

# Czech Language News

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## Message from the Presidents

This issue of *Czech Language News* focuses on Czech literature and culture, with a focus on the twentieth century. Jonathan Bolton discusses a general education course that he teaches on the history and politics of the post-war period, Clarice Cloutier focuses on the city of Prague as reflected in Czech literature, and Karen von Kunes discusses changes in the Czech language as a result of globalization. Reviews of three recent publications also reflect this focus: Jiří Holy's recent book on post-war Czech literature, *Writers under Siege – Czech Literature since 1945*, Václav Havel's recent book *To the Castle and Back*, and *Slovník Karla Čapka*, the first of a series of corpus-based lexicographical works that will focus on major figures in Czech culture. We hope that you'll enjoy this themed issue, and welcome your suggestions of other themes that you'd like to see addressed in future issues.

Looking ahead to the summer and fall, for our fall issue we'd like to include articles relating to the (in)famous digit -8 in Czech history. Please contact Susan Kresin ([kresin@humnet.ucla.edu](mailto:kresin@humnet.ucla.edu)) if you'd like to contribute.

This year we have decided to expand our presence at the annual meeting of AATSEEL (American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages): in addition to our usual IATC-sponsored panels on Czech literature and Czech linguistics, we're also sponsoring roundtables on translation of Czech literature and on current issues in teaching Czech. A fifth Czech-related panel has also been proposed, focusing on contrastive West Slavic linguistics. The conference will be held December 27–30 in San Francisco, California; for more information, see the website [www.aatseel.org](http://www.aatseel.org). If you'd like to participate in either of the roundtables, please let us know as soon as you can. We also encourage you to plan to attend the autumn meetings of our sister organization, *Asociace učitelů češtiny jako cizího jazyka*, held on September 27 and December 6. More information about these meetings, as well as other Czech-related conferences, can be found within the newsletter.

We wish you a successful end of the school year and a relaxing summer,

Dr. Craig Cravens, University of Texas, Austin, [svejk@mail.utexas.edu](mailto:svejk@mail.utexas.edu)  
Dr. Susan Kresin, University of California, Los Angeles, [kresin@humnet.ucla.edu](mailto:kresin@humnet.ucla.edu)

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### Some Thoughts on Teaching Czech Culture of the 1960s

Jonathan Bolton, Harvard University

This semester, I am teaching a new course on Czech post-war culture in Harvard's "core curriculum" of distribution-requirement courses for undergraduates. I have been grappling, not always successfully, with the question of how to present this material to students who mainly want to fulfill their requirement in "Foreign Cultures" and have no particular attachment to Czech language or Central European history, nor even any pressing interest in the questions of cultural repression and resistance that inevitably emerge from the encounter with twentieth-century Communism.

One of the most challenging tasks, for me, has been to give a sense of how the "Stalinist" culture of the early 1950s gradually gave way to the more relaxed and spontaneous world of the 1960s. We read Julius Fučík's *Notes from the Gallows* and talked about the "Fučík cult" following World War II, and examined excerpts from the testimony in the Slánský trial, supplemented by Zuzana Justman's excellent documentary *A Trial in Prague* and Heda Margolius Kovaly's memoir *Under a Cruel Star*. But while it seemed straightforward to evoke the pathos of opposing repression in the late 1940s and early 1950s, it was harder to demonstrate how Stalinism evolved into something else. I found myself frequently sliding into simplistic oppositions between "official" vs. "unofficial" culture and relying heavily on the idea of a "thaw" (which is, ultimately, an oversimplified and inadequate model of cultural change). Rereading Milan Kundera's *The Joke*, I particularly appreciated its implicit replacement of the "thaw" model with an account of how our personal obsessions lead us to rewrite history, and its reminder that cultural liberalization is, inevitably, a form of forgetting.

In approaching the 1960s, I have found it useful to juxtapose a number of texts and films. Václav Havel's extensive comments on the "renaissance of the small theaters" in *Disturbing the Peace* set up a number of useful debates. Havel praises Jiří Suchý and Jiří Šlitř's Semafor Theater, in particular, for stepping outside of ideological boundaries altogether:

The performances were not about anything. They were just a series of songs, one after another, and the songs themselves were about nothing in particular, but it was the delight in the performances, the rhythm, the pure fun, that seemed to make all those learned ideological debates seem fundamentally inappropriate,

without much in common with real life. It was a manifestation of uncensored life, life that spits on all ideology and all that lofty world of babble; a life that intrinsically resisted all forms of violence, all interpretations, all directives.<sup>1</sup>

Footage of Suchý, Šlitř, and Semafor is easy to turn up on YouTube, and is also prominent in Miloš Forman's 1963 film *Konkurs*, in which he filmed young women trying out during a (fake) singing audition at Semafor.<sup>2</sup> The film can be usefully supplemented by Forman and Jan Novák's immensely entertaining book *Turnaround: A Memoir*. Here, Forman describes the fake audition:

There were moments when the spectacle of the audition became tough to watch. The young women stripped down to the core of their personality and ambition, frequently revealing something so skewed and self-loving that you wanted to look away. I decided to make a film about an open audition in which I'd never look away. I'd keep looking and make the audience watch with me.<sup>3</sup>

In a world inured to the brutal humiliations of American Idol, the *Audition* footage today may seem tame and innocuous, but for just that reason it highlights how rare such forms of direct, unscripted performance were in the cultural landscape in the early 1960s.

Today, when we think about forms of scripted and unscripted culture in this context, it is difficult not to remember the show trials of the 1950s – just ten years before *Audition* was filmed, Czech radio audiences had listened to Rudolf Slánský, Rudolf Margolius, and others recite their self-incriminating testimonies in lifeless voices that left no room for improvisation. (It would be useful to track down just when the Slánský trials began to be interpreted as theater rather than reality – or as theater of the absurd rather than realist drama.) If anything, the show trials enacted, on a grand scale, that everyday disconnect between experience and propaganda, that feeling of alienation from one's own language, that was to become such an obsession of Czech literature and film of the 1960s. This was the same

<sup>1</sup> Václav Havel. *Disturbing the Peace: A Conversation with Karel Hvízd'ala*. Trans. Paul Wilson. (New York: Vintage, 1990) 49.

<sup>2</sup> *Konkurs* was recently re-released as *Audition/Talent Competition* by the British company Second Run DVD, which has been re-releasing many wonderful Central European films and also has an excellent website with links to articles and essays about its titles.

