

# The Periodization of Slovene and Czech Literatures and the Two Currents in Czech Interwar Literature (A Contribution to a Discussion)

Ivo Pospíšil

Ústav slavistiky, Filozofická fakulta Masarykovy univerzity, Arna Nováka 1, CZ-602 00 Brno  
ivo.pospisil@phil.muni.cz

*The author discusses the problem of periodization of Slovene and Czech literatures in general and with regard to the 20th-century interwar period in particular. The Czech and Slovene literatures of the interwar developed similar movements and tendencies, but the divergent political and cultural climate and ideological positions (Marxism, Catholicism) gave different results: Czechs had nearly no Catholic dissidents, rather individualities, the same as on the avant-garde or communist side. The liberal democratic and religious and spiritual currents in Czech literature are demonstrated on the comparison of Karel Čapek and Jaroslav Durych.*

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The construction of any history of literature is more or less connected with its criteria and with the notion of literary streams, currents or tendencies – each term has, of course, its definite semantic content and range. The general principle of periodization of the literary process consists in the search for a net of mutually permeated criteria; the usual method is a peculiar hierarchy of social, political and poetological/personalistic criteria; at the point of intersection of all these factors there are the streams and currents as a specific historical-aesthetic manifestation of the development of poetic forms. The problem of the so-called progress in literature has been put aside similarly as that in the development of society. The periodization obviously has paradigmatic and syntagmatic aspects. The former is represented by the evolution of literature split into

autonomous stages defined by the above-mentioned complex criteria. The latter, as a rule, defines the horizontal boundaries of a literary process, say, in the framework of a national literature. The problem is closely linked to the range of each national literature, in simple words, what belongs to a certain national literature and what does not. In Slavonic literatures in general and in the literatures situated in transitory areas or zones (Central Europe, the Balkans) in particular it often means the polyliterariness or the presence of foreign or another literature or literatures in the area: in both the Lands of the Bohemian Crown and Slovenia there is the Old Church Slavonic “cradle” – the entity of canonical texts written in different geographical varieties of Old Church Slavonic and the literature created by the representatives of Germanic tribes or Germans themselves (Saxons, Bavarians) since the Middle Ages.

The problem has then been stressed by the permanent existence of one or more other literatures in the area of a major national literature and by the intersection, sometimes even permeation giving birth to bi- or polyliterariness of the key-authors; sometimes the rise of the “cordon sanitaire”, the hermetic closure and the international isolation of these literatures; it is partly the case of Czech and German literatures in certain periods of their development, especially towards the end of the 19th century and later after the First World War. The oscillation between openness and isolation determined in a way the whole image of literature, especially at the time we are interested in – the 20th-century interwar period when the occurrence of the national tendencies in both Czech and Slovene literatures became obvious.

Another problem is linked to the intrinsic structure of a national literature; of course, the dominant role has been played by the literature created in capitals (literary centrism), natural centres of national life in Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia (now the major part of Silesia is situated in Poland), but due to the historical development both Slovene and Czech literatures were differentiated in greater detail according to their regional roots; in Slovenia under the impact of Austrian-German or/and Italian traditions, in Czech cultural environment by the same German or Austrian-German impact and some other facts connected with the cultural orientation of the 19th-century national revival (Czech pro-Russian, pro-French and pro-Anglo-American orientation as a specific counterbalance to the prevalent German impact or influence). Probably in Czech literature the range of influences might be a little wider and also its volitional element, e.g. the immense impact of Russian literature during the whole 19th and in the first half of the 20th century (Russian poetry, the Russian Golden and Silver Ages, the Soviet avant-garde).

The crucial factor has also been represented by the changing area and political administration framework in which the national literature developed: in modern times Austria-Hungary, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, the Russian and later Soviet influence and the split of these countries after 1990. It is obvious that all the vestiges related to these processes are potentially still present in the corpus of both national literatures – in both the positive and the negative sense.

