

Konference *Setkání s češtinou*
 Oddělení textové lingvistiky a stylistiky
 Ústav pro jazyk český AV ČR

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U příležitosti 90. výročí svého založení pořádá Ústav pro jazyk český Akademie věd České republiky ve dnech 6. a 7. září 2001 konferenci **Setkání s češtinou**, s podtitulem *Setkání zahraničních a českých bohemistů*. Ústav pro jazyk český je akademickým pracovištěm, které se zabývá vědeckým výzkumem národního jazyka, jeho podob spisovných i nespisovných, a to jak z hlediska synchronního, tak i diachronního. Mezi další oblasti zájmu Ústavu pro jazyk český patří obecná jazykověda a výběrově i zkoumání slovanských a neslovanských jazyků v konfrontaci s češtinou.

Konference **Setkání s češtinou** si klade za cíl mimo jiné poukázat na to, že zkoumání českého jazyka není náplní pouze českých akademických pracovišť, ale že češtinou se často na velmi vysoké vědecké úrovni zabývají lingvisté na celém světě. Konference by měla být příležitostí k setkání těch, kteří s češtinou pracují, měla by umožnit, aby si čeští i zahraniční bohemisté mohli vyměnit své zkušenosti, promluvit si o problémech, se kterými se při výuce češtiny setkávají, vzájemně si doporučit nové publikace a studijní materiály. **Setkání s češtinou** chce být prostorem otevřeným pro ty, kteří chtějí prezentovat závěry či předběžné dílčí výsledky svých výzkumů před zasvěceným publikem. Referujícím budou jistě přínosem komentáře kolegů, kteří se potýkají se stejnými či velmi podobnými problémy a těžkostmi.

Čeští bohemisté jsou obklopeni výhradně česky mluvícím prostředím. Situace zahraničních bohemistů je jiná, jsou obklopeni jinojazyčnými mluvčími, což jim umožňuje nahlížet na češtinu z jiného úhlu. Konference **Setkání s češtinou** bude výjimečnou příležitostí, jak se seznámit s prací kolegů, jak navázat a prohloubit spolupráci (třeba i na konkrétních projektech) mezi českými a zahraničními pracovišti.

Předběžně jsme se pokusili vymezit tři poměrně široké tematické okruhy, které nám připadají v souvislosti se záměry naší konference aktuální a závažné:

1. Čeština a její sociokulturní situace
2. Čeština a jiné jazyky
3. Učební materiály, nové učební metody a postupy

Kromě denního, pracovního setkání nabízejí pořadatelé konference všem účastníkům i večerní, neformální setkání ve smíchovském pivovaru, kde budou mít všichni možnost po krátké prohlídce pivovaru pokračovat v započatých zajímavých debatách.

Veškeré informace o konferenci *Setkání s češtinou* naleznete na webové stránce: www.ujc.cas.cz/setkani. Velmi rádi odpovíme na případné dotazy, rádi si přečteme vaše připomínky nebo náměty - obraťte se na náš prostřednictvím e-mailu, naše adresa zní: setkani@ujc.cas.cz.

Svou účast na konferenci již potvrdili někteří známí zahraniční i čeští bohemisté. Jejich seznam naleznete též na naší webové stránce.

Věříme, že nabízený program, jak odborný, tak společenský, bude vhodnou příležitostí k Vaší podzimní návštěvě Prahy.

The Labyrinth of Quantifiers
 for Advanced Czech Students

George Cummins,
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Advanced Czech students face some maddening problems using numerals and quantifiers. Here are some interesting points to consider.

1. Cardinals and indefinite quantifiers. We know that cardinal numerals above *tři*, *čtyři* take the gen pl of the count noun, that adjectives modifying these numerals are also gen pl, and that the main verb, rather than agreeing with them as subject as it does with *dva*, *tři*, *čtyři*, goes into the default neuter: *těch pět posledních mužů bylo trestně stíháno* 'those last five men were prosecuted.' Numerals *pět* and above share these syntactic features with indefinite quantifiers like *několik*, *mnoho*, *málo* as well as with common quantifying constructions with noun gen and verb neuter, such as *přibýlo zákazníků* 'there have become more customers,' *tam je lidí!* 'what a lot of people!' (cf. *tam jsou lidé* 'there are people there')

Many speakers have generalized the quantifying numerals for all numbers above four, so that 21, 22, 23, 24 and all succeeding series have a fixed genderless form, take the gen pl of the counted noun, and default neuter agreement: *dvacet jedna chlapců* like *jedenadvacet chlapců* (cf. more conservative *dvacet jeden chlapec* 'twenty-one boys')

2. Indefinite quantifiers. *Několik*, *mnoho* have become like *pět* in developing a single oblique declensional form: *pěti*, *několika*, *mnoha*. These new indefinites include *tisíc* and *milión*, which are inanimate masculine nominal quantifiers when used as indefinites: *kam, komu a zač šly milióny korun?* 'where, to whom and for what did millions of crowns go?', *demonstrovaly tisíce lidí* 'thousands of people demonstrated' (contrast this with the quantifying numeral *na demonstraci se sešlo tři sta lidí* 'three hundred people gathered at the demonstration').