<sup>3</sup> Miloš Forman and Jan Novák. *Turnaround: A Memoir* (New York: Villard, 1994) 134.

sort of scripted culture that Havel mimics and satirizes so skillfully in plays like *The Garden Party* and *The Memorandum*, and that Esther Krumbachová and Jan Němec analyzed in their film *Report on the Party and the Guests* (also recently re-released by Second Run DVD, and a useful counterpart to Havel's plays).

Forman – along with other New Wave directors who used non-professional actors and scripts built around the banality of everyday life – came at this problem from the other direction, not satirizing official language but highlighting those moments when it breaks down. I doubt that Czech audiences watching *Audition* had the Slánský trial on their minds, but a sense for the vertiginous possibilities of everyday language and the “authenticity” of improvised performance certainly underlay much of the cultural critique in the years leading up to the Prague Spring. Forman, of course, is savvy about the possibilities for “authenticity” in film, and in *Turnaround* he is careful to point out that the non-professional actors favored by New Wave directors could themselves seem wooden and artificial when they weren't paired with professionals. Nevertheless, what Forman captured in *Audition*, as well as in *Loves of a Blonde* and *The Fireman's Ball*, was a sense for those moments when we have to perform and yet don't know how. When we try to understand the political potential of such unscripted moments, it may be more useful to think, not in terms of an elusive “authenticity,” but in terms of *trapnost*. The testimony in the show trials, while at some level it was humiliating for the defendants, can't really be seen as “painful” or “embarrassing” – they were, after all, performing their parts quite well. It was a new awareness of the possibility (and power) of such painful moments – Kundera's treatments of *směšnost* in *Laughable Loves* are also relevant here – that opened up cracks in the superserious façade of 1950s culture.

My sense is that, at some point during the last few years, the 1970s began to seem sexier than the 1960s. Tom Stoppard's *Rock 'n' Roll*, based on a careful reading of the varied normalization polemics among Havel, Kundera, and Ivan Jirous, has recently given us (alongside Hrabal, Gruša, Šimečka, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, “The Power of the Powerless” and the Plastic People of the Universe) even more reason to enjoy teaching Czech culture of the 1970s. But those comments by Havel on the Semafor Theater in the 1960s – “Suddenly, against the world of appearance and interpretation, here stood truth – the truth of young people [...] who wanted only to live in their own way, to dance the way they wanted to dance, simply to be in harmony with their own nature” (*Disturbing the*

*Peace*, 49) – closely mirror his account of the music underground of the 1970s, especially of the Plastic People, which comes in chapter four of *Disturbing the Peace* as well as in key essays such as “The Trial” and “The Power of the Powerless.” This parallel raises interesting questions about how much of the oppositional ideology of the 1970s had its roots in “official” culture of the 1960s.<sup>4</sup> An attention to the spontaneity and “non-ideological” slant of much 1960s culture also poses some interesting comparisons to the program of the underground laid out in Ivan Jirous's “Report on the Third Czech Musical Revival.”<sup>5</sup> It may be a bit unfair, given the circumstances, but it is worth pointing out how Jirous's more dogmatic, even shrill presentation of the theoretical foundations of a “second culture” reveals some of the deformations that the “anti-political” official culture of the 1960s underwent when subjected to the extreme political pressures of normalization.

The Prague Spring was of course a heady and inspiring time, but we are coming to view it more and more skeptically, as a botched or doomed effort to reform a flawed system. Jiří Kratochvíl's “The Story of King Candaules” (1990) portrayed the whole affair as a nihilism-inducing mystification. Kieran Williams' recent accounts have convincingly framed the spring reforms as an elite movement that was managed rather badly by a team of party functionaries who did remarkably (even scandalously) little to allay Brezhnev's fears; it was the Soviet invasion that sparked the genuine popular mobilization.<sup>6</sup> In *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945*, Tony Judt remarks: “The Sixties ended badly everywhere.”<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> It is also telling that Tomáš's skepticism toward dissent in *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* closely mirrors Ludvík Jahn's scorn for Fučík's “exhibitionism” in *The Joke*.

<sup>5</sup> Jirous's famous text, in Paul Wilson and Ivan Hartel's translation, is now readily available in the excellent anthology edited by Martin Machovec: *Views from the Inside: Czech Underground Literature and Culture (1948-1989)* (Prague: Filozofická fakulta Univerzity Karlovy, 2006).

<sup>6</sup> In addition to Williams' book *The Prague Spring and its aftermath: Czechoslovak politics, 1968-1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), see his article “The Prague Spring: From Elite Liberalization to Mass Movement,” in Kevin McDermott and Matthew Stibbe, eds., *Revolution and Resistance in Eastern Europe: Challenges to Communist Rule* (New York: Berg, 2006).

<sup>7</sup> Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (New York: Penguin, 2005), p. 447. Judt's

Having been born in 1968, I can't really share this judgment, but it does seem true that re-capturing the force and meaning of the Prague Spring may be more and more of a challenge now that we're teaching a generation of students who have no investment in the recondite question of whether Communism could "work" or not. Revisiting the culture of the 1960s this semester, however, I've been pleasantly surprised at how much of a "pre-political" charge it packed, and at how many of the oppositional ideologies of the 1970s were prefigured in the "official" culture of the previous decade.

**The University of New Orleans presents  
"THE PRAGUE SUMMER SEMINARS"  
July 5 – August 2, 2008**



"The Prague Summer Seminars" is an educational program for students and adults, offered by the University of New Orleans. Entering its 13<sup>th</sup> year in 2007, this program offers courses in **Czech Language & Culture, Music, Art, Architecture, Photography, Political Science, Business, Environmental Studies, and Engineering**. Students earn six college credits, which are transferable to home institutions; post-graduate participants can enroll as non-degree seeking students. Extra-curricular activities include excursions in and around Prague, weekly lectures, walking tours, informal dinners, and weekend field trips to **Vienna, Austria and Brno, Southern Moravia**.

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<http://inst.uno.edu/prague>

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chapter on the 1960s is pointedly titled "The End of the Affair."

### Teaching a City via Literature\*

Clarice Cloutier, Ph.D.  
New York University  
& Univerzita Karlova



Perhaps some of you wonder why the title of this article is not written in the reverse ("Teaching Literature via a City"). The natural answer lies in what I believe to be one of literature's missions: to acclimatize people to life, at times graciously, sometimes graphically. Within this conception of life come the multiple elements of which it is comprised, including history, politics, sociology, language, culture, etc. Ultimately, these factors are reflected for some countries, such as the Czech Republic, in their capital. Thus, the starting point for my text, the city itself...