Let us continue to follow the periodization link. Both Slovene and Czech literatures as West-Slavonic developed in the area of *Pax Romana* in the constant contact with *Pax Orthodoxa* via the Balkans and through powerful ideological pressure coming from Russia; at the same time there was also a permanent impact of West-European literatures, especially German, French and English including arts and philosophy, later also of the American dream as a cultural phenomenon. There were nearly identical situations in the development of both literatures, but, at the same time, also minor or major differences caused by a different national and cultural status of each nation. While Slovene medieval literature was linked with the existence of the Cyrill-Methodius mission and its linguistic consequences (*Freising manuscripts*, Slov. Brižinski spomeniki, Lat. Monumenta Frisingensia), there has been a prevalent Latin tradition since the 10th century, the same as in the Moravian and Czech environment (The Great Moravian Empire and Přemyslid Bohemia); unlike Slovene literature, Czech medieval literature represented a top of European Gothic literature (satires, the Smil Flaška of Pardubice School of Poetry); on the other hand while the real beginnings of the authentic Slovene literature were linked with the Renaissance-Reformation-Baroque periods, Czech literature was at that time in a critical situation – due to the historical and political processes – it found itself in a crisis or at the crossroads; both literatures had a similar developmental pattern. The problem of the periodization of older stages is thus different: old Czech literature – older Czech literature (since the Hussite wars), the Czech Renaissance – though it started as early as the 14th century – has been really present only since the second half of the 15th century during the reign of the Jagiello Lithuanian-Polish dynasty (Polish literature, which fell behind Czech literature in the Gothic period, reached in the Renaissance its qualitative climax: Cracow cultural centre, the poets Jan Kochanowski and Mikołaj Rej etc.).

The common feature of both literatures was the “meeting and fighting” (F. Palacký) with the German and Austrian-German impact; the attitude towards these elements was, however, ambivalent; declaratively sometimes anti-German, in literature and social and philosophical thought

pro-German (T. G. Masaryk's experience at the Czech part of Charles-Ferdinand University in the 1880s).

The modernist artistic currents found both literatures in the period of the completed process of national revival searching for various literary inspirations. The cluster of words "modern", "modernity", "modernism" and the German "die Moderne" which gave "moderna" in various Slavonic languages and "stil modern" instead of New Art or Modern Style (Austrian and German *die Secession/ Sezession, Jugendstil*) in Russian makes much difficulty in each national literature due to the specific features of its development. It is inevitable to respect these slighter or bigger differences; on the other hand, it has always been useful to try to find a more general and more generally acceptable terminological pattern. The Czech tradition I adhere to prefers to use the term "moderna" (*die Moderne*) for the initial period of modernism (from the 1890s up to 1914); modernism and avant-garde are used as nearly identical terms, the latter stressing the political aspect of the movement. The word "modernism" generally used for all the phenomena accentuating the cult of innovations, experiments and originality was used in Russian or Russian Soviet tradition pejoratively as everything opposed to realism, then in a neutral meaning in the rest of the world as a typical 20th-century phenomenon accompanied by postmodernism in its second half. In Czech tradition there is hardly any strict boundary between "moderna" and modernism, perhaps with the exception of the decadence/symbolism complex which is usually regarded as part of "moderna" as an initial stage of modernism. The singular currents and streams in the framework of both "moderna" and modernism in Czech and Slovene literatures are similar, sometimes with specific delimitation.

The Slovene modernism (in the sense of *die Moderne*) is traditionally delimited by the years 1896–1918, but like in Czech literature, there are still strong remnants of old realism and neo-romanticism (Ivan Cankar, Oton Župančič, Dragotin Kette and others; Karel Hlaváček, Jiří Karásek ze Lvovic, Arnošt Procházka, the young S. K. Neumann, Miloš Marten etc.). The pattern of Czech modernism was represented by decadence (cf. Merhaut, Bednaříková, *Česká*; Janáčková, *Česká*; Janáčková and Hrabáková), symbolism, impressionism and vitalism, Secession (*l'art nouveau/Jugendstil*), fragments of futurism (S. K. Neumann); the Czech imitation and at the same time restructuralisation of Western impulses in avant-garde times is more complex (original Czech Poetism, a specific Czech post-war form of dadaism, surrealism etc.). In Slovene histories of national literature the two evolutionary stages in the interwar period are sometimes called "expressionism" and "social realism" though the inner structure of both is more complicated and elaborate, while in the Czech literature of the