Mostly, however, quantifiers in Czech tend to lose the nominal features of case, number, and gender. Thus *málo* is indeclinable (*s málo lidmi*), as *pár* (*s pár korunami* (in the sense of *několik málo*)) and the very common *čtvrt* 'one fourth,' *tříčtvrtě* 'three fourths' (*po čtvrt roce, před tříčtvrtě rokem*). (Among indeclinables, note also the measure term *kilo*, with colloquial gen pl *pět kilo*.) Prepositions too will govern through indeclinable quantifiers and adverbs, as long as the counted noun or an indefinite at the end of the phrase can mark the case: *v hodně ohledech* 'in lots of relations,' *s více než osmi sty fotografiemi*, 'with more than eight hundred photographs.'

3. Compound cardinal numerals. These are declensionally unstable in Czech. Sometimes all components are declined, sometimes only the tens and the units. Sometimes the entire compound does not decline. There is an internal logic to the patterns of quasi-declined segments, but the realization of that logic seems to vary with the creativity of the speaker and how firmly a numeral segment is

associated with being declined. In some instances the last segment or two mark case, cf. *bez tisíc sedm set padesát(i) osmi korun*). In others the numerals may be all or partially declined (but not necessarily at the end): *bez dvou miliónů pět(i) set tisíc osm(i) set padesát(i) dvou korun* ‘minus 2,500,852 crowns,’ with *dvou* (*dva* is always declined) and *miliónů* (declined, as it is when it is an indefinite quantifier), but otherwise undeclined forms. Very often *sto*, *tisíc*, *milión* work like indefinites in compound cardinals and take the counted noun in the gen pl. In oblique case noun phrases there needs to be at least one form with an unambiguous case marker. Usually it is the indefinite *tisíc* or *milión*, as they have nearly standard nominal declensions and can mark the case, as compared with *pěti*, *několika* (*sto* is likely to be undeclined). Trace the markings in this example:

Zákon by měl umožnit, aby mohlo být téměř sto [indecl] padesáti [oblique] tisícům [dat] lidí [gen pl], z toho mnoha [oblique] tisícům [dat] Čechů [gen pl], ještě letos vyplaceno odškodnění

‘the law ought to make it possible that almost one hundred fifty thousand people, among them many thousands of Czechs, might receive indemnification this year.’ (*Mladá fronta dnes*)

If the numeral has no more than three components, I recommend that the student go ahead and decline all the parts, leaving *sto* unchanged if there is no case ambiguity. This last sentence could serve as a model and might be memorized.

4. Fractions are easy to learn to read: *15,4 procenta*, *16 procent*, *0,1 procenta*, *růst zpomalil z květnových 6,5 procenta* ‘growth has slowed since May’s 6.5 percent.’ A fraction such as 6,5 is read *šest celých pět desetin (procenta)*, ‘six wholes five tenths (of a percent — gen sg of procento) or *šest a půl procenta* ‘6 and a half percent.’

5. Some other kinds of numerals. The Czech category called *názvy čísel* ‘names of numbers,’ which I call reifiers, is beautifully developed in Czech. Every student of Czech knows *dvaadvacítka* ‘tram number 22,’ *jednička* ‘first-class, grade of A,’ *tisícovka* ‘thousand-crown bank note.’ The meanings of these forms are context-bound—*dvěstěpadesátka* ‘250 cc.-engine motorcycle’ (among motorcycle lovers), ‘application form from the ministry of education for a grant that provides 250,000 crowns (among scholars in natural sciences), *jedenáctka* ‘soccer team; penalty kick in soccer,’ ‘dress size #11.’ The older, original *skupinové číslovky* for 2-5 were *dvojice*, *trojice*, *čtveřice*, *pětice*. Note the proverb *do třetice všeho dobrého* ‘all good things come in threes.’

