The Prose Fiction and Polemics of Karel Matěj Čapek-Chod

PhD thesis

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Thesis Abstract:

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K. M. Čapek-Chod (1860-1927) had a well-established reputation as a journalist and caustic polemicist before laudatory reviews of his third novel, Kašpar Lén mšitel (1908) secured him recognition as a major writer. His contemporaries, however, often criticized his works as the pessimistic outbursts of a cynic, which they were not.

The thesis is divided into two parts: the first treats his belleslettres; the second, his polemics. In the Introduction, I consider the shortcomings of critical assessments of his works and suggest that they can best be understood as belonging to the tradition of literature of the grotesque. In Chapter 1, I summarize theories of the grotesque and indicate how aspects of Čapek-Chod’s fiction (narrative structure, characters, images and situations), can be interpreted in this light. In the subsequent chapters, I analyse major themes in his fiction: depictions of science, art and artists; of woman; and of the Jews. I indicate in what respect his treatment of these themes is unconventional and contributes to the construction of the grotesque world of his fiction.

The second part of the thesis is subdivided into two sections: in the first, I treat his polemics concerning art exhibitions and contemporary events prior to the Great War. These polemics discuss the role of the critic and artist, and the relation between art and politics in fin-de-siècle culture. The second section treats polemics between Čapek-Chod and critics of his fiction throughout his writing career. I demonstrate that he was highly sensitive to critics and that even when positive reviews appeared, any remark therein that he regarded as false inspired 'sarcastic' fulmination. I ascertain that as a polemicist Čapek-Chod was a nationalist writer, while nationalism is barely evident at all in his belleslettres, which analyse ironically the conflict between man's ideals and reality.
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Introduction

1. Biographical Notes

Matěj Čapek, who later adopted the literary name K. M. Čapek-Chod, was born in Domažlice in February 1860. His father, Jan Czapek, taught draughtsmanship, architecture and mathematics at the Unterrealschule in Domažlice. He died of tuberculosis at the age of thirty-four. Although Čapek was only six years old at the time of his father’s death, he retained a vivid impression of the man. He was physically very strong: Čapek states that he could lift a billiard table on his back. According to all accounts, Čapek inherited this physical strength from his father. Czapek may have fostered an appreciation of the eccentric in his son.

As well as the students, whom Čapek took on as boarders, there were also pets living in the cottage: a dog, a cat, a cockerel, a drake and a canary. Czapek had the habit of breakfasting at the table with all his pets. In 1924, writing in his journal, Čapek recalls with amazement that his father, in a feverish state on his deathbed, had called his son to his side and asked him - to scratch his chest. Čapek’s mother, Josefa née Jakubšová, was the daughter of a well-heeled haberdasher (tkaničkář). After her husband’s death, the family lived in straightened financial circumstances. She died in January 1912. Matěj Čapek had two

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1See the draft of a feuilleton Čapek wrote about his father: Papers: Karel Matěj Čapek-Chod; manuscript memoirs, no date; Památník národního písemníctví (hereafter, PNP).

2Ibid.

3Ibid. See also the account of the same story in: František Pražák, 'Zvířátka', Pod křídlý domova, Ostrava and Prague, 1948, pp. 129-35.

4Čapek comments: 'Do dneška mám ve špičkách prstů pocit ledovosti jeho'. Papers: Čapek-Chod; journal fragments, 1 April - 14 May 1924; see the entry on 20 April 1924; PNP.

5Čapek-Chod; manuscript memoirs, no date; PNP


7Papers: Čapek-Chod; letter from Jan Hromádka to Čapek-Chod, 24 January 1912; PNP. According to his sister, Čapek was a devoted son. Šach, K. M. Čapek-Chod, p. 90.
brothers, Jan and Václav, and a sister Marie. His younger brother Jan became a priest; he died in 1892. Václav trained as a maltster, but was employed as a post-office clerk.

Čapek studied at the grammar school in Domažlice from 1871 to 1879. He later facetiously claimed that he took up a career as a writer because of the poor grade for Czech language he had received in the school-leaving exam; he received a bare pass (dostatečný) for all subjects except physics and religion, for which he received a higher grade (dobrý). Although he did not excel at school, he taught himself French and pursued independent study of German. In 1879, he matriculated at the law faculty of the Charles-Ferdinand University. He enrolled as an external student at the medical faculty in Prague; according to his sister, Čapek also often visited hospitals as a student and was present at many autopsies. He supported himself by giving private tuition and lodged with a cobbler on the Kampa island. Čapek did not complete his law degree, but left the city suddenly.

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8 František Tvrdoň, 'K. M. Čapek-Chod a moravský národopis', Český lid, 45 (1958), 5, p. 239.

9 Papers: Čapek-Chod; letter from František Kašpar dated 4 November 1892; PNP.


11 Čapek states that he received a grade of 'unsatisfactory' for his school-leaving assignment in Czech. He comments: 'Uložil jsem si za životní pokání, že budu až do své smrti dělat výhradně písemné práce z češtiny, dokud to nedotáhnu aspoň na dostatečnou.' K. M. Čapek, 'Debut', Patero třetí, Prague, n.d. [1912], p. 493.

12 Papers: Čapek-Chod; documents: school-leaving certificate, 1879; PNP.


14 Papers: Čapek-Chod; documents: certificate of matriculation, 1879; PNP.

15 Šach, K. M. Čapek-Chod, p. 76.

16 At least, according to Túma. Ladislav Túma-Zevloun, 'Ježatec', Alej vzpomínek, Prague, 1958, p. 81.
after a brawl between Czech and German students. In 'Debut', Čapek comments cryptically that although he did not fight in the 'Chuchle battle', he had been involved in it and thus it was advisable for him to flee to avoid arrest. He lived in Domažlice for a time and then found work as an extern for the Old Czech Pokrok (later renamed Hlas národa) and in the editorial office of the Otto publishing house. He began work for the Catholic conservative newspaper Našinec in Olomouc in August 1884 and remained there until November 1888. According to Tvrdoň, Čapek began by writing for the 'Day's news' (denní zprávy) and literature and art columns; he also wrote concert reviews. In his capacity as reporter for Našinec, Čapek witnessed the execution of Sergeant Lopatinský, in the courtyard of the army hospital in Klášter Hradisko; he treats the incident in the short story 'šikovatel Lemaninský'. He also wrote leading articles concerning politics, in particular, the conflict between Czechs and Germans, and was known for the fiery patriotic tone of these articles. Čapek, according to Tvrdoň, attacked Taaffe's


18Čapek, 'Debut', pp. 486-87. See also: Šach, K. M. Čapek-Chod, p. 33. The brawl, fuelled by nationalist tension, took place in a restaurant in Chuchle. Several German students were injured. Otto Urban, Česká společnost 1848-1918, Prague, 1982, p. 357.

19Tůma-Zevloun, 'Ježatec', p. 81.


policies, which aimed at reconciliation between the nationalities. Tvrdoň makes the broad claim that Čapek's work as a journalist frustrated Taaffe's plans and thus prevented the further fragmentation and subjection of the Czech nation. Tvrdoň's claim, however, accords with Čapek's own assessment of his role in Czech politics.

Čapek's involvement in community life in Olomouc gives evidence of his wide range of interests. In 1885-86, Čapek arranged a number of lectures on the possible means of exploiting electricity in the workshops of small tradesmen; the lectures took place on the premises of the Slav Workers' Club (Slovanský dělnický spolek). In 1886 he gave a lecture on art for the Slav Reading Club (Slovanský čtenářský spolek). Čapek worked for the National Association for Eastern Moravia (Národní jednota pro východní Moravu); in 1887 he was elected honorary secretary of the executive of the central committee. In this capacity in 1888 he invited Mikoláš Aleš (1852-1913) to design the costumes for the instalment of a tableau vivant; 'Nastolení krále Ječmína' was staged at a costumed ball in honour of the opening of the National House (Národní dům) in Olomouc. Čapek proposed

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26 In a letter to Arne Novák he writes: 'Moje publicistická činnost výhradně se specializovala na národnostní boj zejména pokud se týče vyrovnání s Němcí, jemuž jsem bránil ze všech sil až do úmoru a mohu říci, že až budu ležet na smrtečné posteli a na své úspěchy na tomto poli vzpomenu, snáze budu umírat. Jsem si spravedlivě vědom, že nebytí mého péra, vyrovnání s Němci, resp. národnostní rozhraníčení Čech bylo by se uskutečnilo, ne-li v letech devadesátých, tedy jistě v první desítce t. stol.' Papers: Arne Novák; letters from Čapek-Chod to Novák, 1909-1922; see the letter dated 25 December 1922; PNP. Emphasis in the original.


28 Ibid.

29 Ibid.

30 Emanuel Svoboda, 'Mikoláš Aleš v Olomouci', Klas. Almanach Sdružení spisovatelů z Hané, Rotislav Bartocha et al. (eds), 1947, pp. 60-9. Čapek's letters to Aleš regarding the celebration are printed in this article.
both the theme of the ball and the invitation to Aleš. He also helped the sisters Madlena and Vlasta Wanklová, in whose home he lived with his mother and sister, in their work for the Patriotic Museum (Vlastenecké museum). It has been claimed that Čapek left Olomouc in a rush because of an unhappy love. A 1922 journal entry, in which he mentions having dreamt about Madlena Wanklová, appears to support this conjecture. However, Čapek received an offer of work from Hlas národa dated 24 October 1888; if he accepted, he was to begin work by November at the latest. It is most likely that this explains his sudden departure from Olomouc.

In 1891 Čapek left Hlas národa, the leading organ of the Old Czech Party, to work for the Old Czech [Česká] Národní politika. In the same year he began work for Světozor; he was in charge of the graphic arts column. He regularly contributed articles about Prague artists to the Munich journal Kunst für alle. As a journalist for Národní politika, Čapek covered the

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31The ball apparently was a success. Ibid., p. 67. Both the Mirostřeže episodes in Antonín Vondřejc and the short story 'Labyrint světa' are based to some extent on Čapek’s involvement in the preparations for the celebration.

32Tvrdoň, ‘K. M. Čapek-Chod v Olomouci’. One is reminded of the sisters Mirza and Ada portrayed in Antonín Vondřejc. Madlena and Vlasta were daughters of the archaeologist and doctor Jindřich Wankel (1821-1897).


34Papers: Čapek-Chod; journal fragments from 15 August - 16 September 1922; see the entry on 25 August 1922; PNP. He describes her as a shallow flirt.

35Papers: Čapek-Chod; letter from Josef Kummer to Čapek-Chod, 24 October 1888; PNP. In 1888 Čapek also suffered from a bout of typhus. See: Papers: Čapek-Chod; journal fragments, entry dated 6 April 1924; PNP.

36Papers: Čapek-Chod; documents: request for a state grant; dated 20 April 1898; PNP.

37Ibid.

38Ibid.
Paris Exhibition in 1900. In Paris, he met up with Václav Hladík (1868-1913), who worked for the Young Czech newspaper Národní listy; Hladík arranged a meeting between Čapek and Prokop Grégr (1868-1926), director of Národní listy, which led to an offer of work. In February 1901, Čapek left Národní politika for Národní listy. The journalist Mořic Bloch claims that Čapek left Národní politika because of a conflict with the editor-in-chief; Čapek would have been next in line for this position had he remained at the newspaper. Bloch asserts that Čapek later regretted the decision. Hladík may have instigated Čapek's involvement in the journal Do světa. Praha – Paříž 1900, devoted to coverage of the Exhibition. Hladík edited the first two issues of the journal; Čapek edited the remaining issues, that is, from January to October 1900.

Ladislav Tůma (1876-1956) relates that Čapek received a cool welcome from the Národní listy editors because of his earlier work for Old Czech newspapers. It is difficult to believe that Tůma is correct when he states that Čapek's change of affiliation caused a sensation; the influence of the Old Czech Party had declined significantly by 1900. Moreover, Hladík had also worked for the Old Czech Hlas národa. Apparently, however, Čapek quickly won the respect of his colleagues and the admiration of the younger journalists on account of his talents as a journalist. Even before he started work for Národní listy he

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39 Papers: Čapek-Chod; documents: journalist accreditation for the Exhibition in Paris, 1900; PNP.
40 Tůma-Zevloun, 'Ježatec', p. 82.
41 Ibid.
42 Šach, K. M. Čapek-Chod, p. 23.
43 Do světa. Praha – Paříž 1900, Prague, 1899-1900. Most of the articles are unsigned.
44 Tůma-Zevloun, 'Ježatec', p. 82.
45 Zevloun [Ladislav Tůma], 'Rodinná kronika Národních Listů', Národní listy jubilejní sborník 1861-1941, Prague, 1941, p. 73.
46 Tůma-Zevloun, 'Ježatec', p. 82.
had acquired a reputation as a journalist. He was not only gifted but hard-working and conscientious: acquaintances and friends recollect that he worked long hours. When he left the editorial offices at night, he went home to work on his fiction; he sometimes wrote until the morning. Tůma speculates that his work as a journalist drained Čapek of energy during his most productive years. There may be some truth to the claim that Čapek’s health was undermined by this work; in his correspondence with Jan František Hruška (1865-1937), he complains about his exhaustion and problems with his vision. His correspondence with his employer indicates that he felt overworked and underpaid.

Čapek daily read not only all the Prague newspapers but also French, German and English newspapers. He did so not merely for the sake of keeping abreast, but to find material for his column. Čapek’s primary responsibility consisted of editing the ‘Day’s

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48 Tůma states that Čapek wrote as much as five hundred lines of text daily. Tůma-Zevloun, ‘Ježatec’, p. 84. See also: Šach, K. M. Čapek-Chod, p. 24.

49 Tůma, ‘Čapek-Chod, žurnalista a člověk’, pp. 77-78.

50 Tůma-Zevloun, ‘Ježatec’, p. 84.

51 Papers: Čapek-Chod; letters from Hruška to Čapek-Chod, 1905-1925; see letters dated 4 February 1915, 12 and 26 September 1916; PNP. One is tempted to speculate on the extent to which ‘Ůvodník’ is autobiographical. Čapek-Chod warns against such an identification in his letter to the editor: ‘V rubrice "Literatura"’, Národní listy, 9 January 1917, p. 5. He is here responding to A[ntonín]. V[eselý].’s review of Siláci a slabosí: ‘Novellista K. M. Čapek’, Národní listy, 6 January 1917, supplement to no. 5, p. 11.

52 Papers: Čapek-Chod; letters from Čapek-Chod to Prokop Grégr, 1903-1907; in particular the letters dated 5 June 1903, 13 April 1905; PNP.

news' column, at least for his first ten years on Národní listy. From his own account, and from the attacks directed at him from rival newspapers, it is clear that he often wrote leading articles. In this context, one might note that critics have wrongly claimed that Čapek acquired his knowledge of various disciplines, and of all classes of society, in the course of his work as a journalist. It appears that the knowledge and experience he acquired as a journalist were, for the most part, incidental to his fiction. In a letter to Arne Novák (1880-1939) commenting on the critic's Přehledné dějiny literatury české (1913), Čapek writes:


For a number of years he also edited the 'Naučný obzor' (General Knowledge) column. Almost all this work was unsigned, in keeping with the practice of the time. Čapek only put his name

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54Ibid.; Šach, K. M. Čapek-Chod, p. 24. Vodák's obituary also states that Čapek wrote polemical articles for the 'day's news' column; Vodák's obituary, however, contains a number of inaccuracies. Jindřich Vodák, 'Karel Mat. Čapek-Chod', Cestou, Prague, 1946, p. 205.

55Papers: Arne Novák; letter from Čapek-Chod to Novák, dated 25 December 1922; PNP. Emphasis in the original. The third edition of Novák's study was published in 1922.

56Prokop Grégr informs Čapek that, in response to his request, he has been relieved of the responsibility of editing the 'Naučný obzor' section. Papers: Čapek-Chod; letters from Grégr to Čapek-Chod, 1905-1919; see the letter dated 19 April 1905; PNP.

57Túma, 'Čapek-Chod, žurnalista a člověk', p. 77.
to the occasional reviews of books and exhibitions which he wrote for Národní listy, and to letters to the editor in the same newspaper. Thus one can only ascertain his authorship of articles in those polemics which elicited a personal response from him, usually in the form of a letter to the editor or an article in another journal. At the same time, however, Čapek was also regularly publishing in journals under his own name: his fiction was published in: Česká revue, Český svět, Hlas národa, Květy, Lumír, Světozor, Švanda duďák, Zlatá Praha, Zvon, later, also Cesta; his reviews of exhibitions and theatre performances were published in: Česká revue, Světozor, and Zvon, apart from Národní listy.

It is not clear exactly when Čapek was transferred from the 'Day's news' column. Tůma claims that Čapek was given the task of writing about cultural affairs following Karel Kramář's (1860-1937) buying of Národní listy in 1910. For a number of years prior to this purchase, Národní listy had attacked the policies of the Young Czech Kramář, who defended his stance in the newspaper Den. The public identified Čapek with these attacks, thus it would have probably been expedient to transfer him to another column. However, it seems clear that Čapek continued to write for the 'Day's news' column for some time after the sale of the newspaper. By 1913, he was working on the weekend

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58 Tůma-Zevloun, 'Ježatec', p. 86; Tůma, 'Čapek-Chod, žurnalista a člověk', p. 78.