same period there is hardly one or two strong streams or currents to be extraordinarily dominant. There are tendencies leading from one extreme to another, from socialist (not just social) realism to Catholic fundamentalism and historical revisionism. The Czech expressionism may be represented by the Brno Literární skupina headed by Čestmír Jeřábek, Lev Blatný (father of the famous Czech poet Ivan Blatný, then an émigré in the UK), otherwise the Czech proletarian poetry which dominated at the beginning of the 1920s was substituted by the Czech form of dadaism and vitalism inspired by some features of the futurist poetics – Poetism which resulted in Czech surrealism (the Surrealist Group in the Czechoslovak Republic) with a peculiar fate linked to the 1930s Soviet communist policy.

The Czech literary currents are modelled on their West-European pretexts, but also have their original Czech kernel; the critical role was played – like with all the minor or smaller nations – by tradition that in the Czech past created not only the new Czech language of the 19th-century national revival, but also modern poetic Czech thanks to Karel Čapek's translations of modern French poetry (*poètes maudits*); this was several times confirmed by nearly all the Czech modern poets including Vítězslav Nezval in his preface to the volume *The French Poetry of New Times – Francouzská poezie nové doby*. Karel Čapek created new Czech poetic language and then left the field of poetry to devote himself to prose – the reasons are hidden in his autobiography and his own writings.

Though there were several prevalent artistic/literary currents in both Slovene and Czech literatures, there is a certain dichotomy obvious, e.g. the modernist, revolutionary and avant-garde art inspired by the cult of the new in Soviet Russia, and a more regressive, traditional, but, at the same time very inventional pseudo-baroque Catholic movement. According to René Wellek, in nearly all the highly developed literatures there are two main streams: the materialist, empirical, emotional, sensitive on the one hand, and the spiritual, religious, magical on the other. In his first monograph submitted for obtaining the assistant professor position at Charles University (which later, unfortunately, was not realised due to hostile interpersonal relations) called *Immanuel Kant in England* he discovered the “second England” of the spiritual essence going back to German idealism, the England of idealistic speculation which is also one of the British powerful traditions:

Besides this sequence of great minds who imprinted the peculiar quality of realism and concreteness which we associate with English mentality today, England had created a fine idealist tradition rooted in the Platonic branch of European thought. On the continent of Europe one is wont to overlook this, second England' completely. One hears much about the lack of speculation in England, because

one has defined speculation in a narrow way and is besides unacquainted with the rich English thought which fulfils the conditions of the definition. It would be a fine task for a historian of English thought to trace this great second stream which flows down from Scotus Eriugena and the mediaeval Platonists to grow into a fair river during the Renaissance and to swell into a mighty stream during the seventeenth century (Wellek, *Two Traditions*).

The same contradiction he later found in Czech literature. In his essay *The Two Traditions of Czech Literature* (originally published 1943) René Wellek puts it in this way:

This dualism between an idealist, imaginative tradition and an empirical, rationalist trend is not peculiarly Czech. We could trace it also through the history of English literature. In 1805, Samuel Taylor Coleridge entered a meditation in his notebook, in which he distinguished between two Englands, the England of Sir Philip Sidney, Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, and the other England, or rather Great Britain, of Locke, Pope, Dr. Johnson and Hume.

Quoting René Wellek, it is important to mention the influence of the study of the Czech literary milieu upon his views transcending the limits of the Czech literary situation (cf. Pospíšil and Zelenka) which was not mentioned by his American biographer (Bucco). The two traditions in Czech literature (though it is evident this is a sort of exaggeration or schematization) may be represented by the two antipodes – Karel Čapek and Jaroslav Durych; one belonging to a liberal democratic “Prague Castle wing”, the other a speaker of the pro-Catholic party sharply criticizing the flaws of Czechoslovak interwar democracy, sometimes a Catholic fundamentalist.