6. Set Numerals. Two more categories you ought to be familiar with are the interrelated *souborové* (set) and *druhově* (type) *číslovky*, as in *dvoje zápalky* ‘two boxes of matches’ and *dvojí zápalky* ‘two kinds of matches,’ vs. the cardinal *dvě zápalky* ‘two

matches.’ Set numerals express the number of sets or ensembles, not the number of individual pieces: *jedny rukavice* ‘a pair of gloves’ vs. *jedna rukavice* ‘one glove.’ Unlike cardinals, set numbers may be used with mass or collective nouns: *dvoje povlečení* ‘two sets of quilt covers.’ Note that they are construed as adjectives agreeing with their head noun, which may be in any case. Their oblique forms are adjectival (*bez dvojího povlečení*). With *pluralia tantum* set numerals are used as cardinals in the NA: *dvoje housle* ‘two violins,’ *bez dvojích houslí* ‘without two violins.’ Set numerals up to five are common: *jedny* (n *jedna*), *dvoje*, *troje*, *čtvery* (*čtvera*), *patery* (*patera*).

Druhově číslovky ‘type numerals’ have a full declension, coinciding with *souborové* in oblique cases. They too may occur with just about any category of noun, count, mass, collective, or abstract, as they do not count tokens or entities but sorts or ‘kinds’: *dvojí víno* ‘two kinds of wine,’ *dvojí láska* ‘two kinds of love, two-fold love.’ Note the important difference between *dvoje víno* ‘two wine sets’ and *dvojí víno* ‘two kinds of wine.’ *Obojí* ‘both kinds,’ as also *oboje* ‘both’ (with *pl tantum*, mass nouns and abstractions) are common. *Obojí* can play an important anaphoric role and can refer to dual entities or notions that are present in discourse: *přijímat pod obojí* ‘take communion with both kinds (wine and bread),’ *čaj nebo kafe? — vezmu si obojí* ‘tea or coffee? I’ll take both.’

7. Aggregate numerals. I would like to mention another category of numbers (no longer productive in Czech) which the student may encounter, called by the *Mluvnice češtiny* (2) (1986) *úhrnné* ‘summary’ or ‘aggregate.’ These forms resemble set numerals but take the gen pl. of the counted noun. *Mluvnice* illustrates this category (117) with the example *Ve vestibulu je pět soch [cardinal] — je patery soch [this is the so-called ‘aggregate’] — je pětice soch [group numeral]*. The ‘aggregate’ numeral is supposed to mean that these five make up in themselves all the statuary of the vestibule. But this distinction is very bookish—no one nowadays, for example, says *mám tři děti* to mean ‘I have three children, and that is the sum total of them.’

Those forms that have survived have a referential (definite) discourse meaning, e.g. *desatero přikázání* ‘the ten commandments’ (of Moses), from which Czech gets the modern *desatero pro řidiče* ‘the driver’s ten commandments.’ Outside of proverbial and fixed expressions, however, these forms are no longer used. Commoner than *čtvero ročních období* ‘the four seasons of the year’ is *čtyři roční období*. The meaning of definiteness here comes from the context.

8. Other notes and curiosities. The student, it goes without saying, should know the *řadové číslovky* (‘ordinals’) and their alternate formations, such as *dvaadvacátý* vs. *dvacátý druhý* ‘twenty-second.’ As a curiosity here note that Czech has an ordinal for

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zero, *nultý*. ‘For the first time,’ ‘for the second time’ and so on is expressed *poprvé*, *podruhé*, *pokolikáté* ‘how many times (did this happen)?’ ‘In the first place,’ etc., usually in listing excuses for one’s actions or reasoning, *is za prvé*, *za druhé*.

Then there are the names of the numbers, e.g. in counting and in doing arithmetic problems: *jedna*, *dvě/dva*, *tři*, and, especially important, in the names of years in -1, e.g. *devatenáct set devadesát jedna* ‘1991.’ For more on numerals and more varieties of numerals, see *Příruční mluvnice češtiny*. UČJ FF Masarykovy univerzity v Brně. Lidové noviny. 1995, 301-310, and the more garrulous *Mluvnice češtiny (2) Tvarosloví*. Jan Petr, general ed. Academia. 1986, 105-128 and 402-407.