60 In 1911, in a letter to Emanuel Chalupný, Čapek states that he is the author of 'day's news' articles attacking Jan Herben in Čas. Papers: Emanuel Chalupný; letters from Čapek-Chod to Chalupný, 1911-1923; see letter dated 9 June 1911; PNP. The article to which Čapek refers in this letter is: 'V "Čas"', Národní listy, 8 June 1911, p. 4. Attacks on Herben occur in Národní listy throughout May and June of 1911. At the same time, Chalupný was publishing a very critical account of leading Realists (Herben, Masaryk, Machar): 'Vznik české strany pokrokové', Český jih, 29 April 1911, pp. 1-2; 6 May, pp. 1-2; 13 May, pp. 1-2; 20 May, p. 2; 27 May, pp. 1-2; 3 June, pp. 1-2; 10 June, p. 1.
literary supplement; and during World War I (at least, from 1914 to 1916), he edited this supplement as well as the feuilleton column. His own work, published pseudonymously, frequently appeared in the column. Čapek regarded this position as a demotion; in a letter to Růžena Svobodová (1868–1920), Čapek notes that his influence at the newspaper offices has declined.

It has been wrongly claimed that he adopted the agname 'Chod' after the war, to distinguish himself from the brothers Čapek. He used the name 'Čapek-Chod' as early as 1913; it appears on the title page of Z města i obvodu (1913), and in every subsequent publication. From 1917 onwards, he continued

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61 T. Hrubý sends him a submission for the weekend supplement in 1913. Papers: Čapek-Chod; letter from T. Hrubý to Čapek-Chod; dated 3 November 1913; PNP.

62 Tůma-Zevloun, 'Ježatec', p. 87. This is corroborated by the correspondence preserved among Čapek's papers; many of the letters (for example, those from Eduard Bass, Otokar Fischer, Jan Machek, Jan Pakosta) were posted together with submissions to the feuilleton column. See also his correspondence with Josef Hevera, who asks Čapek to submit a proposal for the organization of his sections, the feuilleton and the literary supplement. Papers: Čapek-Chod; letters from Josef Stanislav Hevera to Čapek-Chod, 1911–1916; letter dated 14 September 1916; PNP. A letter from Čapek to Svobodová indicates that in the first month of 1917, he was still editing the feuilleton column. Papers: Růžena Svobodová; letters from Čapek-Chod to Růžena Svobodová, 1912–1919; letter dated 19 January 1917; PNP.

63 He writes that the position he has at the newspaper in 1916 cannot compare with the influence he had six years before. Papers: Růžena Svobodová; letter from Čapek-Chod to Svobodová dated 30 November 1916; PNP.

64 See, for example: Tůma-Zevloun, 'Ježatec', p. 87.

65 Čapek gives a, perhaps facetious, account of why he added the agname in his speech to the syndicate of Czech journalists: 'Když se totiž mezi zasloužilé literáty začaly i ulice rozdíleti, staral jsem se o to, abych nepříšel zkrátka. Na Vinohradech máme Chodskou ulici, tato náhoda přímo vyzývala k tomu, abych se ji sám zmocnil, a bylo po starosti.' K. M. Čapek-Chod, 'Veterán, nikoli však invalida', Lumír, 53 (1926–27), 9, p. 466. In the same speech he explains why he added the name 'Karel' to his Christian name, 'Matěj'. Ibid., p. 465. Gustav Halík (head physician at the hospital in Domažlice), asserted that Čapek chose the name 'Chod' because his mother came from the Jakubše line, numerous in the Chod region (Chodsko). See: Šach, K. M. Čapek-Chod, p. 59.
to write the occasional article for Národní listy, but he had no regular duties at the newspaper. However, he remained a member of the editorial board and still visited the editorial offices. He declined the offer to return to write polemics. Following the merger of the Young Czechs and the Realists after the war, the editorial board of the newspaper was expanded. Some of Čapek’s most vehement opponents in polemics, such as Jan Herben (1857-1936) and J. S. Machar (1864-1942), were added to the board; thus he may also have been relieved that his duties were so limited at the newspaper. Čapek was then reconciled with some of his former opponents in polemics, for example, Viktor Dyk (1877-1931). T. G. Masaryk (1850-1937), a frequent target before the war for Národní listy journalists, was later on friendly terms with Čapek. Čapek was never, however, reconciled to Machar.

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66 See, for example, Viktor Dyk’s statement to this effect in Šach, K. M. Čapek-Chod, p. 25; also, the funeral address of František Sís, ‘Na rozloučenou’, Národní listy, 8 November 1927, p. 1. In a letter to his employer, Čapek complained about the fact that he was no longer in charge of any columns. He had been asked to contribute a novel for publication in Národní listy. Papers: Čapek-Chod; draft of a letter from Čapek to the editor-in-chief of Národní listy, 1918; PNP.


68 Papers: Čapek-Chod; letter from Čapek-Chod to an editor of Národní listy, 1923; PNP.

69 Zevloun, ‘Rodinná kronika Národních Listů’, p. 107. However, he did feel neglected by his former employer. See the journal entry dated 26 March 1927: Papers: Čapek-Chod; journal fragments, 17 January – 5 June 1927; PNP.

70 See Čapek’s account of their meeting in Karlovy Vary (Carlsbad). Papers: Čapek-Chod; journal fragments, August 1924; entry not dated; PNP. See also the account of their meeting in 1925: Papers: Čapek-Chod; journal fragments, August – December 1925; entry dated 5 August 1925; PNP. Čapek describes a reconciliation of sorts with Herben. They had rooms next to one another at Karlovy Vary; Herben asked Čapek to help him with some difficulty he was having undoing his collar stud. Thus, Čapek comments, his most confirmed enemy trusted him for a moment with his neck. Papers: Čapek-Chod; journal fragments, 16 June 1927; PNP.
While he had retired from *Národní listy*, after the war Čapek signed a demanding contract with *Cesta*;\(^71\) it appears that he had an obligation to write a phenomenal amount for almost no financial remuneration. His correspondence with Miroslav Rutte (1889–1954) suggests that Čapek was obliged to write a certain number of lines per volume and was only paid for lines of text in addition to this obligatory amount.\(^72\) He frequently complained about the contract in his journal entries.\(^73\) Thus, the last years of his life were filled with draining intellectual labour.

Čapek’s energy was devoted not only to his work as a journalist and fiction writer, but also to his passion for the arts, of which his long career as a reviewer of exhibitions and theatre performances gives evidence. Tůma even claims that Čapek studied with the painter Vojtěch Hynais (1854–1925) for a time.\(^74\) Whether or not this was the case, it is clear that they were good friends.\(^75\) It is common knowledge that he loved to play the

\(^71\)He complains about it in a letter to Novák: Papers; Arne Novák; letter from Čapek-Chod dated 17 August 1922. See also: Jan Vrba, *'Za K. M. Čapkem-Chodem', Otokar Březina a jiní přátelé v mé paměti*, Prague, 1932, p. 372.

\(^72\)Papers: Čapek-Chod; letters from Miroslav Rutte to Čapek-Chod; see the letter dated 17 June 1924; PNP. For volumes 5 and 6, that is, 1923–1924, Čapek was paid a total sum of 3,010 crowns. For these two volumes he wrote a total of 23,926 lines of text, of which 16,416 were obligatory.

\(^73\)See: Papers: Čapek-Chod; journal fragments, entries dated 17 and 26 January, and 19 February 1927; PNP.

\(^74\)Tůma-Zevloun, *'Ježatec'* , p. 89. See also the comment to this effect by Heda Svobodová in: *Šach, K. M. Čapek-Chod*, p. 77.

\(^75\)This is evident from their correspondence. Also, in a journal entry Čapek notes that he owns ten pictures on display in a show of Hynais’s work. Hynais had given him the pictures, which Čapek insured at a value of 80,000 crowns. Papers: Čapek-Chod; journal fragments, 17 - 20 December 1924; entry dated 17 December 1924; PNP. Čapek was also friends with the painter Ludvík Kuba (1864–1956) and with Hanuš Schwaiger (1854–1912). See: Papers: Čapek-Chod; letters from Kuba to Čapek-Chod; 1896–1923; PNP; and Papers: Čapek-Chod; letters from Schwaiger to Čapek-Chod; 1899; PNP.
violin, and had friends and admirers in the music world, including the opera singer Ema Destinnová (1878-1930). His passion for chess developed into an obsession, as his journal entries indicate. He usually played chess in Hlava’s café. In his later years, he could not so much as observe a game of chess without it keeping him awake at night as he analysed possible combinations. The description of Čapek’s chess-playing habits, for example, his delight in clever strategies, his absorption in the game to the extent that he forgot to drink his coffee or smoke his cigar, his custom of chatting to the chess pieces, recalls not only Hvězda’s enthusiasm for chess in Nejzápadnější Slovan (1893), but also that of Dr Freund in Antonín Vondrejc (1917-1918). Čapek regarded his chess-playing as an addiction and repeatedly attempted to give it up for the sake of his health.

It seems that the one thing Čapek did not have time for was his family. He suffered terribly from guilt following the death of his one son because he believed that he had been a negligent father. In a letter to Arne Novák he states that he had

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76Šach, K. M. Čapek-Chod, pp. 72-75. According to his sister Marie, Čapek gave up playing the violin following the death of his son. Ibid., p. 75.

77See also the praise for Čapek expressed by the composer Jindřich Jindřich (1876-1967) in: Šach, K. M. Čapek-Chod, p. 72.

78See, for example: Papers: Čapek-Chod; journal fragments, entries on 26 and 31 January 1927; PNP.

79Šach, K. M. Čapek-Chod, p. 28.

80K. J. [probably Karel Juda], ‘Čapek-Chod, šachista’, Národní listy, 6 November 1927, p. 3. Čapek refers to his ‘hotová šachomanie’: Papers: Čapek-Chod; journal fragments, entry dated 26 February 1927; PNP.

81K. J., ‘Čapek-Chod, šachista’, p. 3.

82One of his regular chess partners also states that the game exhausted him. Šach, K. M. Čapek-Chod, p. 53. See also: Papers: Čapek-Chod; journal fragments, entry dated 18 March 1927; PNP.
sacrificed his real for his fictional sons.\textsuperscript{83} Vit (1896-1920) died of typhus; his parents believed that a misdiagnosis, apprehended only when the disease was in an advanced state, caused his death.\textsuperscript{84} Čapek described his former friend, Professor Josef Thomayer (1853-1927), who was responsible for the misdiagnosis, as the murderer of his son.\textsuperscript{85} Čapek did his utmost to atone for his own sense of guilt by caring for his grandchildren, Vit and Vladimír. In his journal he writes that his grandchildren are his only joy in life.\textsuperscript{86} His journal entries and the recollections of his friends indicate that in the last years of his life his one concern was to provide for their security.\textsuperscript{87} He even went to some lengths to help his daughter-in-law, Olga, whom he hated.\textsuperscript{88} This was one of the main reasons he engaged in rather undignified polemics over the award of State Prizes; he hoped to secure their financial future.\textsuperscript{89} In the last

\textsuperscript{83}Papers: Arne Novák; letter from Čapek-Chod dated 6 September 1920; PNP.

\textsuperscript{84}Šach, K. M. Čapek-Chod, p. 30. See also Čapek’s journal entry: Papers: Čapek-Chod; journal fragments, entry dated 5 August 1925; PNP. Vit was falsely diagnosed as having ‘kryptogenetická sepse’. See: Papers: Čapek-Chod; journal fragments, 6 September - 25 December 1926; entry dated 30 September 1926; PNP.

\textsuperscript{85}Papers: Čapek-Chod; journal fragments, 10 July - 28 October 1927; entry dated 24 October 1927; PNP. Nejzápadnější Slovan is dedicated to Thomayer. The character Dr Vejborný, Vondrejc’s doctor (Antonín Vondrejc), is said to be based on Thomayer. Šach, K. M. Čapek-Chod, p. 55. See also: ne [Arne Novák], ‘Návštěva u prof. Thomayera’, Lidové noviny, 14 November 1927, afternoon edition, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{86}Papers: Čapek-Chod; journal fragments; entry dated 23 July 1924.

\textsuperscript{87}Šach, K. M. Čapek-Chod, p. 27.

\textsuperscript{88}He helped her to find employment. Šach, K. M. Čapek-Chod, p. 96. On his feelings for Olga, see his journal entries: Papers: Čapek-Chod; journals; entry dated 1 April 1924; see also: entry dated 12 June 1924; PNP.

\textsuperscript{89}Papers: Čapek-Chod; journal fragments; entry dated 31 January 1927; PNP. See also Vrba’s comment to this effect: Vrba, ‘Za K. M. Čapkem-Chodem’, pp. 370-71.
years of his life, he was also all the more sensitive to criticism because he was worried that he was going senile.\textsuperscript{90}

Čapek was not in the best of health. He suffered from gout.\textsuperscript{91} He again had problems with his vision and with kidney stones.\textsuperscript{92} In the summers, he received treatment at Carlsbad; he also spent time with his family at Chlum u Třeboň.\textsuperscript{93} His wife blamed Thomayer for the fact that Čapek did not receive the necessary medical attention in time. Thomayer apparently had stated that Čapek had haemorrhoids, when he was actually suffering from cancer.\textsuperscript{94} Her statement may merely indicate resentment of Thomayer; it is not corroborated by Čapek’s journal entries. He writes that his doctor had informed him that he had a tumour, most likely benign, which should be removed.\textsuperscript{95} Vodák states that the operation was for an intestinal tumour.\textsuperscript{96} Čapek’s black sense of humour is evident in the comment he made to a journalist who tried to convince him to give an interview in October 1927: 'Poslyšte, soumířte, to je mi nějak podezřelé.'

\textsuperscript{90}Papers: Arne Novák; letter from Čapek-Chod dated 17 August 1922. In a journal entry he comments: 'Fuj tajxl, celý život nestojí za starou bačkoru, a jestliže já dokázal Šaldovi, že bblne a nebo zblbnul, má to za sebou, jak dlouho to bude trvat se mnou.' Papers: Čapek-Chod; journal fragments, entry dated 17 December 1924; PNP. On his fear of senility, see also: Papers: Čapek-Chod; journal fragments, entry dated 9 April 1927; PNP.

\textsuperscript{91}Šach, K. M. Čapek-Chod, p. 121.

\textsuperscript{92}Papers: Čapek-Chod; journal fragments; entry dated 6 September 1926; PNP. He may have given up alcohol on account of the gout and kidney stones. Except on rare occasions, he was teetotal for the last eighteen years of his life. Šach, K. M. Čapek-Chod, p. 121. See also: Papers: Čapek-Chod; journal fragments, entry dated 17 December 1924; PNP.

\textsuperscript{93}In 1925, he and his wife also travelled with their grandchildren to Italy. Papers: Čapek-Chod; journal fragments; entry dated 26 June 1925; PNP.

\textsuperscript{94}Šach, K. M. Čapek-Chod, p. 103.

\textsuperscript{95}Papers: Čapek-Chod; journal fragments; entry dated 9 October 1927; PNP.

\textsuperscript{96}Vodák, 'Karel Mat. Čapek-Chod', p. 204.
Nečicháte nějakou mrtvolu?" Čapek postponed the operation until he had learned whether or not he had won a State Prize for Žešany (1927). On 3 November 1927 his heart gave out following the operation. According to his wife, he asked to speak to a priest before his death; he lost consciousness before the priest arrived. He did, however, receive Extreme Unction. The postscript to his death would have been appropriate to one of his fictional characters: thousands of admirers came to pay their respects at his elaborate funeral service. Národní listy undertook to pay for half the cost of the funeral; however, a year later, the funeral parlour for the city of Prague still had not received payment.

2. Čapek-Chod's Fiction
Čapek-Chod's contemporaries described his writing as Naturalist and grotesque; they did not consider the two terms to be incompatible. Critics sometimes also described him as a Realist, and as the creator of the 'Prague social novel'. He was compared with a plethora of writers: Balzac, Dostoevsky, Herrmann, Merhaut, Neruda, Šlejhar, Tilschová, Zola. Those critics who condemned his style also compared him with E. T. A. H. át., 'Pět minut s K. M. Čapkem Chodem', Národní listy, 29 October 1927, evening edition, p. 1.

Papers: Čapek-Chod; journal fragments; entry dated 15 October 1927; PNP.


Papers: Čapek-Chod; documents: bills for the funeral of K. M. Čapek-Chod, 1927-1928; PNP.

Hoffmann, Jean Paul and Poe. All his life, as is evident from his polemics, Čapek-Chod argued with the critical interpretations of his works. He objected, first of all, to the tendency of his critics to identify Čapek the journalist with Čapek the writer of fiction; and likewise he objected to the identification of the author with his characters. He also rejected the assessment of his work as pessimistic. Unless one holds that Čapek was utterly mistaken about his own intentions and the nature of his fiction, one must reconsider the assessments of his critics. I shall look at why his critics described him as a Naturalist and the inadequacy of the term as a description of his works. This analysis leads one to a consideration of the 'grotesque' character of his work. I shall consider his contemporaries' understanding of the term and indicate in what sense it can be used to describe his writing. What will become clear is that the assessments of critics have been one-sided; one must synthesize the various, often contradictory, readings in order to arrive at a plausible interpretation of his works. It also appears that those critics who condemned him often had the most perceptive insights, while those who defended and praised him overlooked some of the fundamental features of his writing.