Karel Čapek (1890–1938) belonged to the generation of the Czech intelligentsia which could successfully continue the results of the victorious national revival in the 19th century and seek their stimuli also outside the traditional German cultural milieu, though Karel Čapek himself also studied at the Faculty of Arts of the Friedrich-Wilhelm University in Berlin in the winter semester 1910-1911 (later in summer he realised his study stay in Paris, Sorbonne). Čapek’s artistic work was based on the plurality of chances: the axiomatic German tradition in the framework of the Austro-Hungarian Empire together with the spirit of Austrian monarchy with its *biedermeier* and *secession* (*l’art nouveau*, *Jugendstil*, *new art*, *modern style*) on the one hand, French modernist inspiration, Anglo-American world with its utilitarianism, positivism (different from its French founders), pragmatism and Russian axiological and ethical extremism, melancholy, disillusionment, and suicidal moods on the other (Čapek, *Kapesní* 107). Thus French modernist literature, American pragmatism and Russian extremism

were the spiritual and methodological currents which counterbalanced the prevailing German impact. Čapek's translations of French symbolist and post-symbolist poetry under the title *The French Poetry of New Times* (*Francoúzká poezie nové doby*) originated mainly in 1916 in the war years and under the impact of war events (as Čapek himself put it in the epilogue to a new edition which appeared under the slightly modified title *French Poetry* [*Francoúzká poezie*] in 1936 published by the Prague publishing house Borový): "I played with Czech and made it create difficult puzzles of both form and sense and, at the same time, I realised with pleasure, emotion and gratefulness how stimulating, rich, flexible, inexhaustable and shapeable it is" (Čapek, *Francoúzká* 243, trans. I. P.), Čapek repeats his words from the first edition (1920). And Vítězslav Nezval in his famous preface asserts: "Before Čapek's intervention into poetry there has never been such a tone in the Czech speech" (he mentions Fort's poem *Lights*, I. P.) (Čapek, *Francoúzká* 13, trans. I. P.). Čapek, however, left the poetry of Baudelaire, Verlaine, Rimbaud, Mallarmé, Moréas, De Régnier, Le Roy, Fort, Apollinaire, Vildrac, Romain and others and returned to it just as to a memory of his youth.

In 1910 Čapek analyzes a grotesque in modern German literature in Arne Novak's seminar in 1910, in 1911–12 he wrote a treatise on Goethe's *Faust* in Arnošt Kraus' seminar (its text is, however, lost) and – last but not least – in 1914 in professor Krejčí's seminar he read his work on pragmatism and simultaneously worked on his study *The Relation of Aesthetics and Art History* (*Vztah estetiky a dějin umění*) which was then modified into his dissertation going back to 1915 *The Objective Method in Aesthetics with Regard to Visual Arts* (*Objektivní metoda v estetice se zřetěním ke výtvarnému umění*). His seminar work on pragmatism was first published under the title *Pragmatism or Philosophy of Practical Life* (*Pragmatismus čili Filosofie praktického života*) in the Topič Publishing House in Prague in 1918 as a thirty-fourth volume of the series *Spirit and World*, for the second time in 1925 (Čapek, *Univerzita*). A year before reading his work on pragmatism Čapek reflects upon aesthetic relativism in his essays *The Currents in the Latest Aesthetics* (*Směry v nejnovější estetice*, 1913) and comments upon the so-called harmony in arts: "The feeling of harmony is the most complicated aesthetic feeling: it is a confused thought of all the intrinsic and extrinsic relations going endlessly farther and farther which defines the beautiful object." (Čapek, *Univerzita* 77, trans. I. P.). And in the dissertation mentioned above he quite unambiguously opposes "aesthetics of production" speaking about understanding and empathy. Though there is an evident background of Dilthey's *Geisteswissenschaft*, some of the formulations anticipate something from Hans-Georg Gadamer and Robert Jauss. A grotesque, *Faust*, harmony



of beauty, pragmatism and translations of modern French poetry – there is the melting pot in which Čapek’s famous “cursed questions” arose – speaking in a Dostoevskyan way – which he answered by testing French modernism, Russian extremism and Anglo-Saxon common sense: as a result he left poetry for drama and prose and interpreted the clash between plurality and monocentrism. American pragmatism and Russian ethical radicalism do not cease to live in his work and even became new, though contradictory pillars, an ideological basis of his literary creation.

