text reads quite well. Cooper's choice in lexicon does indeed convey an old-fashioned feel to the translated text without making it incomprehensible. The reader definitely has the sense that the text is a product of a bygone, medieval era but yet it is accessible enough for a modern ear to comprehend and enjoy.

In sum, Cooper's book not only provides the English-language reader with the text of the manuscripts in a quality translation but is a good introduction to the context and controversy surrounding them. As Cooper rightfully argues, the manuscripts remain of interest to this day. In terms of history, "they offer an insightful image of the romantic ideal of Czech nationality," and in terms of esthetics, they are "clothed in an appealing and direct poetic language that has aged far better than Macpherson's sentimental Ossianic translations" (xxii). The book brings much needed attention to this important phenomenon in the development of modern Czech culture. It is a valuable contribution to the field and we await Cooper's further study of the manuscripts.

Andrew M. Drozd

Andrew M. Drozd teaches at the University of Alabama. His research interests include Russian and Czech language and literature, East European history, and Slavic folklore. His current research focuses on Czech-Russian literary interrelations.

¹/ Cooper uses Dalibor Dobíáš's edition of the manuscripts, *Rukopis královédvorský, Rukopis zelenohorský* (Brno: Host, 2010). See also: Dalibor Dobíáš, ed. *Rukopisy královédvorský a zelenohorský. Studie z recepce v kultuře a umění* (Prague: Akademia 2019) and Dalibor Dobíáš et al, *Rukopisy královédvorský a zelenohorský a česká věda, 1817–1875* (Prague: Akademia, 2014).

VARIA

Konference českých škol v USA a Kanadě – „Online burza nápadů“

Namísto tradiční konference Českých škol v USA a Kanadě, která se měla letos konat už po deváté (tentokrát v Severní Karolíně), proběhlo ve dnech 30.–31. května 2020 první virtuální setkání českých škol v USA a Kanadě pod taktovkou Marty McCabe z Czech and Slovak Schools of North Carolina a Yevy Zaels z Calgary Czech School, Kanada. Na konferenci se zaregistrovalo 140 účastníků, z toho 76 zástupců 26 českých škol v USA a Kanadě, 27 představitelů českých škol v Evropě, a 37 dalších zájemců. Podrobnější zprávu z Burzy nápadů otiskneme v příštím čísle.

Krajané v zahraničí – nová webová stránka

Ministerstvo zahraničních věcí České republiky zřídilo novou webovou stránku pro záležitosti krajanů v zahraničí: https://www.mzv.cz/cesi_v_zahranici/cz/uvodni_slovo.html

Stránky zahrnují informace o zastupitelských úřadech v zahraničí, školství a vzdělávání, o zdravotním a sociálním pojištění, právní problematice, podnikání a kultuře. Webové stránky spravuje pracoviště oddělení zmocněnce pro krajské záležitosti MZV.

Literární soutěž: A Bohemian State of Mind as the Earth Stands Still

České Centrum v New Yorku pořádá novou literární soutěž pro studenty češtiny, české literatury a historie na univerzitách v USA. Více informací zde: <http://new-york.czechcentres.cz/program/event-details/literary-contest-a-bohemian-state-of-mind-as-the-e/>

Datum odevzdání prací: 16. srpna 2020. Doufáme, že se literární soutěž stane tradicí, i když současné podmínky pominou!

Výzva do příštího čísla

Napište nám o svých pedagogických zkušenostech z doby koronavirové krize! Jak u vás probíhala výuka online? Podařilo se vám uskutečnit některé z vašich záměrů pomocí nových technologií? Které z nových technologií se vám osvědčily či neosvědčily při realizaci výuky? Vaše zkušenosti rádi otiskneme v příštím čísle. Své příspěvky zasílejte na adresu: vtuckerova@fas.harvard.edu

Neil Bermel

Along with his colleague Dunstan Brown of York University, Neil Bermel is leading a major research project with seven institutions in the UK, Czech Republic and Croatia. Their project, called “Feast and Famine: Confronting Overabundance and Defectivity in Language,” is funded by the UK’s Arts and Humanities Research Council and will run for three years starting this autumn. The two Czech partners are the Ústav českého národního korpusu FF UK and the Ústav pro jazyk český AV ČR. Czech is one of four languages to be investigated on the project (along with Croatian, Estonian and Finnish).

You can read more about the project here: <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/slc/news/feast-and-famine-grammatical-forms> and <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/feastandfamine>

David Cooper

David Cooper received the 2019 AATSEEL book prize in the category Best Scholarly Translation for: *The Queen’s Court and Green Mountain Manuscripts With Other Forgeries of the Czech Revival*. Edited and Translated by David L. Cooper (Ann Arbor, MI, Michigan Slavic Publications, 2018). The book is reviewed in this issue of the Czech Language News.

Masako Fidler

Masako Fidler facilitated a multi-disciplinary Memorandum of Understanding between Brown University and Charles University involving faculty and student exchange for the next five years. This expands the previous MoU to include not only the Arts Faculty at Charles, but also the Mathematics and Physics Faculty. The exchange became a model for multi-disciplinary exchanges for which Brown won a prestigious NAFSA award in 2019. Masako also continues her collaboration with the Czech National Corpus, resulting in two publications:

Fidler, M. 2019. The power of “not saying who” in Czech onomatopoeia. Ideophones, Mimetics and Expressives (<https://benjamins.com/catalog/ill.16.09fid>), ed. by K. Akita and P. Prashant. *Benjamins*. 200–227.

Cvrček, V. and M. Fidler. 2019. More than keywords: Discourse prominence analysis of Russian Web Portal Sputnik Czech Republic. *Political Discourse in Central, Eastern and Balkan Europe*, edited by Martina Berrocal and Aleksandra Salamurović. *Benjamins*. 93–117. <https://doi.org/10.1075/dapsac.84.05cvr>

Abigail Weil

Abigail Weil’s dissertation “Man is Indestructible: Legend and Legitimacy in the Worlds of Jaroslav Hašek,” defended at Harvard in 2019, was awarded the 2019 Radomír Luža Prize for an outstanding work in the field of Austrian and/or Czechoslovak History in the 20th Century.