3. Naturalism and Realism
In the reviews of his first published work, Povídky (1892), Čapek was interpreted as a Naturalist; the label has stuck with him up to the present.\(^{104}\) The Lexikon české literatury (1985), for example, notes that the documentary tendency in Čapek's early short stories was characteristic of contemporary Realist and Naturalist works. The author of the entry, Eva Taxová, comments that Čapek is Naturalist in his interest in characters who are physically or mentally deformed, and those who live on the fringe

of society.\textsuperscript{105} Panorama české literatury (1994) describes Čapek as the 'most distinctive creator of Czech Naturalism'.\textsuperscript{106}

The author's first critics, when describing Čapek as a Naturalist, had in mind his 'mimetic' style and choice of subject matter in the lower classes. Thus F. V. Vykoukal (1857-1933) mentions Čapek's faithful reproduction of reality in 'Na valech' and 'Frantův román'.\textsuperscript{107} Prokop Šup (1866-1921) comments that the author combines a Realist technique with a predilection for subject matter taken from the most humble and, at first sight, abnormal, groups in society.\textsuperscript{108} Arnošt Procházka (1869-1925) praises the author's ability to convey reality, but at the same time regards the author's concentration on the external world as a shortcoming.\textsuperscript{109} The leader of the 'Moravian Critics', Leander Čech (1854-1911), notes Čapek's interest in the lives of workers and beggars, as well as in physical abnormalities.\textsuperscript{110} Jiří Karásek (1871-1951) regards the author's depiction of the dregs of society, the 'heavy and stifling mood' of the collection, as inclining towards Russian Realism, particularly that represented by Dostoevsky.\textsuperscript{111}

At the time of publication of Povídky, the terms Naturalism and Realism were used almost interchangeably; this may well

\textsuperscript{105}et [Eva Taxová], 'Karel Matěj Čapek Chod', Lexikon české literatury, vol. 1, Vladimír Forst (ed.), Prague, 1985, p. 388.

\textsuperscript{106}Josef Galík et al., Panorama české literatury, Olomouc, 1994, p. 184.

\textsuperscript{107}F. V. V. (František Vladimír Vykoukal), 'K. M. Čapek: Povídky', Světozor, 27 (1892), 3, p. 34.

\textsuperscript{108}P[rokop]. Šup, 'K. M. Čapek: Povídky', Hlídka literarní, 10 (1893), 2, p. 76.

\textsuperscript{109}Ar. Pr. [Arnošt Procházka], 'K. M. Čapek: Povídky', Niva, 3 (1893), 12, p. 190.

\textsuperscript{110}L[eander]. Čech, 'Výpravná prosa', Osvěta, 24 (1894), 1, p. 86.

derive from the fact that Zola did not distinguish between them.\footnote{Lilian R. Furst and Peter N. Skrine, Naturalism, London, 1971, p. 5.} George Becker has argued that there is no reason to do so: 'in essence and origin naturalism is no more than an emphatic and explicit philosophical position taken by some realists, showing man caught in a net from which there can be no escape and degenerating under those circumstances; that is, it is pessimistic materialistic determinism'.\footnote{George J. Becker, 'Introduction: Modern Realism as a Literary Movement', Documents of Modern Literary Realism, Princeton, N. J., p. 35.} In the early 1880s Naturalism was regarded as a new development of Realism and various characteristics were ascribed to it.\footnote{H. Hrzalová, 'Z historie sporů o naturalismus a realismus: osmdesátá a devadesátá léta', Realismus a modernost. Proměny v české próze 19. století, Vladimír Forst (ed.), Prague, 1965, p. 96.} In 1883, in an article on Vlček's Zlato v ohni (1882), Josef Kuffner (1855-1928) identified Naturalism with Realism, which he understood as an objective, photographic reproduction of reality.\footnote{Ibid., p. 98.} H. G. Schauer (1862-1892), in 1889, identifies Realism with Naturalism, but states that the literary trend in France is distinct from that in England and Russia.\footnote{H. G. Schauer, 'Naturalismus v poesii', Květy, 11 (1889), p. 624.} He notes the Positivist foundation of Naturalism, and the aim of the Naturalist writer to present external, tangible facts according to a strict scientific method.\footnote{Ibid., p. 625.} The Naturalist writer attempts to photograph reality and carry out experiments with its elements. He focuses on the working class because it constitutes a subject which he can study en masse.\footnote{Ibid. Schauer points out that in practice Naturalist writers did not actually adhere to their own doctrines.} In 1891, a year before the publication of Povídky, Josef Durdík (1837-1902) writes, 'Naturalista hlásá, že jeho
Naturalist works are characterized as weighed down by irrelevant details and treating vulgar subjects. In an 1895 article Vojtěch Kalina (1853–1923) refers to Zola as a Realist. He contrasts French Realists, who concentrate on man as a physical being, with Russian Realists, who are concerned with the ‘whole’ individual. Kalina accuses Zola of being a poor psychologist seeing only physiological functions in the individual. He likewise identifies Naturalism with the indiscriminate accumulation of detail. To be labelled a Naturalist in the early 1890s, then, might mean little more than that one provided an objective, detailed, possibly ‘superficial’ or non-psychological depiction of the lower social classes.

One can see why the themes of Čapek’s first collection led critics to label him a Naturalist; he treats such apparently standard Naturalist subjects as: the ‘fallen woman’ (‘Na valech’), the lives of factory workers (‘Němák’), social outcasts (‘Frantův román’) and the poor (‘Žebrák’). The choice of such subjects is perhaps the only feature of Čapek’s works which aligns him with the Naturalists; these subjects, however, were also of interest to the Romantics and Decadents. Becker identifies three main characteristics of Realism/Naturalism: a predilection for the humble, the ordinary, the near-at-hand, in

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120 Ibid., p. 105.


122 Ibid., p. 414.

123 Ibid., p. 219.

124 Ibid., pp. 409-410.

the choice of subject matter, with a tendency to épater le bourgeois; the tenet of objectivity in point of view, approximating the approach of the scientist; the representation of the universe as subject to physical causality. As critics hostile to Čapek noted early on, his works are hardly Naturalist. Indeed, although the label has stuck to him, even those critics who used it in laudatory reviews, such as Rutte, Novák and Sezima (1876-1949), added that Čapek went far beyond Naturalism.

What distinguishes Čapek from Naturalist writers is, first of all, his lack of interest in social issues as such, in classes, groups in society or the average man. In this respect, he can be distinguished from a writer such as Tilschová (1873-1957). By stating this I am not denying the literary critical truism that Čapek was a keen observer of the distinctions between classes and of the lives of the underprivileged, for whom he felt great empathy. He directs his attention, however, at individuals, their delusions and disillusion, spiritual growth or stagnation. The central moment

126 Becker, 'Introduction: Modern Realism as a Literary Movement', pp. 23-34.

127 See, for example, the anonymous review: 'Poznámka o literární etiketě', Čas, 6 February 1910, p. 4.


130 Class differences constitute one of the themes of Tilschová's collection: Na horách, Prague, 1905. However, Čapek's treatment of infidelity in 'Chvojka' (Ad hoc!) resembles that in Tilschová's 'Vdova' (Na horách).
in 'Žebrák', for example, is not the social commentary on the blind beggar’s reaction to the discovery of his son’s suicide, but, as in Joyce’s short stories, the epiphany of the Ich-Erzähler. Likewise 'Němák', although filled with details about the lives of factory workers, is none the less not primarily concerned with the conditions of the working class but with the changes of perception of the eponymous protagonist, who represents the artist rather than the worker.

While Čapek is not concerned with classes, he is, like Weininger (1880-1903), concerned with essences, in particular the distinction between male and female, and the nature of the artist/intellectual. I treat these subjects in the chapters, 'Conceptions of Woman' and 'Science, Art and Artists'. In the last chapter of the first part of the thesis, I treat Čapek’s conception of the character of the Jewish man. Čapek’s interest in essences (man, woman, artist, Jew) to some extent belies his identification as a Naturalist or a Realist writer. Stern describes Realism as a mode of writing premised on the view that there is one reality in the world and that this view is not in need of proof. That is, Realism is defined in opposition to idealism. Stern writes of Realism: ‘The object of its interest is the real world, which is neither the world seen as the Absolute Spirit in one of its temporal-relative manifestations, nor the world as Will and Idea’. The depiction of essences runs counter to Realism thus defined. Moreover, as I shall show in the chapter ‘Science, Art and Artists’, Čapek can be interpreted as depicting music in Schopenhauerian terms as the representation of the Will to Life. This undermines the interpretation of Čapek as a writer who represents the individual as determined by heredity and milieu, as Naturalism is usually

\[\text{131 J. P. Stern, On Realism, London and Boston, 1973, pp. 52-54.}\]
\[\text{132 Ibid., p. 38.}\]
\[\text{133 Ibid., p. 54.}\]
conceived of.\textsuperscript{134} Čapek’s works present the tension between the real and the ideal.

Čapek’s narrators, almost without exception, also violate the Naturalist dictum of objectivity in observation and presentation. Indeed, Čapek did not aspire to objectivity.\textsuperscript{135} Rarely are his narrators self-effacing; on the contrary, they constantly draw attention to their presence and craft. The playful narrators of ‘Na valech’ or ‘Snivá Kateřina’, for example, differ from the objective, invisible narrator of Merhaut’s (1863–1907) ‘Had’ (1892).\textsuperscript{136} To borrow Stern’s words again, Čapek wrote literature of ‘language consciousness’, that is, fiction dominated by ‘an articulated consciousness of the creative process, its psychology, technicalities, and institutionalization’.\textsuperscript{137} Literature of this kind, according to Stern, is incompatible with Realism.\textsuperscript{138} In the self-reflective aspect of his fiction, Čapek can be seen as similar to Sterne, Diderot, Jean Paul, or, among Czech predecessors, František

\textsuperscript{134}See, for example: Emile Zola, ‘The Experimental Novel’ (Le Roman expérimental, 1880), Documents of Modern Literary Realism, Becker (ed.), pp. 173-4.

\textsuperscript{135}In a letter to Růžena Svobodová, in which he comments on the differences between their styles, Čapek writes: ‘Moje dílo Vás nedrtí, ale znepokojuje, poněvadž Vám ukazuje svět po stránce, po jaké jste jej nemohla poznat už proto, že jste ženou, to však nedokazuje, že Váš umělecký názor není správný, nýbrž toliko jiný, neboť umělecké názory jsou subjektivní a nikoli objektivní.’ Papers: Růžena Svobodová; letter from Čapek-Chod to Svobodová, dated 8 December 1916; PNP. An indication of Čapek’s lack of interest in objectivity is suggested by the treatment of the theme of photography throughout his works. One can follow the theme of photography throughout his works. One can follow the photography theme in ‘Otec’ (Nedělní povídky), ‘Snivá Kateřina’ (Patero novel), and ‘Dceruška Jairova’ (Ad hoc!). We notice the entirely different use of the photography theme in Merhaut’s Andělská sonata. Josef Merhaut, Andělská sonata [1900], 2nd edn, Brno, 1923, pp. 16-20, 45.

\textsuperscript{136}All three works treat the theme of the ‘fallen woman’. Josef Merhaut, ‘Had’, Had a jiné povídky [1892], 2nd edn, Prague, n.d. [1921], pp. 7-233.

\textsuperscript{137}Stern, On Realism, p. 159.

\textsuperscript{138}Stern refers to Hoffmann’s ‘The Sandman’ (‘Der Sandmann’, 1816–1817) as an example of literature in the language-conscious mode. Ibid., p. 161.
Jaromír Rubeš (1814-53) and Josef Jaroslav Langer (1806-46). In the chapter on the grotesque, I shall consider the self-reflective style of Čapek's works as characteristic of the grotesque. In the chapter on art and artists, I consider further Čapek's thematization of artistic creation.  

Finally, Čapek was concerned to represent faithfully the milieu of his characters, to allow them to speak and act in a plausible manner. To this end, he carried out a great deal of study, and many of his friends and acquaintances have described him wandering around Prague notebook in hand looking for material. However, while Čapek does depict his characters speaking the idiom and manifesting types of behaviour peculiar to a particular milieu, he does not consistently represent characters as determined by that environment. Such a portrayal would imply that the question of free will and the individual's responsibility for his/her actions had been resolved. For Čapek's narrators this question remains open or is resolved in a paradoxical manner. One thinks, for example, of the fate of the eponymous protagonist of 'Šikovatel Lemaninský'. Čapek's portrayal of biological determinism is likewise ambiguous. He does frequently depict the actions of characters as motivated by sexual desire, that is, determined by instinct. However, just as frequently his narrators ironize a character's self-perception as a slave to desire or as a victim of Fate. One thinks, for example, of Bureš in 'Znova a lépe', of the eponymous Antonín Vondrejc, or of Jiří Stach in 'Dceruška Jairova'. 'Kdo s koho' constitutes a parody of the determined and fatal physical passion described in Zola's Thérèse Raquin (1867).

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139Stern identifies the theme of 'the artist and society' with the literature of language consciousness. Ibid., p. 159.

140Čapek differs, for example, from Šimáček, who represents the character Barka Fisterová as determined by her environment. See: M. A. Šimáček, Duše tovární, Prague, 1894. The friendship between Šimáček and Čapek was strained by their interactions while working for Zvon. See: Papers: Čapek-Chod; letters from Matěj Anastazia Šimáček to Čapek-Chod, 1894-1911; see the letter dated 8 February 1907; PNP.
4. The Grotesque

Critics have applied the term ‘grotesque’ to Čapek-Chod’s works with a fair degree of consistency from the early twentieth century to the present; thus far, however, only Pynsent has written a study of the grotesque aspects of Čapek’s works. Occasionally in Czech the term has been used as a designation of a genre. In his review of Romanetto (1922) and Větrník (1923), Brtník (1895-1955) uses the term in this sense. He describes the stories in Romanetto as ‘grotesques’ from Chosko; he states that they are characterized by the same humour one finds in Ignáč Herrmann’s (1854-1935) works. He also describes Větrník as a pure ‘grotesque’. He appears to use the word in the sense of ‘fanciful depiction’. Brabec likewise refers to ‘Dar svatého Florián’ as a ‘pohádková groteska’. Maur’s application of the terms ‘arabesque’ and ‘humorous grotesque’ is vague.

Most frequently, the term has been used as a description of the themes of Čapek’s works and of his outlook on life. Almost invariably, this outlook has been identified as pessimistic. The term is sometimes used in a colloquial sense meaning ‘bizarre’. Otherwise it implies a combination of opposites or

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143-jb- [Jiří Brabec], ‘Karel Matěj Čapek Chod’, Literární noviny, 8 (1959), 47, p. 5.

144Jan Maur, Karel Matěj Čapek-Chod. Metodický text k 100. výročí spisovatelova narození, Plzeň, 1960, p. 5.

145Jan Blahoslav Čapek, for example, describes Čapek’s grotesque ‘feature’ as the outlook on life manifest in a cruel grimace. J.B.Č, ‘Básník pražského Života’, Nová svoboda, 1 (1924), 5, p. 89.

an extreme form of irony. Sometimes critics have drawn attention to these aspects of Čapek's fiction, without using the term 'grotesque'. The reviewer for Kmen describes the realistic grotesque in Čapek's works as a mocking, unsettling attitude, a perspective from which life appears cruel and selfish. Kopal (1883-1966) similarly identifies the grotesque with a perspective on reality which includes simultaneously: hellish mockery mixed with the cry of a child and the groans of the dying. He thus implies that such a perspective reveals the cycle of birth and death. He identifies Čapek's attitude with a sarcasm which masks incurable sadness with life. The reviewer for Nové Čechy sees Čapek's predilection for the grotesque in his choice of characters and in the resolution of his stories: he depicts Fate as scornful and malicious, destroying illusions of

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147 Andrenik refers to the author's, 'sklon ke grotesce, jakoby barokní rozpětí a odtud i zálibu v kontrastech'. Ivan Andrenik, 'K revisi českého naturalismu', Mladá fronta, 2 September 1947, p. 5.


151 Ibid., p. 195.
beauty and of the spiritual with a cynical brutality. Arne Novák identifies the grotesque with Čapek's pessimistic, tragicomic outlook, which is manifest in his presentation of situations in which instinct and reason, the serious and the ridiculous, agony and pettiness, the burlesque and the noble, are in close proximity. Sezima also identifies the grotesque with a cruel pessimism and with the harnessing of opposites, not only in terms of theme but also of style. Josef Hrabák (1912-1987) describes the 'grotesque situation' in Čapek's fiction as one in which the individual is crushed by the pressure of his environment just when it appears that he will triumph over his lot. A reviewer for Pravda echoes Šalda when she comments that Čapek achieves the grotesque through depicting the collision between the real world as seen from a Naturalist perspective and the world of fantasy, of feverish vision; in other words, the clash between the real and the ideal.

Critics have identified the grotesque in Čapek's works with irony. Lantová describes the grotesque as deriving from a perception of occurrences as determined by ironic Fate. Kučaba identifies the grotesque with irony and the tragicomic. Buriáněk writes of the grotesque as a mocking irony. Janáčková, discussing the conclusion of Kaspar Lén mstitel


156dš [Dagmar Šafaříková], 'Sto let K. M. Čapka-Choda', Pravda, 21 February 1960, p. 5.

157Ludmila Lantová, 'Spisovatel a novinář', Rudé pravo, 20 February 1960, p. 3.