In his essay on pragmatism which followed the theses of pragmatism from Charles Peirce’s first impulses up to the mature works of William James (1842–1910) and John Dewey (1859–1952), Čapek demonstrates a crucial controversy between empiricism and rationalism (Čapek, *Univerzitetní* 266). Exactly in the year of the publication of Čapek’s juvenile seminar work on pragmatism John Dewey published his new book *Reconstruction in Philosophy* (in Czech in 1929 as *Rekonstrukce ve filosofii*, in the Czech epilogue written by Josef Schützner there is a term “přestavba” which might be translated as renewal or revival). Dewey continuing the utilitarianism of Jeremy Bentham and his “greatest happiness principle” notes the crisis of modern man and world consisting in the lack of creative instincts (Dewey 138). For Dewey, utilitarianism is acceptable, but he rejects its uniqueness and one-dimensionality, its one goal which, as he puts it, does not correspond to the plurality and polymorphism of the modern world (Pospíšil, *Labyrint*).

The reason for accepting pragmatism was, obviously, his fear of the gap opened by modern relativism both in natural sciences and literature and the uncertainty in which man is not able to find his point of reference. He explicitly deals with this problem in the 9th chapter of his seminar work just before the so-called *Five Supplements* (Čapek, *Univerzitetní* 314–315). The Five Supplements only deepen his understanding of pragmatism as a partial answer to the questions he keeps asking; pragmatism does not represent a new definition of truth, but a new definition of philosophy as such symbolizing the synthesis of scepticism and enthusiastic energy, sense and will forming, above all, a new conception of individualism. Here we start to get in touch with the four antinomic notions which constitute the core of Čapek’s literary creation and at the same time the kernel of his “philosophy”: individualism versus collectivism and totality and totalitarianism versus plurality. The total crisis of society, arts and sciences as it was manifested and felt towards the end of the 19th century opened several new ways for Čapek: modern poetry, relativistic philosophy, but also the “cursed questions” of Russian literature leading to the very edge of human rationality. In this place, we could also mention the famous



polemic triangle William Shakespeare – Leo Tolstoy – George Orwell (Pospíšil, *Individualita* 95–103).

Čapek's work wedged between the poles of pragmatism and extremism, radicalism – is part of the chains and links, pairs and triangles put together by a similar spiritual atmosphere in which it is useless to seek the influences or thematic theses, but just to observe the complex process of genre continuity, i. e. the phenomenon which is sometimes called the poetological function of art: endless chains of steps, returns, repetitions, retrospectives, stagnation, progression, crises and catharses confirming art as an irreplaceable transcendence (cf. Bradbrook, *Karel Čapek: In Pursuit*, Bradbrook, *Karel Čapek: Hledání*, Ohme, Uhle, Pynsent, *Julius Zeyer: Question; Pátrání; Tolerance*).

Čapek's fate was to be permanently disappointed by former friends: his attitude towards communism evoked the hatred of radicals as well as his love – maybe idealistic – of the Czechoslovak Republic evoked a bitter, though silent (on his part) controversy with his former friend G. K. Chesterton, which is generally known and linked to Čapek's relations to some of the Czech and Slovak Catholics. It might be quite inspiring and again paradoxical to know that in the inquiry published by the famous Czech democratic journalist (also a supporter of the “Prague castle political wing”) Ferdinand Peroutka, the Czech Catholic writer Jaroslav Durych expressed his affection for Soviet communism though only on the basis of emotionality and the movement of masses while Čapek not radically, but clearly declared the rationalistic reasons why he was no Communist. It is characteristic that Ferdinand Peroutka even decided not to publish Durych's opinion regarding it as too provoking and irrational (see further).