To this end, I have developed a course at Univerzita Karlova wherein Prague is explored in its various attributes via the literary works which embody these facets of the city. One characteristic is explored per chapter in our class reader, allowing the students the time necessary to truly grasp the city's essence: City of Love, City of Inspiring Intoxication, City of Impressions, City of Remembrance, City of Mystery, City of the Jews, City of Horror, City of the Everyday, City of Today. This tour de force is preceded by a historical introduction to Prague via selections of poetry and prose, designed to place the city in the prophetic context wherein it was conceived, while likewise examining older chronicle texts. By arranging the course thematically, as opposed to chronologically (with the exception of "City of Today"), I was able to place literary works from different centuries/decades under what I considered to be more meaningful semantic mantles. Authors explored included:

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\* Photo and collage©Clarice Cloutier

Ajvaz, Čapek, Dalimil, Diviš, Halas, Hanzlík, Hašek, Havel, Hodrová, Holan, Holub, Hrabal, Hrubín, Jirásek, Karásek ze Lvovic, Klíma, Kosmas, Langer, Meyrink, Neruda, Nezval, Osers, Pavel, Pecka, Reiner, Seifert, Simko, Škvorecký, Topol, Vrchlický, Weil,. While this is far from a complete list of writers, I remind the reader that some of the other well-known names in Czech literature, while perhaps having covered the capital, are not necessarily celebrated for their contributions to Prague's literature; Němcová stands as an obvious example of northern Bohemia or the group of Brno-based poets for the Czech Republic's second largest literary enclave.

Having the privilege of working not only with Czech students, but also with university students from many countries worldwide, I have found that a city-specific curriculum allows students to reassess their own capitals or other large cities which function as political, historical, cultural and literary points of gathering. Comments I have received from students reference the fact that they will be returning to their home countries changed in that they now realize how a city writes its literature or vice versa, the literature writes the city. Indeed, some of my students have written comparative literature/urban studies papers using Prague as a basis, whether during my course or later, in consultation for other courses they were completing in their respective countries.

To counterbalance the emphasis on Prague, I have likewise developed a comparative literature course (using other Slavic and non-Slavic texts) aimed at familiarizing students with the lesser-known literature set outside the capital, "All Aboard: Armchair Traveling in the Czech Republic." This course allows students to not only extend their literary, geographical and culture sense of the Czech Republic as a whole, but, when paired with the Prague course, inculcates a sense for what the capital is not. Ideally, the courses would be taught beginning with the Prague-focused one, followed by the Czech Republic course the next semester. This chronology may be especially relevant, as most students choose Prague for their semester abroad versus Brno, Olomouc, etc. and thus are personally acquainted with the city. As regards university classes, I have used these courses successfully at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, making the necessary adjustments in terms of amount of reading assigned, class discussion expected and final projects.

The "city as a classroom" philosophy of New York University (Prague branch), where I teach Central European comparative literature and culture, has given me additional opportunities to expand on

the above-mentioned work. By incorporating regular site visits to correspond to the literature discussed, the city literally takes life via the words written about it. For example, Seifert's 1979 poem "Otisky prstů" ("Fingerprints") is structured around the statue of the Vltava River carved by sculptor Václav Prachner, inset in a wall near the Klementinum. This poem, together with a short jaunt to view the stone woman in person, make a splendid class session, especially when combined with digressions into the background of Prachner, the importance of the Vltava River's representations and, as you might expect, the abundance of female literary depictions associated with Prague. These types of field trips work equally well with prose selections.

Allow me to close this article with a quote from another writer, albeit the French Baudelaire and the subject Paris, "The life of our city is rich in poetic and marvelous subjects. We are enveloped and steeped as though in an atmosphere of the marvelous; but we do not notice it." If anything, Czech literature should inspire us to seek out what is indeed marvelous, allowing details to rise to the surface within this city of 100 spires, resulting in teaching a city via literature and literature via life.

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#### 2008 SVU Student awards: Dr. Joseph Hasek award

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 \$250 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. Submissions are only accepted from institutions outside the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

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\* Baudelaire addressing the Salon of 1846 in "On the Heroism of Modern Life." From "*Charles Baudelaire, To the Bourgeois and The Heroism of Modern Life, from the Salons of 1845 and 1846*" <http://www.csus.edu/indiv/o/obriene/art109/readings/10%20baudelaire%20hero%20%20bourgeois%204.htm> Accessed January 2008.

2) The study must have been written for an undergraduate or graduate course during the academic year 2007-2008. Chapters of theses or dissertations are not admissible.

3) The deadline for submission is **MAY 15, 2008**.

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, English, French or German. Submitted papers will not be returned.

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).

The SVU is a nonprofit, nonpolitical, cultural organization, dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge, the free dissemination of ideas, and the fostering of contacts among people. It brings together scholars, scientists, artists, writers, students, lawyers, businessmen, and others throughout the world who have a professional, family or other interest in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, their history, peoples, or their cultural and intellectual contributions.

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LIDÉ, MĚL JSEM VÁS RÁD, BDĚTE!

## JULEK FUČÍK - VĚČNĚ ŽIVÝ!

Literárněvědná konference věnovaná národnímu hrdinovi

pořádají evropské revue Valgo.net a Ústav pro českou literaturu AV  
21. a 22. VIII. 2008 v prostorách Akademie věd ČR, Národní 3

Soutěž o odznak Julia Fučíka,  
pobyt v "biografu" a výlet  
do Bráníka v ceně.

## Globalization in Czech

Karen von Kunes, Yale University

In recent decades, languages of the world, including Czech, have been subjected to globalization. The term *globalization* has become widely spread at all levels of communication and is subject to a variety of definitions. In his "Slovníček evropských levicových pojmů," Hynek Fajmon gives an overview of the history of the term and the trend of globalization. "To some extent," he claims, "globalization is an empty term because it doesn't give any proof of its content."<sup>8</sup> Further, he suggests that the term *globalization* could be translated into Czech as "světizace," but rejects this proposition on the basis of its absurd tautology, as in "svět se světizuje." Needless to say, using a Czech word for globalization (or a translated term in any target language) denies the trend of globalization itself.

What is to be understood by the term *globalization*? Fajmon connects its lexical interpretation to the history of the world: an economic, ecological, cultural, social and political inter-dependency of nations, which can be traced to times immemorial, and which has become prominently visible in the 15th century since the discovery of the Americas. The trade expansion between the continents reached yet another level of exchange during the 19th century industrialization – of the capital and of the enterprise. The current globalization trend is due to political and economic restructuring of countries since the post-1989 period; it allowed the widespread usage of e-technology not only in the regions of former Eastern Europe, but around the globe.