159František Buriánek, 'Člověk a prostředí', p. 73.
(1908), also appears to use the term to indicate an extreme form of irony.¹⁶⁰

The term ‘grotesque’ has been applied to Čapek’s works in a derogatory sense. Thus, J. Š. Kväpl (1904–1975) comments that the re-publication of Antonín Vondráj in 1946 offers an opportunity to reassess Čapek’s prose, to expose the weaknesses of his grotesque vision, to plead for more active protagonists and more unified composition.¹⁶¹ In the same year, Holý describes Čapek’s artistic development as moving from the ‘heartless grotesque’ to the tragicomedy of Fate.¹⁶² A reviewer for Svobodné slovo uses the term ‘grotesque’ to indicate the occasional, undesirable result of Čapek-Chod’s frank portrayal of the powerless individual crushed by Fate.¹⁶³

In ‘Čapek-Chod and the Grotesque’, Pynsent analyses grotesque characters and situations, grotesque parody and self-satire in the writer’s works. He follows Thomson’s definition of the grotesque.¹⁶⁴ Pynsent regards the devices of the grotesque as manifesting a particular outlook on life: ‘When one speaks about Čapek-Chod and his grotesque, one is speaking about his depiction of the conflict engendered by idealism in the face of almighty Fate. That conflict is always potentially grotesque.’¹⁶⁵

In the chapter on the grotesque, I shall consider the history of the term and suggest that it can be applied to Čapek-Chod’s works without at the same time implying that the author was cynical; that is, the term need not imply a moral judgment


of the works or of the author’s attitude, but can be used to describe the characters and situations depicted in, and the structure of, Čapek’s works. I shall also suggest that the term ‘grotesque’ captures the ambiguity characteristic of Čapek’s works, an ambiguity which makes it impossible to designate his fiction as presenting an exclusively pessimistic or life-affirming outlook on life.

5. The Polemics

During the years Čapek worked for Národní listy prior to World War I, the public identified him with the polemical ‘Day’s news’ column devoted to current events and attacks on rival newspapers, such as the Social Democrat Právo lidu or the Realist Čas. These newspapers identified Čapek with the politics of his employer; thus, attacks on Čapek, his politics, his style as a journalist and his prose fiction, often constituted attacks on the Young Czech Party. The polemics writer for Rašín’s (1867-1923) Slovo attacks Čapek in a manner typical of the rivals of Národní listy:


The polemics in which Čapek was involved from 1900 until his death testify to the fact that Čapek’s reputation as a political journalist influenced his reception as a fiction writer.167

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167 This is supported by the statements of his contemporaries. See, for example, F. X. Svoboda’s (1860-1943) comment: ‘Žurnalistické polemiky tvé ovšem vyvolávají ti hojně nepřátel, kteří by za to rádi ranili tě na uměleckém tvém díle. Tím stalo se, že snad nejvíce ze spisovatelů naší generace jsi nedoceněn,
Čapek adopted the stance of the Young Czech Party; this is manifest, for example, in the anti-German nationalism of the 'Day's news' articles and in Čapek's art reviews. That Čapek identified with this party is suggested by the fact that after the war he became a member of the Czechoslovak National Democratic Party. However, Čapek asserted that those articles which he did not sign did not express his opinion. The theme of the role and responsibility of the journalist as creator of public opinion runs throughout the debates over contemporary issues in which Čapek was involved, like universal suffrage or the Czech-German conflict.

Many of Čapek's polemics concern the role of the critic. The question of the critic's responsibility to the nation was raised in debates over the relation between art and politics, in particular in reviews of exhibitions and plays. These polemics also discuss the activity of the critic, that is, the nature of his or her mediation between the artist and the public.

I have divided the polemics into two sections: (i) pre-war debates over contemporary political and cultural events; (ii) Čapek's pre- and post-war conflicts with critics of his drama and daleko nedoceněn.' Papers: Čapek-Chod; letters from František Xaver Svoboda to Čapek-Chod, 1902-1920; see letter dated 21 February 1910; PNP. Čapek engaged in polemics prior to 1900. However, with the exception of the dispute over Bílek, I treat only those polemics after 1900. In terms of the issues raised, the Bílek dispute is linked with later polemics, which also refer back to this exchange between Čapek and Mânes.

168Čapek's mistrust of the German minority is also evident in his brief post-war commentary: 'Aby měla vždycky', Národní listy, 25 December 1923, supplement to no. 352, p. 9.


170A note from Prokop Grégr instructing Čapek not to respond to Kramár's recent article supports the view that the contents of Čapek's articles were determined by the political opinions and goals of his employers. Papers: Čapek-Chod; letters from Prokop Grégr, 1905-1919; calling card dated June 1909; PNP.
prose fiction. Within each section I discuss the polemics in a more or less chronological order; this organization of the material reflects the fact that the polemics build on one another; opponents in polemics often refer to earlier disputes. Many more polemics exist which could be traced through study of rival newspapers. The present selection of polemics was traced through a systematic search of Národní listy for the years 1900-1914 and through references to Čapek in other journals after World War I. The selection thus concentrates on the period in which Čapek was most active in daily polemics. A detailed study of his polemical style would probably provide a useful tool for identifying more of Čapek's anonymous articles; I believe, however, that the present selection reveals those issues with which Čapek wished to be identified and indicates the style which made him famous, or notorious.

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171 I do not treat here Čapek's feuilletons, published in Národní listy during the war.
The Grotesque and Čapek-Chod

1. Paradox in Romantic Irony and the Grotesque

Despite their variety, twentieth-century definitions of the 'grotesque' share an understanding of the term as connoting a combination of opposites. In this respect, literary scholars generally follow Ruskin, who describes grotesque art as 'composed of two elements, one ludicrous, the other fearful'. In his interpretation of the activity which gives rise to this art, that is, the play of the mind with terror, Ruskin also suggests the paradoxical character of the grotesque. Kayser defines the grotesque as consisting in 'the very contrast that ominously permits of no reconciliation'; as 'A PLAY WITH THE ABSURD', and an attempt 'TO INVOKE AND SUBDUE THE DEMONIC ASPECTS OF THE WORLD'. His emphasis on the sinister quality of the grotesque, however, tends to undermine the contradictory character ascribed to the term. In his interpretation of the grotesque as the 'fusion of organic and mechanical elements', or mixture of the animate and inanimate, he draws upon the original use of the term to designate the frescoes decorating the Golden House of Nero in

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2Ruskin, 'Grotesque Renaissance', p. 155.


5Ibid., p. 188. Emphasis in the original.

6He writes: 'THE GROTESQUE IS THE ESTRANGED WORLD [...] We are so strongly affected and terrified because it is our world which ceases to be reliable, and we feel that we would be unable to live in this changed world. The grotesque instils fear of life rather than fear of death. Structurally, it presupposes that the categories which apply to our world view become inapplicable.' Ibid., pp. 184-5.
Rome. He gives little weight to the fanciful character of the grotesque, exemplified by the frescoes, emphasizing that in grotesque art, 'human bodies [are] reduced to puppets, marionettes, and automata, and their faces frozen into masks'.

'If one were to tear the mask off', he asserts, 'the grinning image of the bare skull would come to light'.

With a definition derived from Coleridge, Van O'Connor states that grotesque art, 'simultaneously confronts the antipoetic and the ugly and presents them, when viewed out of the side of the eye, as the closest we can come to the sublime'.

Like Kayser, Van O'Connor endorses the now conventional, if suspect, notion that grotesque art is particularly suited to the twentieth century; he writes: 'The grotesque has developed in response to our age, to atom bombs and great social changes.'

Bakhtin does not make this assumption; indeed, he bases his definition of the grotesque on an interpretation of medieval and Renaissance art. His presentation of the technique of 'degradation' or debasement, the 'fundamental artistic principle

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7Ibid., p. 183. On the frescoes, see Barasch, The Grotesque. A Study in Meanings, pp. 17-20.

8Kayser, The Grotesque in Art and Literature, p. 183.

9Ibid., p. 184.


of grotesque realism',\(^\text{12}\) emphasizes the contradictory nature of the grotesque. For Bakhtin, degradation consists in:

coming down to earth, the contact with earth as an element that swallows up and gives birth at the same time. To degrade is to bury, to sow, and to kill simultaneously, in order to bring forth something more and better. To degrade also means to concern oneself with the lower stratum of the body, the life of the belly and the reproductive organs; it therefore relates to acts of defecation and copulation, conception, pregnancy, and birth [...].\(^\text{13}\)

The action thus has both destructive and regenerative aspects. He interprets the grotesque as attempting 'to grasp in its imagery the very act of becoming and growth, the eternal incomplete unfinished nature of being. Its images present simultaneously the two poles of becoming: that which is receding and dying, and that which is being born'.\(^\text{14}\) The essence of the grotesque is, for him, the 'contradictory and double-faced fullness of life'.\(^\text{15}\)

Jennings writes of the grotesque object that it 'always displays a combination of fearsome and ludicrous qualities [...] simultaneously arouses reactions of fear and amusement in the observer'.\(^\text{16}\) In the grotesque situation, exemplified by the Dance of Death, he writes that, 'there must be a basic incongruity, inherent in the structure of the concrete world presented to us'.\(^\text{17}\) He interprets the grotesque as a means by which 'humour conquers anxiety and fear'.\(^\text{18}\) Similarly, Steig

\(^{12}\)Mikhail Bakhtin, Rabelais and His World [Tvorchestvo Fransua Rable, 1965], translated by Helene Iswolsky, Bloomington, 1984, p. 370.

\(^{13}\)Ibid., p. 21.

\(^{14}\)Ibid., p. 52.

\(^{15}\)Ibid., p. 62.

\(^{16}\)Jennings, The Ludicrous Demon, p. 10.

\(^{17}\)Ibid., p. 21.

\(^{18}\)Ibid., p. 15.
defines the term as 'the managing of the uncanny by the comic',
adding that, 'a state of unresolved tension is the most common
result'. Freud's analysis of the 'uncanny', which influenced
twentieth-century theories of the grotesque, also develops,
perhaps coincidentally, from a paradox. He points out that the
word heimlich can be defined as 'what is familiar and agreeable,
[as well as] [...] what is concealed' (unheimlich), that is, the
antonym of heimlich. The contradiction in the definition leads
Freud to speculate that the uncanny derives from the familiar:
'an uncanny experience occurs either when infantile complexes
which have been repressed are once more revived by some
impression, or when primitive beliefs which have been surmounted
seem once more to be confirmed'.

The conception of the grotesque as constituting a paradox
is so well established that Barasch mentions it in her
introduction to The Grotesque. A Study of Meanings as one of the
three current uses of the term. The study concludes with the
assertion:

Few important novelists since James Joyce have
neglected the modern theme of man's search for meaning
in a disordered and confusing world; the most
prevalent means of expressing that theme have been the
grotesque mingling of the ludicrous and the terrible,
the use of incongruities, the juxtapositions of low
comedy, sordid reality, and the noble delusions of the
inner man.

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19 Steig, 'Defining the Grotesque: An Attempt at Synthesis',
p. 259.

20 Ibid., p. 260.

21 Sigmund Freud, 'The "Uncanny"', The Standard Edition of the
Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, vol. 17 (1917-
discusses Freud's essay. Steig, 'Defining the Grotesque: An
Attempt at Synthesis', pp. 256-7.

22 Ibid., p. 249.


24 Ibid., p. 161.
Thomson succinctly phrases this interpretation of the concept as 'the unresolvable confusion of incompatibles'. The secondary characteristics he ascribes to the grotesque include those which are frequently associated with the term: 'a quality of abnormality'; 'a high degree of radicality in substance, presentation and effect'; the inseparability of right and wrong in grotesque art; an anti-rational approach; experimentation with the unusual; the confusion of inanimate with animate. A further characteristic of the grotesque, according to Thomson, is the arousing of lyrical expectations and their subsequent destruction.

A direction for further refinement of the term is suggested in Thomson's comparison of the grotesque with irony: 'A worldview based on the notion of infinite irony [...] or of mutual irony on a grand scale [...] necessarily implies also notions of universal grotesquery and universal absurdity.' Thomson usually distinguishes between irony and the grotesque, asserting that 'irony depends on the resolvability, intellectually, of a relationship [...] while the grotesque presents essentially the unresolvability of incompatibles'. Recent critics, however, have tended to emphasize a similarity between the terms; that similarity becomes particularly apparent when one considers the conception of irony elaborated by Friedrich Schlegel.

Schlegel's description of irony as the 'form of paradox' suggests an obvious comparison with the grotesque, which has been

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26 Ibid., pp. 19, 21, 22, 54, 56.


understood as 'related to the paradox in logic', or the 'visual incarnation of paradox'. Ernst Behler identifies three variations on the concept of irony in Schlegel's fragments, the first two of which may be relevant to contemporary conceptions of the grotesque. In the Lyceum (1797) fragments, irony is conceived of as self-restraint:

Schlegel found two antagonistic forces in the author's creative drive, namely the creative strivings of poetic enthusiasm for expression which are counteracted by the scepticism of irony. More specifically, the function of irony does not reside so much in the destruction of creative production, but rather in a hovering, mediating position between enthusiasm and scepticism. Schlegel defined irony as a shifting between two poles, as 'alternation between self-creation and self-destruction', and termed the result of this ironical alternation 'self-restraint' (Selbstbeschränkung), i.e., the disciplined mastering of the creative drive. This idea is expressed in the following aphorism: 'It is just as fatal for a thinker to have a system as not to have one. He will therefore have to decide to combine both.'

Nietzsche also identified the ironic attitude (dissimulation) with self-control. Nietzsche's conception of irony as a mask also reveals the influence of Schlegel, who writes of Socratic

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31 L. E. Pinsky, Realism Epochy Vozrozhdenya, cited by Bakhtin, Rabelais and His World, p. 32 n12.


irony: 'In this sort of irony, everything should be playful and serious, guilelessly open and deeply hidden. [...] It contains and arouses a feeling of indissoluble antagonism between the absolute and the relative, between the impossibility and the necessity of complete communication.'

The potential pessimism of this fragment anticipates that of Heine's notion of 'God's irony' or the 'irony of the world' which 'results from the disappearance of the conviction of reasonable order in this world'. Twenty-first-century theories of the grotesque -- one thinks, in particular, of Kayser -- are indebted to Heine's notion of irony.

The second variation on Schlegel's concept of irony, according to Behler, its self-reflective character, is expressed in the Athenaeum (1798-1800) fragment no. 116 concerned with Romantic poetry:

it can also -- more than any other art form -- hover at the midpoint between the portrayed and the portrayer, free of all real and ideal self-interest, on the wings of poetic reflection, and can raise that reflection again and again to a higher power, can multiply it in an endless succession of mirrors.

Schlegel's definition of irony as 'permanent parabasis' may combine both the dynamic self-contradictory and self-reflective character of irony. Georgia Albert states that in this definition the two sides of irony expose each other as fictional, commenting: 'The play that is interrupted by a parabasis reflects on its own fictionality.'

According to Schlegel's definition, ironic literature must be inherently self-reflective and involve

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37Behler, Irony and the Discourse of Modernity, p. 92.

38See Kayser, The Grotesque in Art and Literature, p. 186.

39Schlegel, Philosophical Fragments, Athenaeum fragment no. 116, pp. 31-2.

a 'conscious reference to literature within literature itself'.

As Immerwahr notes, however, self-conscious stylistic devices are identified by Schlegel as arabesque (as used by him, synonymous with grotesque) rather than ironic:

What is involved is the unusually close association or transposition of form and content, the discussion within the work of the form or medium along with the actual object of portrayal, or the portraying of this form or medium instead of the object. Precisely these stylistic devices are conspicuous in the examples of the arabesque in eighteenth-century literature which Friedrich Schlegel mentions in his 'Brief über den Roman': Laurence Sterne, Jean Paul Richter, and Diderot's Jacques le fataliste.

The same authors are often labelled 'grotesque' by twentieth-century critics. While in Schlegel arabesque is distinguished as one manifestation of irony, contemporary notions of the grotesque may incorporate his conception of irony as well as that of the arabesque.

At least two critics have noted the similarity between twentieth-century notions of the grotesque and Romantic irony. Gerald Gillespie draws attention in particular to the subjective

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42 Ibid., p. 682.

43 Ibid., p. 673. Immerwahr writes: 'Schlegel uses the term "arabesque" to denote a form characterized by involutions, complex and seemingly aimless digressions, and wanderings back and forth between temporal and spatial settings as well as between levels of narrative reality.' Raymond Immerwahr, 'The Practice of Irony in Early German Romanticism', *Romantic Irony*, Garber (ed.), p. 84.