Durych's harsh attacks on Karel Čapek (not only his but also other right-wing writers-fundamentalists) had, unfortunately, a rational basis: his physical defect (problems with the backbone) and his problems with women, his shyness, timidness, childlessness. But one of the reasons is, most probably, the embarrassment and shame: Karel Čapek, this sick man who had permanent problems with his health, this childless and often unhappy, weak creature, this lover of “little Czech men”, this “C” as he was termed by Jaroslav Durych (that is, he was not healthy enough to become a soldier of a regular army, he was not conscripted) who sometimes had to lie to idealize his beloved personalities and ideas could not survive his ideals and principles.

Jaroslav Durych (1886–1962), a military doctor by profession, fought against the protestant conception of Czech history (František Palacký, T. G. Masaryk, Alois Jirásek) as a misinterpretation. In his prose and poetic work he constructed quite a different picture of an ideal man and

woman of modern times: religious piety, the cult of poverty, sensibility, strong emotionality and ecstatic love of God. Due to his Catholic faith he regards this reality as part of a higher order inspired by the poetics of Romanticism (*Jarmark života*, The Fair of Life, 1916; the novel *Na horách*, In the Mountains, 1919; love novella *Sedmikráska*, A Daisy, 1925, essays *Gotická růže*, A Gothic Rose, 1923). Probably the most impressive are his historical novels situated in the time of the immense religious wars in the 17th century (*Bloudění*, The Wandering, 1929; *Rekviem*, The Requiem, 1930; *Masopust*, The Shrovetide, 1938; *Služebníci neužiteční*, The Useless Servants, 1969; *Duše a hvězda*, The Soul and the Star, 1969; *Boží duha*, God's Rainbow, 1969). In his pseudo-baroque style he found a new, modern poetics demonstrating and revealing the hidden layers of the Czech poetic language being influenced and formed for many centuries by baroque poetics. In his essays and reflections he very often expresses controversial views and depressions of modern human individuality searching for God, extreme opinions, emotions, sincerity and openness (see, for example, his essays *Výstražné slovo k českým básníkům*, A Word of Warning to the Czech Poets, *Proč mne mrzí být českým spisovatelem*, Why I feel bad to be a Czech Writer, *Kánon sexuality*, The Canon of Sexuality, *Čekám na slovo osvobozující*, I am Waiting for the Liberating Word – in his essays Durych even came to the positive appraisal of communism). The rational kernel of his utterances consists in his revealing some common features of big mass movements: emotions, psychosis, a weak brain control, extremism and expressing absolute opinions consisting in the condemnation of post-war unmanliness, impotence and weakness:

After the War our men became softer: it became fashionable to exhibit this unmanliness. The influence of post-war French literature is in this sense glaringly demoralizing. Though this unmanliness dwells rather on the tongue than in the real physiognomy of men, the word has its powerful spell which has its affection even through the crust of hypocrisy. So it happened that the idea of speaking softly and lamentably about the war horrors became common and that these horrors will be expelled for the future. And communism seems to be an apparition which threatens these dispositions [...] The Bolshevik revolution attempted at the formation of the balance between the natural and unnatural death, as even at war many people died naturally. It carried out the work of destruction and the work was really immense. We could be instructed that great dangers were still ahead [...] Communism manifested its lack of the sense of sentimentality, and I must accept it with respect. Regarded as a ephemeral experiment it showed its ability of inertia. It even organized to a certain degree its own principles. It plundered the fear of violence, accentuated the significance of the army, the sense of dictatorship, it proved to be more vital and stronger than socialism; it declared its privilege to rule over the world without any compromises and at any cost. I have the respect for communism and I may even have more affection for it; I recognize many of