Peter Steiner: *Deserts of Bohemia: Czech Fiction in Its Social Context*.
Cornell University Press, 2000, 288 p. ISBN:
0801437172

To the modest observer of writing and politics, Czech fiction in the twentieth century offers an embarrassment of riches. During these years, fictional texts lived destinies that resembled the lives of public individuals. According to the moment and the context, both could be understood as the incarnation of an absolute principle, only to be rejected and reinterpreted as the incarnation of another—often contrary—absolute principle. Texts always revealed their true identity. But that identity depended on the context, and one fate could be exchanged for another on remarkably short notice. In the encounter between poetic texts and political contexts, what gave those who directed politics the edge against poetic texts was their control over the state political and cultural apparatus. What gave writers the edge against this state apparatus is the broader subject of *Deserts of Bohemia: Czech Fiction in Its Social Context*, the recent book by Peter Steiner, Professor of Slavic Literature at the University of Pennsylvania. As Steiner argues, texts are infinitely reusable artifacts. The dustbin of history, as far as texts are concerned, is only the wishful projection of the rulers. In the twentieth century, the dustbin of history turns out to be a recycling depot. Texts from this depot invariably outlive their masters.

That Czech fiction is inseparable from Czech political history is a basic premise of *Deserts of Bohemia*. To write in the Czech language at all placed Czech writers of the nineteenth century and later in a manifestly political relationship to the official German-language state. The emergence of a specifically ‘Czech’ public during this period, as well as the geopolitical significance of the Czech lands in the subsequent struggles for world power in the twentieth century, always ensured that what Czech writers had to say mattered. And yet, to approach fictional texts as a translation into the local language of a particular ideology, whether nationalism, Marxism, or liberalism, is to restrict greatly the unique character of texts. Literary genres, styles of writing, and modes of self-representation are not national achievements. They are shared features of fiction that extend across linguistic and national boundaries. Recent reports on testimony presented to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission charged with investigating crimes during the apartheid era in South Africa provide a recent example. One of the most compelling witnesses to testify before the Commission recalled the injustice of the previous state against her individual rights. How, she asked, could the state authorities prevent her from burying the body of her brother—regardless of his crimes? Her account of injustice captured the imagination of the public precisely because it was a narrative structure they already knew. It is the tale of Antigone, the story of a daughter forbidden by the state to bury her father. Such narrative structures sleep in the minds of readers and listeners. They wait for a suitable moment and context to be realized. In South Africa, committee

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members woke up to find themselves living in a political context structured by the stories of ancient Greek drama.

In his chapter on Julius Fučík, Steiner shows how such a formal approach to fictional texts can propose a different understanding of even those books that no longer seem capable of keeping us awake. Following Northrop Frye, Steiner sees Reportáž, psaná na oprátce as adhering to the narrative conventions of the romance genre. At its most basic, this genre tells the story of ‘man’s vision of his own life as a quest,’ a quest motivated by his relentless desire to transcend the unsatisfactory situation to which he is confined. Such stories resemble a wish-fulfillment dream. They are particularly persuasive to audiences because they present straightforward conflicts in which the distinction between good and bad characters is absolute, and in which the regime of lies is vanquished by the triumph of truth, beauty, and justice. The most fundamental Western narrative of this type is the struggle, death, disappearance, and triumphal resurrection of Jesus Christ. But the story of Marxism, as Frye suggested, is also fundamentally a romance narrative. It is the particular achievement of Julius Fučík in Reportáž, psaná na oprátce to have joined together elements from both these narratives to create the story of his own life. Himself frequently mistaken for dead only to be discovered alive, Fučík’s final demise is redeemed by the ‘happy ending’ of history at which the proletariat rids the

world forever of the tyrannical class rule of the bourgeoisie. Moreover, as Steiner convincingly shows, Fučík self-consciously employs the passion narrative of Jesus Christ to maximum effect in Reportáž. Language, imagery, and emplotment all serve this effort to model the Fučík story after that of Christ—including betrayal by a member of his own circle, temptation by his Nazi interlocutor, and transcendence in death. To be sure, the communist Fučík replaced the Christological religious symbolism with a Marxist one. Or, in the words of Steiner, ‘ad resurrectionem per insurrectionem.’

Fučík rises from the trash-bin of literary history looking like the martyr the communists always claimed him to be. By contrast, it is a distinctly un-martyr-like Karel Čapek who takes shape in a chapter devoted to his collection of stories *Apokryfy*. These short texts, first published in *Lidové noviny* between 1920 and 1938 and later collected for publication, would seem an unlikely instrument for political discourse. Nor does the heterogeneous nature of the texts themselves, which range from a philosophical lecture, to a dramatic fragment written in blank verse to a letter, speak for their political significance. Yet, an examination of the circumstances surrounding their publication reveals the highly pragmatic intention behind them. Thus the text, ‘As in the Good Old Days,’ published on August 3, 1926, is not simply a philosophical dialogue between two citizens of ancient Thebes about the nature of justice and the rumors concerning a local military leader. Placed in the context of August 1926, it is rather an allegorical justification of the editorial decision taken by *Lidové noviny*, in deference to the government, to refrain from speculation on the politically sensitive investigation of the right-wing General Radola Gajda. In *Apokryfy*, Čapek used fiction to mask