44 See, for example, Kayser, *The Grotesque in Art and Literature*, p. 51.


46 The third aspect of irony in Schlegel, Behler argues, is symbolic, as is suggested in *Ideas Fragment* no. 69: 'Irony is the clear consciousness of eternal agility, of an infinitely teeming chaos.' Schlegel, *Philosophical Fragments*, p. 100. See Behler, 'Introduction', pp. 46-47; and Behler, 'The Theory of Irony in German Romanticism', p. 62.
and self-reflective style implied by both terms, referring to the first literary application of the term by Montaigne to describe his essays:

Because Montaigne's elaboration of a subjective discourse obeying inner rules rather than external generic norms became itself an inspiration for writers such as Diderot, one may justifiably conclude that such linking of the notion of the 'grotesque' with a new kind of self-centered discourse prepared the ground for the later romantic association of this ruleless realm with their own self-referential, 'modern' (i.e., Romantic) irony. 47

In his treatment of William Blake, Gillespie suggests that the paradoxical character of the grotesque may be identified with that of Romantic irony. 48 He describes the grotesque as 'one of several routes in the general development of irony as the dominant modern approach'. 49 The grotesque, he asserts, is 'inherently ironic, because it demonstrated the empowerment of the creative mind, yet simultaneously provoked questions about the vision and the visionary'. 50

Frederick Burwick asserts that the grotesque presents 'the illusion of delusion', citing as examples from literature Hoffmann's 'The Sandman', Poe's 'The Tell-Tale Heart' and Kafka's 'Metamorphosis'. 51 He emphasizes the similarity between the paradox of irony and that of the grotesque:

It is not the content, per se, that renders these works grotesque; rather, it is the peculiar tension of dual perception which is required in responding to the grotesque. We must experience the work as illusion yet recognize it as delusion. The grotesque, then, involves an elaborate multistability of manner and matter. This was Friedrich Schlegel's reason for defining the grotesque as a mode of irony, for he

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48 Ibid., p. 328.
49 Ibid., p. 340.
50 Ibid., p. 341.
recognized in the grotesque a challenge to the mind’s instinctive endeavor to synthesize.\textsuperscript{52} This definition, emphasizing the unstable and contradictory nature of grotesque literature, provides a useful tool in analysis of Čapek-Chod’s writings.

2. The Grotesque and Čapek-Chod

The narrator, identical to the implied author, of the epistolary novel Větrník resents the ‘grotesque’ label which critics have applied to his works.\textsuperscript{53} The narrator justifies his wilful decision to ‘destroy’ the barracks shielding the windmill from wind by invoking his reputation for grotesquerie: ‘Mohu je odkliditi se svědomím tím lehčím, že jsem se ondýno dočel, že mám realism i naturalism už za sebou, a že tou dobou pěstuju výhradně grotesku. Ta je pak pravým opakem skutečnosti a protož!’\textsuperscript{54} As if to mock the critics, the narrator declares his intention to top his previous efforts: ‘Mám-li totiž zhotoviti grotesku, zvláště pak, má-li tato groteska býti v mém díle poslední, musí býti samozřejmě nejen groteskní, ale co nejgrotesknější.’\textsuperscript{55}

Although, one is wary of identifying Čapek-Chod automatically with the narrator of Větrník, the author suggests that such an identification is valid; in ‘Jak píšu své knihy?’ he writes:

\begin{quote}
Stalo se již jednou, že jsem byl dotázán velmi roztomilou dámom, jak to asi vypadá v mé tak zv. duševní dílně, a já s věnováním spanilé tázatelce pokusil se o vylíčení řečené dílny románem-essaiem
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{52}Ibid., p. 130.


\textsuperscript{54}Čapek-Chod, Větrník, p. 43.

\textsuperscript{55}Ibid, p. 61.
As the narrator constitutes a representation of the author, analysis of this 'most grotesque' novel may suggest the author's conception of the grotesque aspects of his prose, even if these are parodied. The Větrník devices and themes are characteristic of grotesque literature and have been present in Čapek-Chod's writing from his first collection of short stories: self-referential narration; characters with deformities; the incongruous pairing of characters; the conflation of the high (spiritual) with the low (physical); the comic treatment of death; an emphasis on the body as the source of emotions and motivator of actions; the depiction of human delusions, the importance of chance, the 'cruel jokes' of Nature, and the indifference of the 'world' to individual suffering.

The novel has two main narrative levels: the narrator's explanation to the addressee of his artistic method; and the story which demonstrates the method, the account of the hunchback Kačenka's disillusion with love. The 'author's' footnotes directed at critics indicate a third level on which the novel functions: as a polemic with contemporaneous critics. Větrník can be regarded as a grotesque story within a grotesque frame. The novel's frame, that is, the first narrative level, is grotesque in that its premise is paradoxical, consisting of seven letters addressed by the narrator to a woman whom he identifies as his fictional creation. When she objects to the publication of their conversation, the narrator asserts, 'Vy sama předobře víte, že ráčíte být pouhou mou fíkci a že tudíž pospas veřejnosti nemá pro Vás žádného nebezpečí.' Characteristically playful, however, the narrator then warns her that even fiction will not save her from putting on weight. The structure of the novel destabilizes the presentation of reality. The narrator reveals himself as creator of the text, yet characters appear and disappear,

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56 K. M. Čapek-Chod, 'Jak píšu své knihy?', Cesta, 10 (1927-28), 6-7, p. 100. This brief article was published posthumously, accompanied by a drawing of two nudes by the author.

57 Ibid., p. 18.
criticize and make demands on the narrator, oscillate between 'real' (independent) and 'fictional' (created) status, not only according to his will but sometimes arbitrarily. For example, the narrator seems surprised to discover a dwarf cobbler living in the windmill. He excuses himself for not relating the dialogue which occurs between them with the explanation that the cobbler is partially deaf. He even refers to the cobbler by a pseudonym, to protect his identity. Yet he expels the 'paradoxical' man from the windmill when he no longer suits the narrator's developing story. The reader cannot trust any presentation of reality in the text, as is exemplified by the series of endings the narrator offers for his story about Kačenka. One is reminded of the variety of endings offered by the narrator of Diderot's *Jacques le fataliste* (1796).

That the two main characters in the story are physically deformed might suggest a relation to grotesque literature and art, but that is only superficial; in art criticism, characters with deformities were referred to as 'grotesques' following the application of the term to Callot's engravings in the early seventeenth century. Kačenka and Josef Pulpíť, however, cannot be considered grotesque simply because they are physically abnormal. Kačenka's character is built on incongruities; she typifies the paradoxical individual, whose gifts derive from her defects and whose dreams and desires are undermined by her own nature. The narrator depicts the contrast between her beautiful face and hunchback's body as a cruel irony. Her angelic voice contrasts with her deformed body, that of a 'fallen angel'.

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58 Ibid., p. 39.

59 Ibid., p. 45.

60 See the discussion of parabasis in Albert, 'Understanding Irony: Three essais on Friedrich Schlegel', pp. 841-2.


63 Ibid.
Yet, the narrator states, the quality of her voice derives from her build: 'Zpravidla hrud' mnohem širší než vyšší přiškrcuje hlas, tomuto naopak dodávala nesmírné resonance.' Her longing for a kindred spirit, the narrator suggests, will never be fulfilled because her appearance precludes the possibility that her love will be requited. Thomas Mann similarly uses a deformed character in 'Little Herr Friedemann' ('Der kleine Herr Friedemann', 1897) to dramatize sexual awakening and frustration.

The unlikely pairing of the diminutive and misshapen Kačenka with the ugly giant Josef may be regarded as bizarre, considering the incongruity in their sizes. Josef’s face, however, is described as so extremely repulsive as to render her attraction to him grotesque. Josef’s appearance, moreover, is presented in such a way as to emphasize the 'unruly' nature of the body. Kačenka first sees him, dressed in fake leopard-skin, performing for a travelling waxworks; he is a barker who gathers a crowd and cajoles the audience into visiting the show. When he summons people, shouting with powerful lungs, his throat opens 'nestoudně'. His facial features suggest uninhibited growth, the body extending beyond its borders:

Brunátná jeho tvář s široce rozplesklým nosem a vyvalené pyskatými ústy, hustým černým knírem, jemuž daleko vyvstalé obočí málo zadalo, měla tak divoce sveřepě vzezření, že mohlo slečně Špuntíkové snadno kukátko z rukou vypadnouti, když si ji skly přiblížila.  

During his act, Josef shocks the crowd by rolling back his eyelids to reveal their bloody underside. The narrator comments: 'Žádná lidská tvář nebyla schopna tak zoufale žaluplného výrazu, jaký jevila nyní grimasa vyvolávačova [...] Úžas byl tím větší, že nikdo nebyl s to, aby si vysvětlil, kterak si ten dryáčník nasadil najednou tvář, docela jinou až k nepoznání!' When the owner of the show urges him to show a more friendly face to the crowd, the strongman tears off his (fake) moustache and bares his

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64Ibid.  
65Čapek-Chod, Větrník, p. 88.  
66Ibid., p. 89.
long white teeth to the public. A caricature of his face, with mouth wide open, is painted on his bald crown, provoking the laughter of the crowd whenever he bends over. He represents the grotesque body, as Bakhtin has defined it: open to, rather than separate from, the world, outgrowing itself, transgressing its limits.\(^6^7\)

As an embodiment of unruly material vitality, Josef may contrast with stunted Kačenka. The capricious force which fuels Josef’s antics, however, is also manifest in the unusual proportions of Kačenka’s body, her long legs and short torso.\(^6^8\)

On the one hand, Kačenka does not represent spirituality, or the psyche, as opposed to Josef’s materiality. On the other, to claim that her dreams can be reduced to the impulses and needs of the body would be an oversimplification. Čapek-Chod strongly objected to critics’ interpretation of his works as demonstrating the victory of sensuality over the psyche.\(^6^9\) Kačenka’s longing for love and for a spiritual companion, however, does seem to manifest itself as sexual desire. This is suggested in the description of her improvisation on the harmonium, during which she imagines ascending to another realm, in which she marries her kindred spirit, who is, the narrator emphasizes, of the male sex.\(^7^0\) Her marriage-improvisation is interrupted by the noise of the hurdy-gurdy played by Josef. The vulgarity and animality of the hurdy-gurdy sounds, in such immediate juxtaposition to Kačenka’s playing, may ironize her longing as self-delusion, as well as suggest that her psyche can never escape its material confines:

Stádo vepřů nedovede sveřepějí chrochtat a kvíčet, když je jím z jich vlastního hnušu nejlabužnější, jako


\(^6^8\)Ibid., p. 52. She seems almost a parody of Tynda, who walks with a similar long stride. See: Čapek-Chod, *Turbina* [1916], 2nd edition, Prague, 1920, pp. 191-2.


\(^7^0\)Čapek-Chod, *Větrník*, pp. 83-4.
The narrator leaves no doubt that Kačenka, like most artistic or intellectual characters in Čapek-Chod’s works, deceives herself. After describing her grief over the lost harmonium, which she sells to pay for a surgeon to tend Josef’s broken leg, the narrator comments: ‘Nebyla to pravda úplná, něco si nalhávala po svém zvyku, sebe samu podváděti. Za živý svět by si nebyla doznala, proč vlastně a doopravdy pláče.’ It is clear that she suffers because the man she loves is engaged to another woman. Her attempt thus to protect herself reminds the reader of the tailor Josef’s attempt at cynicism in ‘Na valech’. Even if Kačenka is deceived about her desires, it does not necessarily follow that they are sexual in origin. The narrator may be suggesting that her predicament, and that of the individual in general, is all the more paradoxical because her immaterial longing seeks fulfilment in material form, which it will never achieve. The ‘world’ carries on indifferent to her frustrated desires and bitterness, as is indicated by the narrator’s closing description of the windmill’s sails gaily turning. Considered within the surrounding frame of the novel, the paradoxical nature of Kačenka’s predicament is further heightened in that it is only a story, a construction of chance elements, which might have ended otherwise.

Analysis of this ‘most grotesque’ of novels suggests a view of human existence, characteristic of Čapek-Chod’s works, as defined by paradoxes: the individual’s ambitions and desires are frustrated by his or her own nature, limitations of personality or of body; suffering, joy or virtuous actions, despite their significance to the individual, do not affect the world or the course of life nearly as much as chance or trivial incidents. The material world and the demands of the body are inescapable: emotions and decisions have a material source or manifestation; the individual is subject to the cycles of the material world.

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alternating between destruction and regeneration. From such a perspective, morality may seem irrelevant and free will unthinkable. Čapek-Chod, however, portrays the individual as responsible for his or her actions even if they are determined; he indicates that there is a morality towards which the individual should aspire, even though he or she is practically incapable of distinguishing a virtuous from a foolish or destructive action.

The following chapter will treat devices used to convey this view, focusing in particular on self-referential narration but also treating: characters embodying an incongruity; trickster characters; grotesque situations and role reversals.

3. Self-Referential Narration
Works by Čapek-Chod in which the reader’s attention is drawn ostentatiously to the text as construction can be divided into three categories, which do overlap somewhat. The first category consists of works in which a self-conscious narrator, usually a representation of the author, flaunts his activity as writer, often providing didactic footnotes and directly addressing the reader and critics. This category includes 'Žebrák', 'Němák', 'Dar svatého Floriána' and 'Berane burc!'. The second category comprises works in which the act of writing is thematized: 'Úvodník', Větrník and, to some extent, 'Polichinell Maxl'. The third category includes works, the structure of which undermines definitive interpretation: Nejzápadnější Slovan, Kašpar Lén mstitel, 'Zpověď' naturalistova' and, perhaps, 'Experiment'.

The Ich-Erzähler of 'Žebrák' sets out on a walk as if in search of a story; he relates his perceptions and experiences in a 'writerly' manner. This is evident in his descriptions of people. Of the woman whose husband’s corpse is dragged from the river, he wonders, 'jak hrubý byl asi štětec, který rysy tyto opatřil sivým, zsinalým ličidlím bídý?'. He refers to her, in a tone of affected compassion, as 'Trpitelka naše', and invites the reader to examine the corpse: 'Přístupme blíže, nestrachujme

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7"Čapek-Chod, 'Žebrák', Povídky [1892], Prague, 1922, p. 52."
The implied author emphasizes the narrator’s sentimental, consciously artistic pose. The reader suspects the validity of the narrator’s pronouncements about human brutality because of the gap between the implied author and narrator. The short story is thus ambiguous, but by no means to the same extent as 'Němák'.

The reader’s certainty is undermined by the capricious narrator of 'Dar svatého Floriána', who is identified with the implied author. For example, the narrator claims to present an accurate history of the bizarre events in Capartice and his detailed footnotes explaining local expressions and customs mockingly support this pose. The narrator, however, also occasionally admits that he cannot vouch for the validity of his account. After describing Bureš Junior’s abduction of the grammar schoolmaster Hříupka, the narrator comments:

Pravili jsme a z opatrnosti ještě jednou opakujeme, že není nikterak jisto, zdali se výjev tuto vylíčený vůbec odehrál anebo doslově takto odehrál. Celá naše historie sepsána jest na základě spolehlivě zjištěných, očitými i ušitými svědky dosvědčitelných zpráv, hodných důvěry neklamného historického pramene. Jako svědomitý historik neváhá autor označit pouhou domněnku, pověst nebo kombinaci jako takovou.

The narrator, furthermore, boasts about the characters as constructions; he also parodies his manipulation of the characters, expressing exaggerated relief, for example, at the timely appearance of the deus ex machina, the chimney sweep Mimráček. The story is of secondary importance; the text focuses on itself and the clownish creative activity of the narrator. Although in 'Berane burc!' the story is related in a manner calculated to create some suspense, the narrator’s

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74 Ibid., p. 56.
75 The ironizing of the judgments of a central character, from whose perspective a story is told, is characteristic of works like 'Znova a lépe', 'Snivá Kateřina', 'Dceruška Jairova' and Antonín Vondrejc.
77 Ibid., p. 128.
intrusions here are also disruptive, making the reader aware of the polemical intentions of the implied author.

In 'Němák', the narrator's self-presentation relativizes the story he recounts. In this case, however, in contrast with 'Dar svatého Floriána', the central character is sufficiently developed to elicit the reader's empathy and the story holds the reader's attention. That is, like the works in the second category, the reader appreciates the story (is satisfied by the illusion), while at the same time aware that the narrator is having a joke at the reader's expense (is conscious of the text as artifice). Unlike works in the second category, the practice of writing is not thematized to any great extent. The apostrophes to the reader at the beginning and end of the text have the effect of destabilizing the reality of the story. First, the narrator justifies the use, to introduce the story, of a scene in which a mother slaps her daughter.\(^7^8\) The status of the characters as constructs is thus emphasized. This status is heightened by the representation of an argument between mother and daughter as a dumb-show; in other words, the characters appear to be puppets.\(^7^9\) The potato-puppet play which Němák watches creates a similar effect. During the performance, ironically named 'Láska není žádný špás', the puppet-master accidentally knocks off the head of the wrong puppet. Němák is bewildered by this accident and disturbed by the audience's amused response.\(^8^0\) The happy ending of the story leaves the reader likewise perplexed. The narrator admits that events may not have occurred as he has related them; he cannot guarantee that Němák marries and has a child with the woman he loves.\(^8^1\) Thus the reader has the impression that the narrator's hand, like the puppet-master's, might have slipped and that Němák might have lost his head in an alternative ending. By teasing the implied

\(^7^8\)Čapek-Chod, 'Němák', Povídky, p. 64.

\(^7^9\)Ibid., p. 73.

\(^8^0\)Ibid., pp. 157-58.

\(^8^1\)Ibid., p. 169.
readers and undermining their certainty with regard to the events portrayed, the narrator suggests the arbitrary nature of the world outside the text.

The texts which are concerned with the activity of writing question the distinction between reality and fiction. One of the devices used for this purpose is the embodiment of the implied author, either in the narrator (Větrník) or in a character in the story ('Úvodník' and 'Polichinell Maxl'). The representation of the implied author is at once 'real', that is, refers to someone real, thus revealing the artifice of the text, and fictional, subordinated to the demands of the text. The author is represented in 'Polichinell Maxl' as the 'starý literát' who gazes from the street at the women working in the bakery. The identification is clear from the narrator’s description of the writer leaving the bakery:

zrak jeho zabral se zas do snění o tom, co viděl, a zvláště co slyšel. Nehledě k obohacení jeho slovního, nelze snad říci, že 'pokladu', ale přece aspoň hromady či zásoby výrazů, vzatých 'i z žargonu ulice', jimiž tak často znepokojoval útlocitnější recensenty.83

The writer also witnesses the reunion of the worker Róza and her former lover, the blind flautist. The narrator comments on the writer's appreciation for the scene:

byl to v podstatě motiv jako mandle, ale!!! že je romantický, nebylo by mu v nejnovější době shovívavosti k novoromantičnosti ani tak vadilo, jako ta kletá náhodnost setkání obou milenců, nebot' náhodou naši estetové zásadně vylučují z epické koncepce!85

In both instances, the narrator is referring to features of Čapek-Chod’s works noted by critics.84 With the appearances of


83Ibid., p. 293.