Modern Czech reflects influences of Latin, Greek and European languages – above all German, French, Italian, and Russian – that have taken a position of a dominant language (be it only in a limited sphere of usage, such as Italian in music or architecture, French in ballet, etc.) at a given period in history. These linguistic influences have affected morphology, language structure, sentence and/or its vocabulary, and were common not only in Czech but also in many European languages. Prior to current globalization, the English influence has been reflected in world sport terminology (cf. Czech  *fotbal, hokej, basketbol*), and its related realia (*svetr, pullover*). The globalization of the 21st century differs

<sup>8</sup> Hynek Fajmon, "Slovníček evropských levicových pojmů," *Revue Politika*, 24 June 2007. <http://www.fajmon.eu/cze/stranka.php?ID=555> The quoted English version is adapted from the Czech by the author of this article.

from any previous inter-nation influence (or dependency) in the speed of its dissemination and the reach of geographical region: it is instantaneous and affects even remote parts of the globe.

In his contribution on the globalization of language, Stig Hjarvard exposes how media enhance the spread of English on Dutch.<sup>9</sup> His thesis is based on three premises: a) the spread of popular culture in English (film, TV, music) contributes to “the Anglicization of global culture”; b) mediatized cultural communication is inevitably media-bound rather than region-bound (linguistic variants arise out of specific media — thus, medialects, rather than of regional — dialects); c) linguistic influence of the media can't be viewed as a national influence (influence on one nation only). Hjarvard calls English the Language of Globalization because “English has come to occupy a singular position among languages” in the past two to three decades. As he defines it, English has become “the lingua franca of the global network.”<sup>10</sup> It has assumed the position of a world language in the sense that English has become a language of communication outside of the boundaries of one culture and one community.

Due to their past history, Czechs have been open-minded to western influences. The usage of the Latin alphabet makes it accessible for Czech to adapt a number of “global” terms without significant orthographical constraints. They naturally blend into the Czech morphological system provided their grammar code is evident (noun gender, noun endings, etc.). For instance, *spam* and *e-mailový* in the following sentence have been subjected to their proper grammatical categories (*spam*, hard masculine inanimate declension, and *e-mailový*, hard adjective): “Úkolem Úřadu na ochranu osobních údajů je mimo jiné boj proti spamům. Nevyžádaná e-mailová pošta přesto denně zahrnuje počítače.”<sup>11</sup> Unlike Russian, which needs to find its way to Cyrillic and phonetic transcription of its newly adapted global terminology, Czech seems to breathe freely through adapted, non-adapted, and non-adaptable globalisms. To provide an example, the following expressions have been randomly taken from the internet: *asociace producentů v audiovizí, svět českého grafického designu, multimediální zákon, české modelky a celebrity, stránka informující o hardwarových i softwarových novinkách, klikněte*

*pro start, virtuální disk, český web, na tomto serveru, mozek implantován, veškerá fast food produkce, drama s prvky sci-fi.*

One of the inevitable impacts of global terminology on Czech is the reduction in usage of diacritical markings. While obvious analogies are preserved in their natural form (*filmař, makléř* as in *kuchař, malíř*), the highest number of diacritics appears in Czech suffixes and prefixes (both of Slavic and European origin) attached to the term: *profesní, komunikační, šéfredaktor, viceprezident*. The ignoring of diacritics in an informal context has been nowadays accepted as the norm. An e-mail, Skype, Facebook, MySpace, blog and SMS communication can be typed with the diacritics, but the systems are not necessarily uniform for each user and, therefore, often avoided due to unfamiliarity of the program or of the diacritical system usage, time constraints, multi-tasking, etc. What has been regarded as “marvelously simple”<sup>12</sup> since the 14th century when Jan Hus introduced diacritics to written Czech, is viewed by users of electronic media as “simply complicated.” After all, if communicating in Czech without the diacritics has proven to be adequate, isn't it possible that Jan Hus's orthography will collapse one day into “global simplicity”?

*Deník.cz*<sup>13</sup> reports Kateřina Kozmová's article on the communication mode via SMS. She points out that a mobile phone message SMS allows only 160 characters to be entered in one message; thus, the “speakers” have come up with yet another succinct way of communication: ignoring interpunctuation and spaces between individual words (by altering upper and lower case letters), using numerals and single letters for similar sounding words (4U for “for you”), and above all usage of acronyms, both English (ASAP for “as soon as possible,” BTW for “by the way,” IMHO for “in my humble opinion,” ILU2 for “I love you too”) and Czech (MTR for “mám tě rád/a,” MT for “miluju tě”).

The Czech verbal system is highly receptive to globalisms; theoretically, new verbs can fall into any conjugation category of Czech (perfective aspect – *nu-* type conjugation: *kliknout, skypnout*). In practice, however, they show the tendency for the imperfective aspect of the –*ova-* type conjugation: *kódovat, faxovat, designovat, interpretovat, mailovat,*

<sup>9</sup> Stig Hjarvard, “The Globalization of Language,” Media, Globalization, and Identity. Plenary Session III (to download online, enter the author's name and the article title) 75–76.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> The quotation is taken from <http://zpravy.idnes.cz/domaci.asp>, March 2, 2008.

<sup>12</sup> This refers to an expression that a character in Milan Kundera's *Slowness* uses.

<sup>13</sup> Kateřina Kozmová, “Jak mluvíme v esemeskách? Především ve zkratkách.” *Deník.cz*, Feb. 28, 2008. [http://www.denik.cz/svet\\_plus/sms\\_svet\\_plus\\_2008022820080228.html](http://www.denik.cz/svet_plus/sms_svet_plus_2008022820080228.html)

*skypovat*, etc.). The formation of the future and past tenses is all within the regularity of Czech verbal system. The globalization of Czech is also reflected in the usage of prepositions; for instance *klikněte pro start* is un-Czech by any standard of Czech grammar. Naturally, a number of translations, calques, and new expressions have been introduced to Czech hastily in order to put a product on the market as fast as possible. Often the un-Czech sounding expressions were not intended by their “introducers”<sup>14</sup> to become a part of permanent language terminology. Over time, they have indeed become globalisms (the term “globalism” doesn’t necessarily exclude a neologism, but due to its instant and large dissemination around the globe, the term “globalism” is preferred); many of them are still in the process of vacillation, rejection or acceptance, limitation to a particular group of users, etc. But they unite “speakers of electronic technology,” they break down the barriers between nations and cultures, and native and foreign languages.

The globalization of Czech can also be viewed as a starting point for an e-approach in language instruction. Not only students should be encouraged to use skype, facebook, etc. communication with their professors, and native speakers of Czech, but also among each other. The influx of “global” nouns, adjectives, and verbs makes it easier for speakers of English to understand and easily retain Czech noun, adjectival and verb endings of familiar words. If e-technology is introduced to a classroom setting intelligently, the benefits of globalization in Czech could prove enormously fruitful in enhancing Czech language learning.