its principles and especially its view of bourgeoisie; I recognize that cultus is really the work of the proletariat, I even recognize the haughtiness of the proletariat without any incidental explanations and escapes. But yet I am no communist, as communism does not mean completeness for me, but just a part, maybe a stage. I could not become a communist though they would make me do so, though I know I will not be forgiven without the complete obedience, though I know the communist hammer strikes not only the nail heads, but also the human ones, though not every day. If I long for completeness, I can serve a part, but I cannot believe in the sufficiency of this part. What possibilities can then appear? Either nothing happens, and we will quietly die. Or communism will win the so-called old world and it will forgive us or will treat us due to its common methods. Or communism will be defeated by its opponents, and then they let us live not being interested in us or cover us with the ruins of communism without knowing about it. Or afterwards quite different circumstances will dominate in the spiritual world, and in this case it depends on our ability to create history or not. The peak of communism is relatively high. The human has not created anything higher. But for us, it is not the highest peak. No empirical reasons against communism are sufficient for me. For that matter, communism has not have its own historian who would be at the same time its critic and visionary. I can see the monstrosity, but also beauty and mainly strength. But there is even a bigger strength and in the order of eternity the lower must serve the higher.<sup>1</sup> (Fialová 189–190).

These extreme and controversial views do not correspond to those expressed by Edvard Kocbek in his essay *Premišljevanje o Španiji* (1937): the views of these two Catholics are quite different as Durych is Franco's supporter. The whole case of the journal *Dom in svet* (cf. Dolgan) is hardly imaginable in interwar Czechoslovakia, more precisely in the Czech Lands: the prevalent left-wing avant-garde movement more or less connected with communism and Marxism evoked the resistance in the Catholic circles which were therefore more radical. Though the Slovene Catholic expressionism (Anton Vodnik, France Vodnik, Edvard Kocbek) was in its style and poetics close to Czech Catholic modernism, its topical social and political views were different due to the inner Slovene situation. In interwar Slovenia the ideological tension was not so strong and the struggling parties were not so contrastive as in the Czech cultural milieu just after the foundation of the new republican regime that was at the very beginning very anti-Catholic, what was supported by President Masaryk himself (the rise of a new Church founded by Catholic dissidents – The Czechoslovak Hussite Church – existing up to the present day).

To sum up: the Czech and Slovene literatures of the interwar period developed in a similar, but at the same time in a different political and cultural environment. This interwar situation naturally reflected the different position of the two literatures; there were similar movements and tendencies, but not identical results: the different political and cultural

climate, divergent positions of various ideological trends (Marxism, Catholicism) gave different results; the Czechs had nearly no Catholic dissidents, rather individualities and extremists, as same as on the avant-garde or communist side. The avant-garde movement identified with modernist poetics was stronger and more pluralistic in Czech literature; therefore the first big post-war exhibition of the so-called Soviet fine art in Prague in 1947 was a big shock for all Czech communist artists – a medieval return of pathetic, robust, realist, non-inventional state art. The relative irreconcilability of the Czech left-wing and Catholic artistic positions has, of course, some exceptions to the rule: one of them is a Czech communist poet of spiritual orientation František Halas (1901–1949).