84For critics commenting on his rich vocabulary, see: F. V. V. [Vykoukal], 'K. M. Čapek: Nedělní povídky', Světozor, 31 (1897), 43, p. 516; 'Nové knihy prózy', Moravsko-slezská revue, 8 (1911-12), pp. 527-32; R. [V. Červinka], 'Z literárního trhu', Zlatá Praha, 29 (1911-12), 48, pp. 582-3; F. X. Éalda, 'K. M. Čapek: Kašpar Lén mstitel', Novina, 2 (1908-09), pp. 213-15; Arne
the writer, who wants to create a story from the events he witnesses and the reader reads about, the narrator incorporates the genesis of the story into the story. The implied author, represented by the writer, the 'real' people and events and the story constructed around them, are simultaneously included on the same plane. Čapek-Chod affirms the identification of the implied author with the 'starý literát' in his article, 'Jak pišu své knihy':

K 'Polichinellu Maxlovi' [...] pomohla mi pekárna na oplatky, jejímž majitelem udělal jsem Maxe Blausterna. Na tu jsem padl při lovu v jisté ulici na periferii. Chodil jsem k té pekárně, plné pájicích pekařek tři dny a nakouvalo do ní tak vytrvale, až po mně nejstatečnější ze zpěvač-pekářek chrstla vodou, začehož se stala druhou hrdinkou této odvážné povídky, k niž bylo potřebí i osobní odvahy autorovy.

The writing theme is more obviously central to 'Úvodník'. The protagonist, Kandrt, in his search for material from 'real life' for the creation of a story, resembles the 'starý literát' and the narrator of Větrník. He also represents the implied author, as is suggested by the character's reputation as a vitriolic polemicist. When he falls ill after accidentally stabbing himself with a pen, one of his opponents in polemics is said to comment, 'Bylo prý divu při proslulé jedovatosti jeho péra, že vůbec vyzval'. As in Větrník, the reader is presented with the versions of stories Kandrt entertains for his planned novella 'Písek'; Kandrt never gets further than writing down the title. The premise that Kandrt derives his story from 'real life', that is, from people he knows and events he witnesses, however, is undermined. The reader cannot be sure whether Plecitý, Kandrt's former schoolfellow and the projected protagonist of 'Písek', is Kandrt's or the narrator's creation;


Čapek-Chod, 'Jak pišu své knihy', pp. 102-03.

one suspects the former. Plecitý is first introduced as an industrious ploughman whom Kandrt immediately decides is to be hero of his story. Kandrt's later 'recognition' of Plecitý strikes the reader as artifice; in other words, the recognition constitutes the beginning of Kandrt's story. The narrative line which presents Plecitý's hunt for sand on the outskirts of Prague and his marriage, may be Kandrt's invention. This is suggested by the fact that Kandrt's scenario concludes the Plecitý narrative line; Kandrt imagines a conversation with Plecitý's daughter-in-law, in which she tells him that Plecitý's bride is the knacker's daughter and that her poor social standing will bring scandal on the family. The Plecitý family conflict is thus explained and the reader hears no more of it. Plecitý and his family disappear from the story quickly and conveniently as if the narrator (or Kandrt) had tossed them out of the window.

The reader's ability to discern the actual from the imagined in the text is further undermined by the narrator of 'Úvodník'. A vivid account of Kandrt's inability to meet the deadline for completion of the leading article concludes with his suicide. The narrator, in the next section, qualifies the account, stating that the suicide only occurred in Kandrt's imagination and that in reality he wrote the article and then went home to bed. The narrator's reversal of events, like the denial of omniscience in 'Dar svatého Floriána' and 'Němák', suggests to the reader that the text, which seems finished and closed, is unstable, a concoction of characters who refuse to be relegated to the world of fiction, and who are subject to arbitrary occurrences, the consequences of which cannot be predicted rationally. The fly which irritates Kandrt, causing him to thrash his arms about and stab himself with his pen, thus endangering his health and his career, is of greater significance than his despair and suicide, which can be rewritten. The implication is that man's life is so inconsequential that it makes no difference whether he foolishly

87 Ibid., p. 112.
88 Ibid., p. 179.
89 Ibid., p. 205.
throws himself out of a window or completes an article and weeps over his pathetic, self-pitying nature. In both cases the reader pities Kandrt, while at the same time recognizing that his predicament is laughable and that it is no predicament at all, but a caprice of the narrator which could easily be rejected and rewritten.

The reversal or obscuring of an event in the narration informs the structure of Nejzápadnější Slovan and Kašpar Lén mstitel. In the former, the ambiguity centres on whether or not Hvězda broke the handle of the door from inside the enchanted courtyard, or outside on the street in a state of madness brought on by typhoid fever. The parodic tone of the first chapter, the narrative reversals in the second and third chapters, and Hvězda’s own conclusions suggest that he was deluded, that the phantom femme fatale and the palazzo were the products of his imagination. The ambiguity, however, is not conclusively dismissed. The Realist/Naturalist explanation constitutes a literary version of a story, and is no more valid or ‘true’ than the Romantic version.

In Kašpar Lén mstitel, the central event, to the annoyance of contemporaneous critics, is not depicted. The reader cannot be certain whether Lén has committed the murder for which he is tried. The second part of the novel, which consists of an account of Lén's trial and the efforts of the prostitute Mařka to attend it, relativizes the portrayal of the psychological tension leading to the crime in the first part. The conflicting testimonies of the key witnesses, Mařka and Kabourková, raise doubts for the reader as to what actually happened in the first part. The interrogation of the Gipsy cement-mixing Kabourková reveals that she and Lén were lovers and that Lén had promised

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90Ibid., p. 222.

to leave Prague with her once he had saved forty guilder. This information surprises the implied reader who, like Mařka, had assumed Lén was saving the money to liberate her from the brothel. Kabourková may be lying, but the reader cannot be sure. Kabourková’s description of Lén’s ‘comatose’ condition immediately following the supposed murder of Konopík accords with that of the police and the doctor who found Lén on the building site. The scepticism of one medical expert regarding Lén’s ability to commit the murder, considering the alcohol poisoning from which he was suffering at the time, undermines the reader’s assumption that Lén had perpetrated the crime.

The uncertainty introduced in the second part and the conclusion to the novel may suggest that it is of no significance whether or not Lén is guilty. Regardless of his guilt or innocence, he will be convicted on the testimony of the woman he intended to ‘save’; regardless of the outcome of the trial, he will die of tuberculosis. Lén’s predicament is similar to that of the eponymous Sergeant-Major Lemaninský; army doctors make every effort to save the consumptive and suicidal Lemaninský so that he can be executed for having shot his superior, wounding him in the hand. That death, in one form or another, is inevitable for both characters makes for a statement on man’s lack of free will and his helplessness before physical decay: the condition of being human is terminal. This perspective is expressed explicitly by a minor character in Turbina:

Ostatně je lhostejno, jak sebevrah zemřel, nebot’ na něco zemřítí musíme všichni a biologicky vzato jest sebevražda právě tak smrtelnou chorobou jako tuberkulosa; souchotinář i sebevrah umírají od neschopnosti žíti ... a oba neradi ...

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93 Ibid., pp. 169-70.


In both 'Šikovatel Lemaninský' and Kašpar Lén mstitel, the death of the eponymous hero is portrayed as grotesque: that is, pitiable, laughable and, in Lén's case, repellent. Lén's death, as he attempts to address the question of his innocence or guilt, may serve as a model for that of Antonín Vondrejc. In Kašpar Lén mstitel, however, unlike 'Šikovatel Lemaninský', the theme is reflected in the structure of the text. The ambiguity raised by the omission of a description of the 'crime' and by the second part of the novel corresponds to and emphasizes the insignificance of man's actions with respect to his fate.

The structure of 'Zpověď' naturalistova' likewise reflects the main theme, the relation between the 'objective' world and the imagination. Critics have tended to interpret the short story as the author's artistic credo and quote sections of the 'confession' to demonstrate that Čapek-Chod really was a Naturalist. Moldanova shows a more percipient approach when she notes the 'ironic relativization' which is the basic structural principle in the work, and the dual nature of the narrator, who is both involved in the story and reflecting on it. This approach suggests that comparisons with Jean Paul, Dostoevsky, Robert Walser or Nabokov, rather than with Zola, would be appropriate. To interpret the story as Naturalist is to fall victim to the narrator's ruses.

The closer one looks at 'Zpověď' naturalistova', the more evident it becomes that the short story is devised as a paradox.

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96Čapek-Chod, Kašpar Lén mstitel, p. 246.

97This is also the central theme in Větrník, as is emphasized by the reference to Don Quixote, on p. 25.

98See: Brabec, 'Předmluva', p. 23.


100One is reminded of the difficulty of acquiring an 'objective' perspective on the narrator of Dostoevsky's Notes from Underground, 1864.
containing further paradoxes, and thus can be regarded as structurally grotesque. To begin from the inside out, we can consider Rezinka, the object of the narrator’s obsession. As Pynsent has noted, she is ‘far from a standard beauty’, which, however, need not render the narrator’s attraction to her paradoxical. Rezinka is described as emaciated, with a coarse mane of hair which covers her body like a fur coat. But more than that, when the narrator seeks to describe her charm, the first word that occurs to him is ‘šerédnost’, that is, ‘hideousness’. He is particularly fascinated by her eyes which look as if they were upside down. One suspects that the narrator is drawn towards his own double; this is further suggested by the imagery associating both Rezinka and the narrator with a bizarre, enlarged eye. The narrator identifies himself with a poem he has once read: ‘ještě v hrobu nerv oka unylý/Tě bude viděti’. He repeatedly depicts himself with his eyes pressed against the glass of his binoculars. When the narrator first enters the family’s flat, he is mesmerized by a large black eye, presumably Rezinka’s, which stares at him through a gap in the curtains covering the door to the adjoining room. The narrator describes her in such a way as to suggest that she is nothing more than a reflection of his own eye, an illusion. This constitutes an ironic comment on the method of the Naturalists; it also undermines the ‘veracity’ of the narrator’s story, as it places a reflection at the centre of the tale.

103 Ibid., p. 316.
104 Ibid., p. 334.
105 Ibid., p. 337.
This accords with the self-reflective nature of the story; the narrator constantly calls attention to his activity as constructor of a literary work. The narrator, for example, concludes the letter proper with the comment: 'Leč dosti metafor, sic od některé z nich umřu o den dříve, než mi souzeno, hahaha!'.\textsuperscript{108} Or, to take another example, the narrator writes, 'chci Ti poskytnouti - jak se nepříliš česky říká - školní příklad "zákona o vzniku díla z prostředí", na který my oba, já zvláště jako zjevně zneuznaný naturalista, přepe přísaháme, at' si antitainistě hlásají, co libo'.\textsuperscript{109}

Rezinka's illusive nature is emphasized further as the narrator obscures her death. The seduction which devastates Rezinka is never described. Her fall is depicted, but not its culmination. The narrator sees an account of her death in the newspaper, but he reads it in almost total darkness, which must cast doubt on his ability to decipher the words.\textsuperscript{110} The narrator, furthermore, takes care to state that no one can testify to his connection with the events related.\textsuperscript{111} He hints, but avoids stating, that he leaves his inheritance to the girl's family.\textsuperscript{112}

As was the case with Rezinka, it is futile to search for the narrator's corpse, as he himself writes;\textsuperscript{113} but such a search is futile not because his body will be hidden by the ice floes in the Vltava, but because the text is so constructed that the narrator must be both alive and dead. One is prepared for such a paradox by puzzles like the narrator's assertion that he is dying of cowardice and for this reason he must kill himself, in order to prove the opposite.\textsuperscript{114} The central paradox becomes

\textsuperscript{108}Ibid., p. 372.
\textsuperscript{109}Ibid., p. 331.
\textsuperscript{110}Ibid., pp. 356-7.
\textsuperscript{111}Ibid., p. 350.
\textsuperscript{112}Ibid., p. 371.
\textsuperscript{113}Ibid., p. 373.
\textsuperscript{114}Ibid., p. 358.
complete when the short story is read: the reader confers reality on the fictional character of the narrator; as 'you', the literary critic addressed in the letter, the reader also confers reality on the events the narrator relates. That is, if the letter is read, the narrator must be dead, as the opening line of the letter asserts. The letter is, the narrator states, a means by which he prolongs his life, for as soon as the details of his fate are written and the letter posted, he is compelled to kill himself. The critic/reader, however, who is responsible for the narrator's death, on one level at least, is also the creation of the narrator; 'you' is defined by the narrator. The short story is set, furthermore, in an absolute present, the boundaries of which are controlled by the narrator; if he defines the present, he cannot be relegated to the past. This is suggested by the narrator's description of Emerich. The narrator has, theoretically, already lived through the events he is describing, thus one would expect him to have 'complete' knowledge of his perspective on the events. But the narrator occasionally radically alters his perspective. Emerich, for example, is described as a 'hanbäř, cynický až k vychloubačnosti'. In the next sentence but one, the narrator explains that Emerich's treatment of the cat is motivated by hunger, human need, rather than perversity. By undermining earlier positions or statements the narrator destabilizes the reader's perspective. What the reader had taken as the present, is suddenly replaced by a 'new' present established by the narrator. This is made particularly explicit with the postscript. The present tense of the letter is undermined by the 'scribbled' postscript, establishing a new present which is not delimited by a farewell or a signature. The present tense of the postscript thus seems to continue; the possibility remains that the narrator might reappear, as he controls the time frame. As has been stated, however, this is impossible if the letter is being read. The short story constitutes a paradox in that it is a closed,

\[115\text{Ibid., p. 309.}\
\[116\text{Ibid., p. 335.}\

finished structure which seems to contain its opposite - the possibility of being open-ended.

4. Grotesque Characters: Incongruities
In Čapek-Chod’s works there is no simple correlation between a character’s appearance and his or her personality. The author’s method is like that of the Harlequin, as defined by Möser in *Harlequin: or, a defence of Grotesque Comic Performances* (1761). The Harlequin states that he uses the formula of ‘greatness without strength’ in his creations; they are the ‘highest representation of ridicule, as I aggrandize my objects and figures, and diminish as much as possible their internal force or soul’.'17 A frequent type in Čapek-Chod’s works is the character whose large and robust frame is accompanied by an impractical, day-dreaming or cowardly personality; the character thus embodies an incongruity, at least from a neutral ‘public’ point of view. The characters who correspond approximately to this type include: Josef in ‘Na valech’, the eponymous Němák, Hvězda in *Nejzápadnější Slovan*, Mates Holejch, Konteska Fina and, in particular, Bureš in ‘Znova a lepe’ and Kateřina in ‘Snivá Kateřina’. Several of these characters have other features which might identify them as grotesque. Both Němák and Konteska Fina are giants, such as are frequently depicted in grotesque art.'18 Hvězda’s character presents a contradiction; his name and his subject of study (astronomy) suggest an ethereal, perhaps even mystical nature; he is introduced as an adventurous outsider by the narrator, who comments, ‘vzpomínám naň tesklivě, jako na první svou lásku’.'19 Hvězda’s prosaic occupation in the novel’s ‘present’ as railway official, however, as well as his earthiness, large appetite and ‘repulsive’ smoking habit, undermine both the narrator’s introduction of him and his self-presentation as a


19 Čapek-Chod, *Nejzápadnější Slovan* [1893], Prague, 1921, p. 3.
victim of a supernatural being or a delusion. Hvězda's former schoolfellows are bored by his autobiographical fantastic story; the narrator's comments even indicate a feeling of discomfort, if not disgust, with Hvězda: 'v zubech [měl] nejkrajnější zbytek viržinky plný nikotinu (prázdný můj žaludek kormoutil se nad tím), a díval se na mne tak vytřeštěně, jako kdyby mne chtěl brátí za svědka svého neobyčejného vzrušení'.

Likewise one finds in Čapek-Chod's writings characters whose 'strong' personalities (showing kindness, perspicacity, wit, creative talent) contrast with their diminutive or deformed bodies (again, in a different sense, 'greatness without strength'). Among them are included: the dwarf hunchback painter Bacháč (V třetím dvoře, 1895), Kryštůfek ('Jak Tondovi Nemanskejch pomohli'), the miller Jirka ('Prasátka se ztratily ...'), Armin Frey (Turbina, 1916), Kačenka (Větrník) and Max Blaustern ('Polichinell Maxl'). The potentially grotesque nature of these last three is enhanced by the fact that their bodies manifest extremes of 'beauty' and 'ugliness'.

5. Tricksters
That the trickster is defined as paradoxical suggests a connection between this figure and the grotesque. As an example of a paradoxical trickster, Grottanelli mentions Prometheus, whose deeds are crimes, from the perspective of the gods, and acts of salvation, from the perspective of humanity: 'This breaker of rules [...] is banned and punished, acting as a scapegoat who offers up his life for humanity, for he has sinned for the benefit of humans. Prometheus is the ultimate example of the duplicity of tricksters: criminal and savior, guilty and heroic, impure and sacred, antagonist and mediator'. The trickster is also identified as closely related to the literary

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120 Ibid., p. 29.