#### Czechoslovak Studies Association (CSA)

The Czechoslovak Studies Association furthers the study of the peoples, culture, and history within and without the historic boundaries of Czechoslovakia and its predecessor and successor states.

For information see:

<http://fas.harvard.edu/~aaass/organizations/csa.html>

<sup>14</sup> “Introducer” is either *překladatel* (human being) or *překladač* (translation software).

#### Asociace učitelů češtiny jako cizího jazyka

Schedule of Events for Fall 2008-04-06

22. setkání – 27. září

Metodicko-didaktický seminář  
zaměřený na výuku bez  
zprostředkujícího jazyka

**Termín pro přihlášení příspěvků:  
27. srpen 2008**

23. setkání – 6. prosinec

**Termín pro přihlášení příspěvků: 6.  
září 2008**

Metodicko-didaktický seminář se  
zaměřením na učební materiály pro  
výuku češtiny jako cizího jazyka  
(práce s texty, gramatikou, cvičeními,  
komunikační aktivity...)

For more information, please see the  
association’s website:  
<http://www.auccj.cz/>.

#### Obituary

Kevin Hannan, Ph.D., died unexpectedly at the age of fifty-three amidst lecturing, grading theses, and tutoring diploma defendants at Uniwersytet Slaski w Ceiszyne in Lodź. Reading through the obituaries in which colleagues and friends reflect upon upcoming plans to meet Kevin in Dublin, Prague, and Texas, one realizes how rich his life was.

Kevin published in all journals representative of our discipline such as *JSL*, *SEEJ*, *Journal of American Ethnic History*, *Oxford Slavonic papers*, *Slavic Review*, *Český lid* and others. His book *Borders of Language and Identity in Teschen Silesia*, analyzing historical, geographical, and linguistic factors dividing Teschen Silesian borderlands and challenging traditional approaches to dialectal studies, won the Orbis Prize in Czech and Slovak Studies in 1996.

My collaboration with Kevin started in 1996 when he sent me his article on tombstone inscriptions in Evangelicals cemeteries in the Czech region of Teschen Silesia. Over the twelve years we exchanged tens of letters and e-mails from which I learned first hand about dialectal, religious, and historical make up of Texas Czech communities. I’ve benefitted from Kevin’s meticulous research on language contact, displacement and identity, as well as the wealth of primary sources he had collected. Kevin dedicated his life to arguing for the need to

map out Texas Czech dialects, interviewing terminal speakers, and applying data to research on codeswitching and language death. He was instrumental in my research for *Stones on the Prairie: Acculturation in America*, 2007. Kevin shared his research generously with many of us but was a private man about whose personal life we had known little.

Two matters were on his mind during the last year of his life: securing a date when an article that we wrote together would appear in *JSL*, and locating an institution to which he could donate all the periodicals and letters he collected over the years in order to make them accessible to other scholars. Last year I had microfiche holdings of the immigrant periodical *Svoboda* (1885–1962) digitized ready to pursue collaborative research on immigrant press in the U.S. Now, I've had to put the project on hold; there is no one to respond to my questions. *Odpočívej v pokoji*, Kevin, we will miss you.

Eva Eckert  
Connecticut College

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## Book Reviews

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**František Čermák (ed.): *Slovník Karla Čapka*.  
Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, Praha 2007, 714  
str. (ISBN 978-80-7106-915-7)**



Už od dětství jsme se nechávali okouzlit Čapkovým čarováním s češtinou, bohatstvím jeho slovní zásoby. Vzpomeňme jen na excelentní přehledku abecedně řazených nadávek, jimiž přepadená trhovkyně vyděsila zdvořilého loupežníka Lotranda

ve Druhé loupežnické pohádce: „Ty ancikriste, ty arciloře, ty Babinský, ty bandyto, ty Barnabáši, ty bašibozuku, ty cikáne, ty čerchmante, ty čertovo kvítko, ty darebo, ty darmošlape, ty ferino, ty Goliáši, ty hasáčerte, ty Herodesi, ty hrdlořeze, ty hrubiáne, ty hříšníku, ty chachare, ty indiáne,...ty Jidáši, ty kaine, ty kriminálníku, ty kružáku, ty krvežiznivče, ty lenochu, ty lidožroute, ty lucipere, ty machometáne, ty metlo, ty mezuláne, ty mordýři [...]“ (citováno podle vydání Praha, Albatros, 1991). Explicitně Karel Čapek vyjádřil svůj vztah k mateřštině ve *Chvále řeči české*, kde mj. říká: „Chtěl bych umět napsat vše, co dovedeš vyjádřit; chtěl bych užít aspoň jedinkrát všech krásných, určitých, živoucích slov, která jsou v tobě“ (*Marsyas*; poprvé pod názvem *Řeč a literatura*, LN 1927). Na otázku, kolik slov tento velikán české literatury a mistr české řeči ve své tvorbě skutečně užil, známe dnes už přesnou odpověď. Přináší ji detailní kvantitativní popis Čapkova lexikonu v práci kolektivu Ústavu Českého národního korpusu *Slovník Karla Čapka*. Slovník vychází jako první svazek řady Korpusová lexikografie, v níž Nakladatelství Lidové noviny hodlá postupně představit slovní zásobu významných autorů či období české kultury; následovat by měl slovník mapující jazyk Bohumila Hrabala.

*Slovník Karla Čapka* se opírá o korpusové zpracování v podstatě kompletního souboru Čapkových textů obsahujícího zhruba dva miliony tři sta tisíc textových slov. (Výchozí korpus je přístupný na CD provázejícím publikaci, takže uživatel má možnost ověřit si všechna uváděná fakta na zdrojovém materiálu a zároveň v případě zájmu sledovat textové souvislosti, které strohý kvantitativní popis nemůže zachytit.) Ze statistických slovníkových údajů se můžeme např. dozvědět, že v celém sledovaném Čapkově díle se vyskytlo téměř sedmdesát tisíc různých slov (lemmat), že téměř dvacet osm tisíc lemmat se objevilo pouze jednou, tedy v roli hapaxů, že z hlediska první stovky nejfrekventovanějších slov se Čapkův jazyk příliš neliší od současné češtiny reflektované korpusem SYN2005 apod. To jsou však pouze nejobecnější výsledky práce. Podívejme se na ni detailněji.