There are, of course, many questions left aside: the typological role of minor literatures in Europe, the necessity of the analysis of Slovenia as part of Austria-Hungary, Yugoslavia, European Union, and the cultural space of the contemporary Czech Republic and the fates of its territory in the past, the Soviet ideological and artistic influence in the 20th century, the problem of the non-existence of a strong Danube empire in the Central-European cultural space etc. But this may become the subject of another research project.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Po válce naši lidé změkklí: stalo se aspoň módou nosit změkčilost na odív. Vliv poválečné francouzské literatury je v tomto smyslu okatě demoralizující. Změkčilost ta sídlí sice spíše na jazyku než v pravé fyziognomii lidí, ale i slovo má své mocné kouzlo, které působí i skrze krunýř přetvářky. Tak se stalo, že se vžila představa, že je nutno o hrůzách válečných mluvit měkce a žalostivě, a tím že se tyto hrůzy pro budoucnost zažehnají. A komunismus je strašidlem, které tyto dispozice ohrožuje [...] Bolševická revoluce pokusila se, aby zjednotila rovnováhu mezi smrtí přirozenou a nepřirozenou, poněvadž i ve válce ještě příliš mnoho lidí umíralo přirozeně. Vykonal dílo zničení, a bylo to dílo veliké. Mohli jsme se poučit, že na nás číhají ještě velká nebezpečí [...] Komunismus ukázal nedostatek smyslu pro sentimentalitu, a to musím uznávat s úctou. Považován za efemerní experiment, dokázal svou schopnost setrvačnosti. Zorganizoval do jisté míry i svoji řeholi. Vyplnil strach před násilím, vyzdvihl smysl armády, vyzdvihl smysl diktatury, ukázal se životnějším a silnějším než socialismus; ohlásil svůj nárok na vládu nad světem beze všech kompromisů a za jakoukoli cenu. Ctím komunismus a snad k němu chovám city ještě vřelejší; uznávám mnohé z jeho zásad a zvláště jeho názor o buržoazii; uznávám, že kultus je skutečně dílem proletariátu, uznávám i povýšenost proletariátu beze všech postranních výkladů a zadních dvířek. Ale komunistou přece jen nejsem, poněvadž komunismus pro mne neznamená úplnost, nýbrž část, třebas i etapu. Nemohl bych být komunistou, ani kdyby mne nutili, třebas vím, že bych pardonu nedošel bez poslušnosti úplné, třebas vím, že komunistické kladivo bije nejen do hlav hřebíků, ale i do hlav lidských, třebas ne každý den. Toužím-li po úplnosti, mohu sloužit části, ale nemohu věřit v dostatečnost části. Jaké nastávají možnosti? Buď že se nám nic nestane a že zemřeme klidně. Nebo komunismus zvítězí nad takzvaným starým světem a pak nám buď dá pardon, nebo s námi naloží podle běžných metod. Nebo komu-

nismus podlehně svým odpůrcům a pak nás jeho odpůrci buďto nechají žít, nedbajíce o nás, nebo nás zasypou troskami komunismu, třebaš ani o tom nevědouce. Nebo posléze nastanou zcela jiné poměry v duchovém světě, a to záleží na tom, zda historii tvořit umíme, nebo neumíme. Vrchol komunismu je značně vysoký. Lidský duch sám o sobě nevytvořil dosud ničeho vyššího. Ale pro nás přece jen není vrcholem nejvyšším. Žádný empirický důvod proti komunismu mi nestačí. Ostatně komunismus ještě neměl svého historika, který by byl i kritikem a vizionářem. Vidím oblidnost, ale i krásu a hlavně sílu. Je však síla ještě vyšší a v řádu věcnosti nižší musí sloužit vyššímu.

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## Periodizacija slovenske in češke književnosti ter dva tokova v češki medvojni književnosti (prispevek k razpravi)

Ključne besede: primerjalna literarna veda / slovenska književnost / češka književnost / literatura in ideologija / literarna periodizacija / modernizem / literarna avantgarda / Čapek, Karel / Durych, Jaroslav

Avtor študije se ukvarja s problemom periodizacije slovenske in češke književnosti, pri čemer se podrobneje posveti obdobju med prvo in drugo svetovno vojno. Češka in slovenska medvojni književnost sta se razvijali v podobnem, toda hkrati različnem političnem in kulturnem okolju. Obstajala so podobna gibanja in tendence, toda rezultati niso bili enaki: različne politične in kulturne okoliščine ter različni ideološki tokovi (marksizem, katolištvo) so pripeljali do različnih rezultatov. Čehi skoraj niso imeli katoliških odpadnikov, več je bilo katoliških osebnosti in skrajnežev, podobno je bilo na avantgardni ali komunistični strani. Pravilo o relativni nezdružljivosti čeških levo usmerjenih in katoliških umetniških pozicij seveda pozna nekaj izjem: ena izmed njih je češki komunistični pesnik z duhovno usmeritvijo František Halas (1901–1949). Liberalno-demokratski ter religiozni in duhovni tokovi v češki književnosti (René Wellek) so v članku prikazani s primerjavo Karla Čapka in Jaroslava Durycha.

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