political comment. His texts thus conceal their significance according to the original sense of the Greek verb *kryptein* 'to hide', from which the word 'apocrypha' is derived. Viewed from this perspective, the other literary innovations for which Čapek is celebrated lose some of their technical character and acquire a political edge. His introduction of multiperspectival narrative into Czech literature and his relativist approach to knowledge become less the product of a gentle soul who loved gardening, small animals, and the countryside than the hard-nosed practical strategies of a writer trying to reach the multi-ethnic society of the First Republic. At the same time, the apocryphal texts should be seen as a work of literature. Indeed, as Steiner suggests, their arrangement and manner of presentation reveal Čapek addressing a problem that had long preoccupied him: the question of how to write a biography adequate to the complexity of an individual life.

A slippery aesthetics that barely conceals its politics, a slippery politics that claims an aesthetic agenda at the first sign of trouble. *Deserts of Bohemia* explores fully this ironic dimension of Czech literary history. Yet where the power of genre to shape narrative and the power of ironic autostylization are given such authority, the ability of individual personalities to shape events will necessarily be diminished. To this extent, *Deserts of Bohemia* tells a story of Czech writers and writing different from the one that prevails in English-speaking countries. That story is largely a hero cult of small but significant deeds. It is one of Czech dissidents and dodgers in which their individual act of resistance was always more significant than their books. In the United States, the slogan 'living in truth' is still probably better known than the title of any single drama by Václav Havel. Meanwhile, the fact that the ironic perspective of Milan Kundera was always understood as a gesture of resistance rather than accommodation is surely essential to any account of his remarkable success abroad. That readers of Bohumil Hrabal could never quite locate such a dissenting gesture goes some distance toward explaining his extraordinarily weak reception in Anglo-Saxon countries.

While *Deserts of Bohemia* has just been published in English, it is also available in Czech. The Fall/Winter issue of *Kritický sborník* contains an abbreviated version of the chapter on Fučík, while the study of Kundera and *The Joke* is presented in the January and February issue of *Střední Evropa*. The book, which also includes chapters on the *The Good Soldier Švejk*, the Slánský show trials, and Havel's *The Beggar's Opera*, will necessarily find a reception in the Czech Republic different from its reception abroad. Nevertheless, curious readers might wish to use the rare opportunity of a book on Czech literature appearing in English to assess the current state of Czech and Anglo-American literary relations.

The appearance of the book provides an occasion to reflect. For while the Czech past offers an embarrassment of riches for the study of politics and fiction, the future of the literary enterprise is not so assured. Have we reached the end of a unique era whose history is now being written? Looking back, it is impossible to imagine a Czech politics without fiction. Looking forward, the picture is more cloudy. Czech politics will survive without literature, but

will the remarkable legacy of Czech literature survive without its role in politics?

Michael Burri - Villanova University

**CZECHOSLOVAK SOCIETY OF
ARTS AND SCIENCES
SVU STUDENT AWARDS
FOR THE YEAR 2001
Dr. JOSEPH HASEK AWARD**

The Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences (SVU) is announcing a competition for the 2001 Dr. Joseph Hasek student awards. The names of the winners will be announced in the Society's newsletters.

The main purpose of the Society's awards is to generate and encourage scholarly interest in Czech and Slovak affairs among university students living outside the Czech and Slovak republics. There will be one prize for the best undergraduate and one for the best graduate study dealing with some aspect of Czech and/or Slovak history, politics, or culture. The winners will receive the \$200 Dr. Joseph Hasek award, a year's membership in the Society, which includes a year's subscription to the Society's newsletter, and a certificate of merit.

The following rules apply:

- 1) The paper must be submitted **by the professor** in whose class it was presented and should be accompanied by his recommendation.
- 2) The study must have been written for an undergraduate or graduate course during the academic year 2000-2001. Chapters of theses or dissertations are not admissible.
- 3) The deadline for submission is **June 1, 2001**.
- 4) The study essay should be submitted in triplicate to Professor Vera Borkovec, 12013 Kemp Mill Road, Silver Spring, MD 20902. It must be typewritten, double-spaced and submitted in Czech, Slovak, or any of the major Western languages (English, French or German).
- 5) The Student Awards Committee which will judge the quality of the submitted essays consists of: Prof. Ivo Feierabend (San Diego State University), Prof. Milan Hauner (University of Wisconsin), and Chair, Prof. Vera Borkovec (American University).
- 6) Submitted papers are not returned.