Základ publikace tvoří čtyři slovníky. Hlavní a nejrozsáhlejší, nazvaný stručně *Slovník*, je abecedně uspořádaným frekvenčním seznamem nepropriálních lemmat, která se v korpusu Čapkových textů vyskytla alespoň dvakrát. U každého je uveden celkový počet výskytů v korpusu a rozložení frekvence do šesti žánrů. Slovník přináší i další informace, k nimž patří stručné zachycení významu málo známých hesel, zkratka jazykového původu u cizích citátových jednotek, upozornění, že některá slova se neužívají v izolované podobě, tzn. tvoří pouze součást frazémů, a výčet

nejvýznamnějších kolokací. Co však v zpracování tohoto stěžejního slovníku zaráží, je fakt, že v něm chybí takzvaný rank (tj. pořadí slova podle frekvence), přestože je v úvodu (s. 10) anonsován. Je sice pravdou, že se v závěrečném shrnujícím statistickém pohledu na jazyk Karla Čapka uvádí pořadí sta nejfrekventovanějších lexémů korpusu, to ale není seznam úplný a postačující.

Druhým zařazeným slovníkem je jednoduchý abecední seznam lemmat, která se v Čapkově tvorbě vyskytla jen jednou, tedy *Slovník hapaxů*. Slovníkovou čtveřici dále doplňují *Slovník proprií* a *Slovník zkratek*.

Práce však není pouze souborem slovníků, přináší i základní interpretaci zjištěných dat. Po *Úvodu*, v němž vedoucí autorského kolektivu F. Čermák seznamuje čtenáře s cíli a obsahem díla, a po krátké studii literárního vědce J. Opelíka, která odhaluje inspirační zdroje Čapkovy jazyka, následuje poměrně rozsáhlá kapitola *Slovník Karla Čapka: jeho lexémy a nominace* věnovaná lingvistické analýze shromážděného materiálu. Tato část je sice poněkud nerovnoměrně zpracovaná, vedle detailních, vnitřně pečlivě strukturovaných rozborů přináší i popisy povrchnější a náhodnější, celek však vytváří informačně bohatou sondu do Čapkovy lexikonu. Čtenářsky přitažlivé jsou zejména údaje o evaluativních pojmenováních, o frazémeh, o neologismech a autorských metaforách, o kontaktovcích prostředcích, které jsou pro Čapkův jazyk zvláště příznačné, ale též např. o poměru apelativ a proprií apod. Jedním z významných pozitiv těchto rozborů je všudypřítomný aspekt srovnávání Čapkovy lexikonu s dnešní slovní zásobou reprezentovanou korpusem SYN2005. Zkoumání individuálního slovníku tak plynule přerůstá v komparaci obecnějšího jazykového úzu dvou časových období vývoje češtiny.

K slovníkovému jádru jsou dále připojeny kapitoly *Přílohy* a *Statistické aspekty jazyka Karla Čapka, zvláště jeho lexikonu*. První z nich zahrnuje např. soupis Čapkových neologismů a seznam hlavních typů frazémů. Uvádí i citace několika lexikálně zvláště zajímavých pasáží z Čapkovy tvorby. V kapitole *Statistické aspekty...* jsou prezentovány výsledky kvantitativního rozboru Čapkovy jazyka (poněkud matoucí jsou však určité nesrovnalosti v nejobecnějších číselných charakteristikách uváděných zde na s. 676 a v úvodu na s. 11). V závěru se na základě kombinace několika typů statistických metod dochází k celkovému zhodnocení bohatství slovní zásoby Karla Čapka. Překvapivou pointu výpočtů, ale vlastně i celé práce, přináší porovnání výsledné hodnoty s uvedenými paralelními hodnotami charakterizujícími téměř dvacet jiných českých

literárních tvůrců. Karel Čapek se v této konkurenci umístil přesně uprostřed. Viditelně není rozhodující, kolik slov autor užije ani která to jsou, nýbrž jak s nimi dokáže zacházet.

Publikace je doplněna „nelingvistickým“ souborem zajímavých myšlenek, aforismů a výroků Karla Čapka, bibliografií jeho děl, výběrovým přehledem prací týkajících se Čapkovy jazyka a výběrovým přehledem zahraničních i domácích autorských slovníků.

Přes některé zmíněné drobnější nedostatky lze práci *Slovník Karla Čapka* hodnotit pozitivně a doporučit ji zájmu lingvistů, literárních vědců i laiků. Přináší řadu nových poznatků, a to nejen o jazyce konkrétního literárního velikána, ale o jazyce vůbec. Kromě toho ověřuje a novátorsky rozšiřuje metodické postupy korpusové lingvistiky a statistické analýzy jazyka. Vzhledem k tomu, že v českém prostředí v podstatě neexistují autorské frekvenční slovníky, jde zároveň o moderně zpracovaný vzor pro budoucí podobné práce.

Zdeňka Hladká  
Ustav českého jazyka FF MU

**Václav Havel. *Prosím stručně: rozhovor s Karlem Hvižďalou, poznámky, dokumenty*. Gallery, 2006.**

**Václav Havel. *To the Castle and Back*. Trans. Paul Wilson. New York: Knopf, 2007.**



In the preface to Paul Wilson's English translation of *Prosím stručně* (hereafter *PS*, an abbreviation which cannot be a mere coincidence), Havel characterizes it as a "strange little book" that is not a "full-blown memoir" but rather an "account" of his presidency that he chose to present as "a special kind of collage". The collage has been fashioned from three kinds of fragments:

(1) Answers to questions submitted by the journalist Karel Hvíždala, which thereby bookends Havel's presidency given the publication of Hvíždala's pre-1989 interview with Havel, *Dálkový výslech* (translated into English as *Disturbing the Peace*). Indeed, Havel himself highlights the biographical bookending (as well as the post-scriptum) by quoting some of his responses to Hvíždala in the pre-1989 interview in the last section of *PS*. This explicit bookending suggests that the pre-1989 Havel and the post-1989 Havel form a natural continuum — that the politician did not represent a radical break from the “dissident” intellectual or, more generally, that an intellectual and a politician can successfully coexist in the same individual, which is a key theme in Havel's speeches as president and which also seems to be one of Havel's central concerns in *PS*. The Hvíždala fragments form the cornerstone of the book, and the Havelian voice in them is the confident voice of the essayist and cultural critic.

(2) Notes (or diary entries) that Havel wrote mostly during a two-month post-presidential stay as a guest of the Library of Congress in Washington, DC. They are lyrical in tone, laying bare Havel's personal insecurities, his uncertainties and petty preoccupations, his humility, and his basic humanity (he isn't so different from any of us). For American readers, much of Havel's commentary on American society and especially the American political scene (he has more than one description of his attendance at a high-powered party at Madeleine Albright's Georgetown home) comes across as rather naïve (with the exception of certain moments such as his discussion the televising of Pope John Paul II's funeral), but this impression is not inconsistent with the overall tone of the fragments. They represent a wistful, melancholy, and at times seemingly exhausted Havel, but a Havel who has not lost his appreciation for the absurd and his sense of playfulness.