121 Bacháč's odd, elegant appearance and eccentricity prefigure that of Frey in Turbina. Čapek-Chod, V třetím dvoře, Prague, 1895, pp. 82-3, 90.

fool and the picaro, which also alerts one to his possible relation to grotesque literature.  

William Hynes lists six characteristics common to most tricksters; the trickster is: fundamentally ambiguous; a deceiver or trick-player; a shape-shifter; a situation-inverter; a messenger/imitator of the gods; and a sacred/lewd bricoleur. Implied by the fourth and sixth characteristics is an inversion of the sacred, a violation of taboos, in particular those which are sexual, gastronomic or scatological. The trickster has both divine and human traits; he may cross the border between the sacred and the profane. By doing so, he contributes to human culture. Grottanelli defines the trickster as a 'breaker of rules', adding that, 

though they are often tragic in their own specific way, their breaking of rules is always comical. This funny irregularity is the central quality of the trickster; and what makes the anomic comical is the trickster's lowliness [... ] when a human being, he never ranks high, and his power lies in his witty brain or in some strange gift of nature.

The trickster's dual nature as saviour and pharmakos (both powerful and impure, like Prometheus and Oedipus), derives from his daring crossing of boundaries, or violation of taboo.

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125 Ibid., pp. 38, 42.

126 Ibid., p. 40.

127 Grottanelli, 'Tricksters, Scapegoats, Champions, Saviors', p. 120.

128 Ibid., pp. 135, 137-39.
Laura Makarius also defines the trickster's function as the violation of taboo on behalf of his social group. She states that certain qualities can be attributed to this violator/hero: 'unbridled sexuality, a pronounced phallic character, and an insatiable greediness and hunger'. He must pay for his violation, thus often falling victim to his own ruses. The paradoxical response of the spectator to the dramatic fool/trickster has also been noted; the spectator perceives the fool both as alter ego and as outsider. The fool's attitude is ironic; truth is concealed behind a mask of foolishness. Koepping distinguishes between the 'intellectual' trickster (Prometheus) and the 'earthy body' trickster (Wakdjunkaga, of the Winnebagos): '[the former] shows us the operation of thoughts that hide deceit under the surface of smiling negotiation, and [...] [the latter] shows us the hidden dimension of the naked orifices under the clothing of civilized and rule-governed life. Both reveal a hidden truth'.

Several of Čapek-Chod's characters, although they may seem to bear little resemblance to one another, can be identified as tricksters, thus grotesque characters: Rokyta ('Snivá Kateřina'), Plecitý ('Úvodník'), Žibřid Paprštejn ('Dvě vdovy'), Dr Černý (Jindrové, 1922) and Dr Freund (Antonín Vondrejc). Rokyta is portrayed as a liminal and deceptive character. He is introduced as a voice which Kateřina hears at the site of her lover Klimt's death. He photographs Klimt, but is concerned to conceal his

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130Ibid., p. 85.

131Ibid., p. 84.


133Ibid., p. 211.

134Ibid., p. 213.

135I treat the characters Freund and Žibřid in the chapter 'Jews in the Works of Čapek-Chod'.
camera for fear of angering Klimt's fellow workers at the factory. When he meets Kateřina later, he hides from her the fact that he was present at Klimt's death. He also hides his motivation for inviting her to work as a ticket girl at the first exhibition of the artists' association to which he belongs. He suggests to her that general concern for her fate has led him to make the offer, whereas he hopes to convince her to model for him, so that he can complete his painting of the factory accident which results in Klimt's death. When he first appears, he is described as a shadow: Kateřina sees his shadow in the window of the door to her shop. The narrator states that Rokyta brings with him the twilight, 'v němž, zády k světlu obrácena rýsovala se jeho postava jen temným stínem'.

Rokyta's defect, his limp, suggests both a demonic and a 'pronounced phallic character'. His ambiguous demonic aspect, both playful and ominous, is indicated by the amusement he derives from Klimt's death; Rokyta is also amused by Kateřina's rejection of his proposal that she model for him. After the outraged Kateřina has left the gallery, the narrator writes of Rokyta:

Osaměl a vyvalenýma očima pohlížeje vůkol po prázdném sále, smál se, aniž ústa otevřel, bez pohnutí jediného svalu v tváři, smíchem, jež bylo slyšet jakými škytavými, trhanými zvuky, v hrdle tajenými.

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137 Ibid., pp. 258, 319-25.

138 Ibid., p. 251.

139 Ibid., p. 252.

140 The defect is associated with Satan, as well as with fertility figures. See the chapter 'Science, Art and Artists'.


142 Ibid., pp. 328-29.
His irreverent attitude to death, as well as his attempts to seduce the pregnant and poverty-stricken Kateřina, constitute violations of a moral code, if not violations of taboos.

Despite his brutal treatment of Kateřina, Rokyta is not simply characterized as selfish, manipulative and 'heartless'. He functions as a trickster in that he also unmasks the 'truth'. Kateřina's delusion that she can redeem herself socially through a 'pure' and unfulfilled love for Rokyta are destroyed by his cynical propositions to her. Rokyta may be interpreted as Kateřina's 'saviour'; by destroying her false hopes, he indirectly forces her to decide what reason she has for continuing to live.

As a trickster, Plecitý differs from Rokyta, although he too can be interpreted as provoking an epiphany in the central character, Kandrt. Plecitý combines two bodies in one: a body that is aging and a body that grows and renews itself. He is the same age as Kandrt and is repeatedly described as old and even 'plesnivý'. His frenetic physical labour wastes him. The narrator, however, also insists that Plecitý is physically strong:

Rek nové povídky Kandrtovy byl věru prototypem síly [...] Bylo jich tu kolem patnácti, ale všichni dohromady by nebyli spravili, co on jediný rek a pán staveniště, aby byli stačili nakopat na první střídu do šesti hodin pro deset vozů. Plecitý has the proportions of a giant: his palm is the size of a serving-tray; his long arms give him the appearance of a troglodyte; Kandrt refers to him as a Cyclops. He also regards him as a 'cultural hero', battling with the earth for the sake of humanity: 'vzrostl Plecitý v jeho očích na heroa kultury —

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143 See pp. 256-7, 261-2, 285. Wounded vanity may motivate Rokyta to affront Kateřina with the proposal that she model for him. The reader thus may empathize with his cynicism.

144 Čapek-Chod, 'Úvodník', p. 156.

145 Ibid., p. 134.

146 Ibid., pp. 112-13.

147 Ibid., pp. 116, 129, 134.
stavba lidských příbytků jest přece kulturním činem! —
bojujícího s kosmem, podmínkou i ohrožovatelem lidské
kulturny'.'\textsuperscript{148} In the risks he takes with his life, Pleciti\'y may be
seen as figuratively crossing the border between life and death;
this daring is identified with the trickster.\textsuperscript{149} Kandrt imagines
that Pleciti\'y is crushed by the boulder under which he has been
digging; only when he hears Pleciti\'y\'s curses does he realize that
the man is still alive.\textsuperscript{150} Pleciti\'y also has the power which the
trickster acquires through taking risks; for example, he has a
healing effect on Kandrt\'s overworked brain.\textsuperscript{151} Pleciti\'y\'s power
is also manifest in his sexual prowess: when a fourth former, he
makes his former wet nurse pregnant.\textsuperscript{152} He begets a child by a
nineteen-year-old girl, Maryna, who is younger than his childless
son and daughter-in-law.\textsuperscript{153} In marrying the knacker\'s daughter
Maryna, Pleciti\'y violates a taboo.\textsuperscript{154} He thus acquires the
\textquote{impure} power which accrues to one who sheds blood.\textsuperscript{155}
Pleciti\'y also demonstrates business acumen, inventiveness and
guile. His method of ploughing a lot to break up the topsoil
greatly accelerates the process of removing the earth, and
astounds the workers who observe him.\textsuperscript{156} He conceals from the

\textsuperscript{148}Ibid., p. 142. See also p. 141.

\textsuperscript{149}See Grottanelli, \textquote{Tricksters, scapegoats, champions, saviors}', p. 137.

\textsuperscript{150}\v{C}apek-Chod, \textquote{\^{U}vodník}', pp. 144-5.

\textsuperscript{151}Ibid., p. 129.

\textsuperscript{152}Ibid., pp. 117-18.

\textsuperscript{153}Ibid., pp. 165, 176.

\textsuperscript{154}Ibid., pp. 179, 220.

\textsuperscript{155}See Makarius, \textquote{The Myth of the Trickster: the Necessary
Breaker of Taboos'. That \v{C}apek-Chod was aware of the \textquote{magical}
powers associated with the violation of a blood taboo is
suggested by his use of the motif of the marriage to the
knacker\'s daughter in \textquote{Dceru\v{s}ka Jairova}'.

\textsuperscript{156}\v{C}apek-Chod, \textquote{\^{U}vodník}', p. 113. In his inventiveness, he is
similar to the Czech-American industrialist Mr Mour in \textit{Turbina.}
The character Mour may derive in part from Bene\v{s}ová\'s
owner his suspicion that the lots contain valuable sand; thus he is able to buy the land at a cheaper price than he might have done.

Plecitý can be interpreted as a revealer of 'truth' in that, by his example, he stimulates Kandrt to reflect on himself, the 'meaning' of his life and his work. It would be oversimplifying to assert that Plecitý reveals Kandrt to be a pitiable old bachelor who has wasted his life in slavery to his career and literary ambitions. Plecitý, however, does make Kandrt aware of the insubstantiality of his reputation as a journalist. Plecitý has not heard of Kandrt's writing; when he learns what newspaper Kandrt works for, Plecitý comments, 'To to máš řáký vachrlatý'. While at first Kandrt is eager to return to fiction writing and to compose a story about his former schoolfellow, he later realizes that to do so as well as write copy would be self-destructive. His encounter with Plecitý thus impels him to reassess his ambitions and priorities. It also encourages him to acknowledge his filial responsibility. Kandrt finds it pathetic that he must care for a senile old mother rather than a beautiful Madonna with child, like Plecitý; the short story, however, concludes with Kandrt's visit to his mother, a duty he has previously neglected. Plecitý brings Kandrt to greater self-awareness - "Inu neurasthenik," řekl si na vlastní útěchu ... - and awareness of his obligations to others.

In Jindrové, Dr Černý's defiance of the Austrian officers, who insist that he stand while the orchestra plays 'Gott erhalte', cannot be interpreted simply as Czech patriotism:

'Pane!' spustil důstojník náhle česky, 'naposled vás vyzývám, abyste vstal!'


157Čapek-Chod, 'Úvodník', p. 128.

Although Jindra Junior regards it as bravery, Dr Černý’s behaviour may be interpreted as motivated by a desire to play games, rather than by political conviction. Dr Černý does not hesitate to undermine his own position, informing the interrogating commissar that, ‘v tomto prvotřídním státě také idioty máme prvotřídní a [...] zvláště u policie nabývají nicky daleko nadpřirozené velikosti’. By this act of insolence, foolhardiness or daring, Dr Černý becomes, even more than the war itself, an agent of Jindra’s fate. Jindra only remains seated during the imperial anthem because he is afraid Dr Černý will ridicule him otherwise. Jindra thus loses his privileged position as an officer in the medical corps, and is sent to the front as a common soldier, where he is blinded.

The narrator presents Dr Černý as a stock character who also self-consciously assumes such a role. He is frequently described as a ‘Černý človíček’, which is most likely a reference to his beard. It may also, however, ironically suggest his ‘diabolical’ nature. ‘Jmenuju se, jak vypadám!’, he introduces himself to Jindra Junior, indicating that he is conscious of the potentially representative function of his name. He dresses all in white, as if to enhance his ‘black’ appearance and call attention to his ‘paradoxical’ character. His attire also identifies him as a

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159 Čapek-Chod, Jindrové [1922], 11th edn, Prague, 1987, p. 211.
160 Ibid., pp. 213-14.
161 Ibid., p. 211.
162 Ibid., p. 119.
163 Ibid., p. 119.
164 Jindra Junior comments to Dr Černý, ‘Seznal jsem, pane doktore [...] Že, abych tak řekl, náruživě rád žertujete a že paradoxy přestujete snad jako jiný amatér – tulipány –’. Ibid., p. 126.
comic figure as Dr Černý is aware.\textsuperscript{165} He consistently plays the role of a clown, mocking and deflating the pretensions of his acquaintances.\textsuperscript{166} He lures people into making fools of, or embarrassing, themselves; thus, he goads the shy Jiřina into asserting that a man’s ‘useless’ nipples are a sign of his inferiority to woman.\textsuperscript{167} His ‘challenge’ to Jindra to remain seated during the performance of the imperial anthem may be interpreted as a trick, intended to reveal Jindra’s foolishness. Dr Černý discomfits Jindra Senior by calling him a war profiteer, while at the same time enjoying the scholar/shareholder’s hospitality; Dr Černý’s function (as well as his appearance) thus resembles that of the court jester.\textsuperscript{168} His bawdy humour, exemplified by his comparison of woman with a torpedo, undermines Jindra’s sentimental conceptions of love and foreshadows Jiřina’s pregnancy (and may present the implied author’s point of view):

> Co do výbušnosti a ničivosti i neodolatelnosti svého posláni mohlo by být torpédo, ovšem nehledě k tempu a jeho přímočarosti, symbolem ženy, nabité stejně svým určením v ní dřímacím, dokud se nachází takřikajíc ve skladišti.\textsuperscript{169}

The image constitutes a paradox, in that a phallic object is designated as representing woman, and thus can be considered grotesque. The eponymous turbine (\textit{Turbina}) is likewise a paradoxical symbol.

6. The Grotesque Image and Situation

In defining the grotesque image and situation, I follow the definitions critics have given, describing a paradox perceived

\textsuperscript{165}Ibid., p. 201. Dr Černý resembles the witty and ugly Polichinelle, a figure deriving from the \textit{commedia dell’arte} mask pulcinella. His white costume, however, identifies him with Pierrot, deriving from the \textit{commedia dell’arte} mask Pedrolino.

\textsuperscript{166}Ibid., pp. 121-2.

\textsuperscript{167}Ibid., p. 40.

\textsuperscript{168}Ibid., p. 202. Černý’s dwarf-like dimensions are those of the traditional court jester.

\textsuperscript{169}Ibid., p. 205.
as fundamental to human experience. The grotesque situation has
different manifestations: Pynsent discusses mismatched couples
in 'Čapek-Chod and the Grotesque'. Grotesque images and
situations in Čapek-Chod's works also arise from a comic or
ironic treatment of death.

The tendency of Čapek-Chod's narrators to demystify death
and disappoint lyrical expectations is evident in 'San Jago'. The
ridiculous death of the seminarian Jago constitutes the first use
of a motif that was to become common in Čapek-Chod's works: a
death unintentionally caused by a loved one. This pattern
suggests the foolishness of man's attempt to influence his fate,
and ironizes the notion of romantic love. Jago's beloved,
Anunciata, severs several strands of the bell rope, hoping to
ensure the death of her betrothed, Pedro, who has the honour of
ringing the enormous church bell on the saint's day. This honour
is transferred to Jago at the last minute; he falls from the
tower to his death while swinging the bell. \(^{170}\)

The motif occurs twice in Kašpar Lén mstitel: the public
messenger Cverenc asserts that dědek fajfka's death is caused by
his blind grandson. The worker jumps from the scaffolding on the
building site on hearing his grandson's voice. \(^{171}\) Dědek fajfka's
death is doubly ironic in that he believed the grandson, a
dexterous basket-weaver, would support him in his old age. \(^{172}\) The
prostitute Mařka does not literally cause the death of her
sweetheart and self-appointed 'saviour' Lén, but her seizure in
the court following her testimony against him figuratively
infects him, as the diction and imagery of the final passage make
clear. \(^{173}\)

The eponymous Dr Šalvěj ('Mimořádný profesor dr. Šalvěj')
dies as a result of seducing his housemaid Filomena. He has
learned from a doctor that he will not have long to live unless

\(^{170}\)Čapek-Chod, 'San Jago', Povídky, Prague, 1892, p. 152. This short story was not included in the 1922 edition.

\(^{171}\)Čapek-Chod, Kašpar Lén mstitel, pp. 112-13.

\(^{172}\)Ibid., p. 68.

\(^{173}\)Ibid., p. 243-46. See the chapter 'Conceptions of Woman'.
he gives up smoking and drinking coffee. He gives up both. After losing his virginity to Filomena, however, at the age of fifty, he feels rejuvenated and drinks and smokes while he considers marrying the woman. He has a heart attack as he rushes to propose to her. The grotesque aspect of his death is suggested by the conclusion to the short story: Filomena, who is already engaged to a railway official, refuses to postpone the wedding, even to accommodate Dr Šalvěj’s funeral. Helena Lukutová (‘Dusza ordynarna ...’) is, indirectly, responsible for the death of her first love Antonín Mâlek. After leaving her to rejoin his regiment, Mâlek repeats to his superior officer the words with which Helena had cursed him, ‘Dusza ordynarna’, whereupon he is shot. Representations of vitality and regeneration (a marriage or birth) accompany descriptions of the death of a character; this is the case with Armin Frey, Dr Šalvěj, Klimt and Vondrejc.