(3) Documentary material (memoranda) from Havel's presidency that is drawn from Havel's daily correspondence with his presidential staff. These are scenes and details, captured in the moment, from life in Prague Castle as Havel and his staff struggle with the mountain of work that confronts them post-1989. The memos are at first arranged chronologically, but some of the more absurd ones transform into playful motifs as the book progresses.

Putting aside the question of the significance of collage as an art form for an overall consideration of

Havel's work (one of his early intellectual mentors was Jiří Kolář and collage as a concept runs throughout Havel's writing both thematically and formally), we can note that Havel himself suggests that he makes use of collage because it offers “jedna z cest, jak se dotknout oné skryté tkáně života” in that it combines phenomena that seem superficially or externally unrelated. The interweaving of three different voices brings the work close to the form of a play, and a creative tension — whose meaning is potential and ultimately definable only by the individual reader — emerges from the juxtaposition of the three elements. In the words of a Czech reviewer, the collage format exerts a certain “poetické kouzlo” on the reader (V. Šlajchrt, 2006, “Sám sobě Havlem”, *Respekt* 19: 22).

In another context, Paul Wilson has noted that *PS* is structurally unlike anything that a former head of state has ever written (fall 2006, “Notes from the Underground”, 12-15, *Columbia: The Magazine of Columbia University*, 15). It could be added that this is precisely Havel's point: by redefining the genre of political memoir, Havel is effectively reframing our understanding of politics and politicians — exactly what he attempted to do while serving as president and also why the significance of his presidency (it was designed to change the conventional frame) has yet to be understood. This is not to say that Havel avoids all of the conventions of political memoir since he does amply address specific criticisms leveled at him during his years in office and does attempt to settle a number of scores with political opponents: one reviewer noted that Havel's book would be read with “značná nelibost” by the current occupant of Prague Castle (J. Chuchma, May 6, 2006, “Havel na hranici možného”, *MF dnes*, A8).

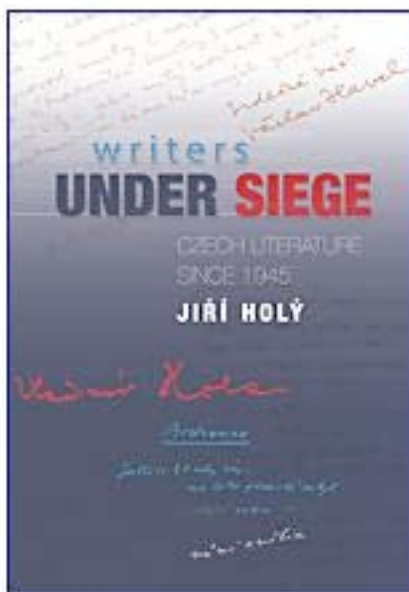
Why the American publisher chose the blandest title imaginable to translate the playfully ironic *Prosím stručně* — a transformative political vision hardly lends itself to brevity — is beyond me. I imagine that *Please be brief* (but perhaps not *PS*?) would have sold fewer copies than a book whose title has the word *castle* — in all capitals and wide-spaced in a much larger font-size than any other word on the cover — has, and I suppose that this is also an ironic commentary in its own special way. Otherwise, it is a pleasure to read, as it always is, Paul Wilson's translation of Havel's original.

It might be said that this book is not for everyone. Parts of it require, as Havel himself is aware, some or even considerable knowledge of the Czech political scene to adequately follow Havel's argument, although the translation does provide a set of explanatory notes for uninitiated readers. On the other hand, in the years that I have taught a literature-in-translation course on Havel, I have had

more than one student who came to Havel (and to the course) because of a random encounter with *Summer meditations*, a compilation that is considerably more Czech(oslovak)-bound than *PS*. Havel's larger message — his attempt to reframe how we think about politics and politicians in the modern world — transcends the specific socio-historical context that he references, and it would not be an exaggeration to say that this is characteristic of everything that he has written.

David Danaher  
University of Wisconsin-Madison

**Jiří Holý. *Writers under Siege – Czech Literature since 1945*. Sussex Academic Press, Brighton-Portland, 2008. 363 pages, GBP 55.00.**



Je obecně známo, že napsat stručný, ale přesto výstižný přehled dějin určité národní literatury je mnohem těžší úkol, než se na první pohled může zdát. Známost osobností české literární historie, které se v první polovině minulého století dařilo pohlížet na českou literaturu z ptačí perspektivy, byl Arne Novák (1880–1939). Ani on se nedokázal vyhnout subjektivním soudům a ne zcela přesným generalizacím, ale nebylo divu, že pro anglicky čtoucí publikum vyšla v roce 1976 právě Nováková *Czech Literature* (trans. Peter Kussi, ed. William E. Harkins). Většina literárních příruček vzniklých v Československu po druhé světové válce byla totiž pod tlakem politické situace natolik zkreslená, že byla nepoužitelná pro studijní účely v západním světě. Novákův přehled končí ve 40. letech – tento nedostatek napravil W. E. Harkins přidáním dodatku (*Supplement: 1945–1974*), který obsahuje nárys

základních tendencí a informace o hlavních osobnostech.

Po pádu železné opony mohly být české literární dějiny znovu napsány objektivněji, než tomu bylo dříve, a s použitím nových historických poznatků. Ve svobodném prostředí bylo takovýchto pokusů několik, ale za největší úspěch je považována kniha *Česká literatura – od počátků k dnešku* (Czech Literature from Its Beginnings to the Present Day, Praha 1998, expanded edition 2002) od čtveřice významných literárních historiků: Jan Lehár, Alexandr Stich, Jaroslava Janáčková a Jiří Holý. Poslední část těchto stručných dějin (které mají v českém originále 1000 stran formátu A5...) nyní vychází v angličtině pod názvem *Writers under Siege – Czech Literature since 1945*. Jde tedy o tu část dějin, která dosud žije v paměti současníků. Právě v přehledu nedávných dějin vždy tkví největší nebezpečí, že autor bude příliš subjektivní a podlehe tendenci nabízet generalizace, které nejsou ověřeny časem. Jiří Holý je příjemně subjektivní, protože alespoň částečně narušuje ustálená historická klišé, jež vždycky po určité době zestárnou a začnou se vzdalovat pravdě. Jeho pojetí nedávných dějin však není založeno na pouhé potřebě být jiný než předchůdci, ale tvoří ucelený systém, který je podložen přesvědčivými argumenty. Česká literární historie po Arne Novákovi byla většinou psána buď z pozice kultu avantgardy (jejímuž zaujetí výrazovými prostředky rozuměli především strukturalisté), nebo z pozice povrchního sociologismu, který měl hlavně marxistickou (ale také antimarxistickou) podobu. Jiří Holý se těmto extrémům úspěšně vyhýbá. Celá kniha *Česká literatura – od počátků k dnešku* byla původně zamýšlena jako učebnice pro středoškolské studenty, nyní je však používána jako faktografický základ pro studenty, který je na univerzitách prohlubován a rozšiřován. Celý text je proto stylizován jako logicky promyšlený výklad pro čtenáře, který toho o dějinách moderní české literatury sice příliš neví, ale chce se dozvědět více než fakta o hlavních osobnostech. V pojetí Holého nejsou literární dějiny pouhým souhrnem faktů, ale příběhem, který má své zápletky, peripetie, odbočky a překvapivé zvraty. Nejde tedy o studii pro čistě akademické účely, ale o odborný narativ přijatelný pro širší čtenářské spektrum. Holý vystudoval germanistiku, a snad i proto pro něho bylo snazší neopakovat francouzské a ruské myšlenkové stereotypy, které byly v literárních dějinách donedávna tradovány. Vedle vlivů francouzských avantgardních směrů, který byl vždy zdůrazňován ve většině českých literárněhistorických příruček, si Holý rovněž všímá vazeb na anglosaský kulturní kontext, který lze ve zkoumaném období sledovat od

básnické Skupiny 42 přes působení Josefa Škvoreckého v časopise *Světová literatura* až po rozvoj folkového písničkářství v 60.–80. letech a literární tvorbu rockového undergroundu po roce 1968.

Anglický překlad Holého knihy vznikl v Glasgow zásluhou překladatelky Mrs Elizabeth Morrison a byl důkladně konzultován s Dr Janem Čulíkem, který již déle než čtvrt století žije v Británii a na univerzitách v Lancasteru a Glasgow poznal, s čím mají zahraniční studenti problémy při studiu české literatury a dějin. Originální český text byl značně přepracován – některé pasáže určené především českým studentům byly redukovány, jiné důležité části byly naopak rozšířeny s ohledem na nový okruh potenciálních čtenářů v zahraničí. Anglický překlad byl dále doplněn obsáhlým oddílem „Profiles of the Most Important Czech Writers since 1945“ (pp. 222–287), který obsahuje medailony hlavních osobností, charakteristiku jejich díla, výčet jejich knih přeložených do angličtiny a seznam hlavních odborných statí dostupných v angličtině (popř. i v češtině). Holého snaha podat objektivní obraz hlavních a typických hodnot české literatury je patrná také ve složení autorů vybraných pro těchto 39 profilů. Je mezi nimi pouze 7 spisovatelů, kteří oficiálně publikovali v Československu a neměli přitom problémy s komunistickým establishmentem; 8 autorů „šedé zóny“, kteří sice oficiálně publikovali, ale měli určité politické problémy (jako např. Jaroslav Seifert, Bohumil Hrabal a Miroslav Holub); 11 autorů, kteří působili v disentu a publikovali v samizdatu, a 13 exilových autorů. Překlad do angličtiny je velmi citlivý a přesný – diskuse se nabízí pouze nad několika maličkostmi. Např. jedna část kapitoly o stalinismu je v překladu nazvána „Underground Literature“ a píše se v ní mimo jiné o křesťansky orientovaných autorech, Vladimíru Holanovi, Jiřím Kolářovi a mladší generaci surrealistů. Zřejmě by bylo vhodnější setrvat u původního metaforického názvu „Literatura v katakombách“, protože termín „Underground Literature“ má v českém prostředí poměrně úzký význam a označuje hlavně činnost samizdatové edice Půlnoc na počátku 50. let (kde publikoval např. začínající Bohumil Hrabal) a literární činnost rockového undergroundu po roce 1968. Česká undergroundová literatura tedy není synonymem pro jakoukoliv zakázanou literaturu. Věčným problémem zůstává překlad básnických textů, protože kongeniálních překladů je vždy málo – a někdy dokonce nejsou možné. Holého výklad je doplněn mnoha ukázkami literárních děl, které jsou citovány v češtině a doplněny velmi jednoduchým doslovným překladem do angličtiny. Pavel Kohout psal na počátku 50. let takovéto stalinistické verše: „Já

nemohu zpívat skromně/ radostí jsem bez sebe/ představte si, že se do mě/ zamiloval SNB.“ Anglický nerýmovaný překlad zní takto: „I cannot be modest/ I am beside myself with joy/ just think/ a policeman has fallen in love with me.“ Problém spočívá v tom, že se tento překlad mnohem více podobá antistalinistickým veršům publikovaným ve výše zmíněné edici Půlnoc a připomíná poezii Egona Bondyho psanou v duchu „totálního realismu“ a „travné poezie“ (painful poetry). Nicméně platí, že základní informace byla podána a zkoumání významových nuancí poezie zůstává záležitostí pro specialisty v daném oboru. Za zmínku stojí také anglický název knihy, který není do češtiny úplně jednoduše a stručně přeložitelný. Slovní spojení „writers under siege“ se jednak vztahuje k tomu, že čeští spisovatelé byly ve složitých politických podmínkách často kritizováni a byl na ně vyvíjen nátlak. Slovo „siege“ je však zároveň označením pro „a persistent attack (as of illness or other misfortune)“ (*Webster's Dictionary*). Také tohoto významu si byl Jiří Holý vědom, když psal o tom, že „Czech literature functioned, often predominantly, in its non-aesthetic role, acting as a free press, replacing suppressed civic institutions“. Název knihy se podle autora vztahuje také k situaci po roce 1989: „Paradoxically, at the beginning of the new millennium Czech writers again find themselves under siege, this time however by the mass media, commerce and the dictates of the market.“

Po roce 1989 vyšla v angličtině celá řada knih o moderní české literatuře, ale zatím šlo hlavně o shrnutí základních faktů ve slovníkové podobě (Steven Serafin, Robert B. Pynsent, James D. Naughton), o soubory studií (Robert Porter, Rajendra Chitnis, Peter Steiner, etc.) a o monografie o několika nejvýznamnějších autorech (zvl. Milan Kundera a Josef Škvorecký). Obraz dějin české literatury po druhé světové válce však donedávna připomínal mozaiku, kterou si bylo možné poskládat z mnoha různých textů, ale některá místa přesto zůstávala bílá. Po vydání knihy *Writers Under Siege* je tento obraz konečně úplný.

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