Other deaths in Čapek-Chod’s works can be regarded as grotesque in that they are presented as simultaneously risible and pitiable; Thomson writes: ‘what is essential to the grotesque is a conflict and confusion which is to be found in both the work itself and in the reaction it typically evokes’. One of the clearest examples is Klimt’s death, in ‘Snívá Kateřina’. Benýšková’s death, in V třetím dvoře, is also both comic and horrifying. In the description of Benýšek’s discovery of the suicide, the representation of the corpse as a marionette mutes reactions of shock or pity in the implied reader: ‘Chopil ji za rameno a prudce ji strší, ale na místě co by se měla pohnouti

174 Čapek-Chod, ‘Mimořádný profesor dr. Šalvěj’, Z města i obvodu, Prague, n. d. [1913], pp. 81-3. It is not certain that he is a virgin, but he does tell the doctor who examines him that he is ‘téměř tak nevinným jako kvartán’. Ibid., p. 66.

175 Čapek-Chod, ‘Dusza ordynarna ...’, Ad hoc!, Prague, 1919, p. 104. In ‘Nedonošený’, also in Ad hoc!, Anna unwittingly provokes her husband to hang himself.


177 Pynsent discusses this in ‘Čapek-Chod and the Grotesque’, pp. 203-04.
horní části těla, zaklátily se jí nohy kývadlem.\textsuperscript{178} The potentially slapstick aspects of the scene are evoked by the narrator's dry comment, "Má ubohá cerunka Bábinka" visela', as well as the corpse's slide from the upright position against the wall, where Benýšek has placed it.\textsuperscript{179} The horrific nature of the incident is evoked by the description of Benýšková's face: 'Svrasklá bezretá ústa byla vzdorně naduta do špičky, z níž čouhal koneček fialově modrého jazyka.'\textsuperscript{180} The position of the blind child Rudolfek at the feet of the corpse also contributes to the ambiguity in the scene and in the reader's response. Rudolfek cries and clutches his mother's body, without full awareness of what has happened.

The bow-legged miller Jirka in 'Prasátka se ztratily ...' dies as a result of his own good deed. The poor miller steals his neighbour's pigs. The neighbour beats her daughter for not minding the pigs, and the girl then tries to drown herself. Jirka rescues her and returns the pigs. He catches a chill, however, after fishing the girl from the water, falls ill and dies. The narrator comments on Jirka's deed: 'tam nad náma, kde vedou se knihy o lidských duších, byla Jirkova duše v účtu ztráty škrtnuta, přenesena znova na účet zisku a tu červeně podtrhnuta, nebot', jak známo, nad hříšníkem pokání činícím ...'.\textsuperscript{181} The irony in this remark is indicated by the story's conclusion: the neighbour, having received a good price for her pigs at market, can now afford to show generosity to the deceased Jirka, tying his jaws together with her own scarf.\textsuperscript{182}

The description of Bureš's motives for attacking the Bosnian guerrilla ('Znova a lépe') is also grotesque. Bureš pities his fellow soldier, mortally wounded in the stomach: 'byl to zvláště

\textsuperscript{178}Čapek-Chod, V třetím dvoře, p. 228.

\textsuperscript{179}Ibid., pp. 228-29.

\textsuperscript{180}Ibid., p. 229.

\textsuperscript{181}Čapek-Chod, 'Prasátka se ztratily ...', Dar svatého Floriána a Žvířátka a Petrovští, p. 179. The comment ironizes the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.

\textsuperscript{182}Ibid., p. 180.
Úpěnlivý, takřka nelíský, vřešťení postřeleného zajíců připomínající tón nářku poraněného, nad nímž Bureš plakal slzy až zalykavé'. At the same time, he is horrified by the behaviour of another wounded soldier, meticulously dictating his will to a comrade from the same home town. Bureš's longing to silence this man is fulfilled by the enemy, who interrupts with a shot the stream of words he mistakes for curses. Bureš, however, is enraged rather than relieved by the shooting. A combination of these intolerable, contradictory emotions, as well as the unbearable pain in his heels resulting from his sustained crouched position, drives Bureš to attack the enemy.

An image of the living consuming the dead occurs in three works. In the first two instances, the image is intended to convey the absurdity and horror of World War I, thus the comic aspect is almost overwhelmed by the humanitarian. In 'Dceruška Jairova', the narrator ironically describes the rooks feeding on the corpses of soldiers abandoned at the front:

Zpočátku, když se osazovaly zdejší baterie, živí velmi těžce snášeli pohled na řádění černých ptáků a důstojníci stříleli je z brokovnic, ale krkavci, ptactvo jinak plaché, stali se neodbytnými jako mouchy, a za týden zvyklo se tomu tak, že už se nikomu nezdá tak hroznější, viděti totiž, jak některý z těch dravců kuželovitého zobanu kohosi z těch hromad prakticky přesvědčuje, že jsa mrtev, už nemá zapotřebí očí.

A similar image occurs in Jindrové, although the mingled horror and irony in the tone of description are here diluted. In the trenches at the front, Jindra Junior watches a large bird of prey and its mate tear up the face of a dead soldier trapped in the barbed wire. The bird is killed by a shot from the enemy trenches. In its last occurrence, in Humoreska (1924), the image constitutes an aside, suggesting the banality of the life

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184 Ibid., p. 21.
186 Čapek-Chod, Jindrové, pp. 230-1.
cycle and ironizing Hupka’s mad grief over the death of his son: ‘Veliký, hřbitovními červy tučný kos notoval si v zadu na zdi fletnový svůj popávek a zočiv samičku, rychle se kmitl za ní...’.

7. Role Reversals
Two main types of role reversals occur in Čapek-Chod’s works: male/female, occurring in ‘Na valech’, V třetím dvoře, ‘Znova a lépe’, Kašpar Lén mstitel, Antonín Vondrejc, and ‘Dceruška Jairova’; and parent/child, occurring in ‘Otec’, ‘Úvodník’, Jindrové, and Humoreska. In ‘Zpověď’ naturalistova’ and ‘Experiment’, the role of the self-proclaimed saviour is reversed to that of murderer. A role reversal can give rise to a grotesque situation; expectations are baffled and an apparently distorted world is presented to the reader. In male/female role reversals, the man is represented as passive, weak, often ridiculous; the woman is powerful and practical. The reversal of conventional male/female roles is consistent with, and reinforces, the depiction of woman as embodying the life force, to be found in most of Čapek-Chod’s works. The parent/child reversal suggests a fundamental distortion of the social order. Although Rezi and Chocholouš, in ‘Otec’, are not related by blood, a parent/child relation obtains between them as Rezi’s mother had conceived a child by Chocholouš. His position prefigures that of Jindra Senior in that both are responsible for the suffering and death of their mistresses. In ‘Otec’ and Jindrové, the child educates the parent. Chocholouš does not profit from the lesson of his ‘daughter’, who judges him as ‘špíno’; that is, he does not try to make amends for his guilt. The narrator’s tongue-in-cheek comment that Jindra Junior has raised his father is confirmed by the story’s conclusion: Jindra judges and rejects his father,

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187Čapek-Chod, Humoreska [1924], Prague, 1927, p. 147.

188I treat this theme in the chapter ‘Conceptions of Woman’.

banishing him not only from the home but also from the country.\textsuperscript{190} While Jindra assumes moral authority over his father, however, he is also usurped by his father; as in Mácha’s \textit{Máj} (1836), the father deflowers the son’s beloved. The relation between the Jindras resembles that between Plecitý and his son in ‘Úvodník’. Plecitý also demonstrates his superiority, in terms of sexual prowess, over his son, thus disrupting the ‘natural’ order in which the son succeeds the father. The role reversal in \textit{Humoreska} is not complete. The narrator does comment, however, that ‘starý Hupka dovedl podle okolností být menším hochem než jeho synek!’\textsuperscript{191} Like Jindra in reaction to his impulsive father, Hynek tends to be serious and only slowly roused to emotion.\textsuperscript{192} The role reversal, like the grotesque situation and delineation of character, and self-referential narration, contributes to the representation of a distorted, paradoxical world in Čapek-Chod’s works.

\textsuperscript{190}Čapek-Chod, \textit{Jindrové}, pp. 105, 287-88.
\textsuperscript{191}Čapek-Chod, \textit{Humoreska}, p. 103.
\textsuperscript{192}Ibid., p. 87. See Čapek-Chod, \textit{Jindrové}, p. 91.
Science, Art and Artists

1. Science and Art

In his review of Z města i obvodu, Šalda attempts to define the central theme of Čapek-Chod’s collection and of his writing in general:

Jak patrno, sráží se v novelách p. Čapkových dvojí protilehlý svět: svět vidinný a svět střízlivě určitý a určený; a teprve touto juxtaposition nabývá svět positivný celé svě positivnosti a svět fantastický celé svě fantastičnosti. Že nesplývají, že obojí jest ostře ohraničen, že se nepronikají, ačkoliv se mísí a prostupují, v tom jest pramen grotesknosti, které nebylo možno dostoupiti jinak; ale v tom jest i pramen zvláštní děsivosti a místy i tragičnosti: kdykoliv vystoupí některý obyvatel jednoho světa z jeho mezí a pokusí se vniknouti do světa druhého, jest mu to na neštěstí, ne-li na smrt a skon, nebot’ obojí svět jest uzavřený a nepřátelsky odloučený od sebe. V této knize jsou to ovšem jen obyvatelé světa vidinného, kteří se rozvíjejí o svět střízlivě hmotný, o svět positivný; tak badatelští monomanové, profesor R. Šalvěj a dr Šmerda [sic], kteří žijí šťastně jen potud, pokud žijí svým védeckým vidinám, plánům a snům, a hynou ve chvíli, kdy odváží se prvního kroku do světa hmotné skutečnosti, do života vášně erotické.\(^1\)

The analysis is felicitous in that it indicates the similarity between Čapek-Chod’s depictions of men of ‘reason’, scientists, mathematicians, philosophers, and artists.\(^2\) This similarity is also emphasized by the narrator of Větrník, who suggests possible interpretations of the author’s earlier work. Šalda’s analysis points to the combination of opposites which characterizes Čapek-Chod’s grotesque themes; the analysis, however, is flawed in that it does not account for the complexity of the relations between the two ‘realms’, which are almost always depicted as merging. It does not explain, moreover, the depiction of the creative individual, artist or ‘thinker’, as parasite or criminal; one thinks, for example, of Benýšek in V třetím dvoře, Kamenský in ‘Jak Ferdinand Sovák pochodil’, Rokyta in ‘Snivá Kateřina’, the


\(^2\)Ibid. Šalda notes that the poet Vondrejc’s fate is determined by a woman personifying matter. Ibid.
narrator of 'Zpověď' naturalistova', Vondrejc, Slaba in 'Experiment' and Rozkoč in Vílém Rozkoč (1923). It hints at, but does not develop, the double nature of Čapek-Chod's artist/thinker, who is simultaneously a freak, an outsider, and a typification of the human lot.

The identification of the artist with the scientist is asserted by the narrator of Větrnlík in his characteristically ironic address to the visitor of his 'workshop':

neušla Vám zajisté jedna věc, a to, že nás společný pokus velice se podobá výrobě homuncula, podle receptu Philippa Aureola Theofrasta Bombasta Paracelsa, jak stojí v jeho knize -- 'De generatione rerum naturalium' -- sestrojení umělého dítěte v křivuli cestou chemickou ....'

The artist, like the scientist, usurps the creative role of God. Rozkoč is explicitly compared with the God of Genesis 2:

Nanosil naň vody, pístem roztloukal a hňetl i neustal dříve, dokud hlína nenabyla ideální vláčnosti, což jest, jak dosvědčí všichni sochaři, kteří si ji jsou nuceni sami vydělat, božská práce, ježto jí musel podniknout i bůh, nežli začal modelovat člověka."

Slaba, in 'Experiment', attempts to 'save' Julie; he states: 'Byl jsem však svým posláním zachrance posedlý'.^ He describes his efforts to break her resistance to him so that he can 'recreate' her:

Vyčerpal jsem všecky možné prostředky, abych jej přivodil a nyní, když se kýžená reakce dostavila, pocítil jsem cosí jako triumf ze zdařilé operace; vždyť všechno to, co jsem vám až dosud vyprávoval, nebylo vlastně nic jiného, než začátek ryze odborného, psychoexperimentálního léčení.‘

*Capek-Chod, Větrnik, p. 46.


*Capek-Chod, 'Experiment', Romanetto. Tři chodské grotesky. Pohádka. (hereafter Romanetto), Prague, 1922, p. 43. The primary narrator of 'Experiment' is both 'artist' (story-teller) and scientist (entomologist). At the beginning of the short story, his attitude to people is identical to Slaba's; the narrator states: 'poznal jsem, určil a utřídil už velmi slušnou řadu i lidských brouků'. Ibid., p. 9. The narrator plays God in his capacity as Slaba's judge. Ibid., pp. 111-12.

*Ibid., p. 60. He also states that he cultivates Julie as if she were one of the lilies in his garden. Ibid., p. 68.
Even without the comparison between artists and scientists in Větrník, one would recognize Slaba as similar to the painter Rokyta and the writer/narrator of 'Zpověd' naturalistova'. Rokyta and Slaba are both handsome men who limp (that is, Byronic). Dr Šmarda in 'Herbanimal' attempts to manipulate Nature through enhancing instinct. He hopes to train a carnivorous plant to move in search of food. The plant is implicitly compared with (the younger) Ilona; until the end of the short story, she is portrayed, with some irony, as a femme fatale. The narrator, Aleš Sobotka, says of her: 'Postava její byla tak neobvyklého střihu, profil tak zvláštního řezu, jako kdyby ji byl vymyslí a komponoval démon -- specialista pro kombinovanou svůdnost ženskou'. When she scowls at him, the narrator comments, 'neodolal [jsem] a usmál se tomuto pokusu o masku Medusinu'. The plant is also described as Medusa; Dr Šmarda gives an account of feeding the plant: 'Jakmile zaSnu s krajením soust pro jednotlivé láčky, to Bivoëisné oBivnuti rostliny, to hemžení snětí a stvolů a ta konkurence láček o sousto mezi sebou. Hadi

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7Slaba is described as a 'kulhavý krasavec'. Čapek-Chod, 'Experiment', p. 20. The narrator of 'Snivá Kateřina' states that Rokyta is 'velmi mlad, velmi stíhlé urostlý, ba mohl být zván až nápadně ztepilý, kdyby nebylo jediné vady, ač sotva patrné. Kulhal, málo sice, ale nepochybně'. Čapek-Chod, 'Snivá Kateřina', p. 252.

8'Herbanimal' can be interpreted as a parody of Julius Zeyer's 'Blaho v zahradě kvetoucích broskví'. One thinks of the themes common to both short stories: the femme fatale who lives, trapped, in a walled garden (Mingea and both Ilónas); the nightly rendez-vous of lovers in a garden. Julius Zeyer, 'Blaho v zahradě kvetoucích broskví', Novelly II [1884], 2nd edn, Prague, Unie, 1902, pp. 291-351. Zeyer’s short story is referred to twice in 'Herbanimal'. Čapek-Chod, 'Herbanimal', Z města i obvodu, pp. 241-2.

9Ibid., pp. 188-9. The narrator comments on Ilona’s grace, naivety and pride, her 'fiery eyes' and coquetry. Ibid., pp. 192, 202-3, 264.

na Medusině hlavě nemohli být čilejší'. That the plant dies on the night that Šmarda’s guardianship of Ilôna ends, reinforces the parallel between his experiment on the plant and his control of Ilôna. The writer is compared with the plastic surgeon who experiments with human flesh in ‘Deset deka’. The author dedicates the short story to the surgeon, František Burian (1881–1965), who produces noses from the rib cartilage of his patients and cultivates moustaches on their heads. The author declares that if he wants to help his character to a new face, he will have to rely on the surgeon’s advice and method. The author’s comment on the surgeon’s art applies to the work of prose as well: ‘Je to groteskní, ale něco pravdy na tom je, nelze se tu opřít dojmu jistého humoru, který, jak známo, jest směsí smíchu se slzami, ale v tomto případě je tu ještě přísada -- krve’. ‘Thinkers’ are also depicted conducting ‘unnatural’ experiments on themselves; in both cases Čapek-Chod ironizes Henri Bergson’s philosophical method. In ‘Liberum arbitrium’

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12 The similarity between Slaba and Šmarda’s behaviour may be seen in that both take their ‘sex-goddess’ wards to cafés where they are the centre of male attention. Čapek-Chod, ‘Experiment’, p. 71. Čapek-Chod, ‘Herbanimal’, pp. 187–8. That Šmarda attempts to control Ilôna is suggested in that he locks her within the grounds while he is out on errands. Ibid., p. 177.

13 In a letter in thanks for the dedication, Burian expresses amazement that Čapek has foreseen developments in medicine which doctors anticipate. Papers: Čapek-Chod; letter from František Burian to Čapek-Chod; 5 February 1925; PNP. Čapek notes the incident which inspired the story in his journal: Papers: Čapek-Chod; journal fragments, 1–29 November 1924; entry dated 6 November 1924; PNP.

14 Čapek-Chod, ‘Deset deka’, Čtyři odvážné povídky, p. 81. The quotation makes clear that Čapek-Chod identified humour with the grotesque.

15 Bergson uses an analysis of his own states of mind as a starting point in L’Évolution créatrice (1907). Henri Bergson, Creative Evolution, translated by Arthur Mitchell, Westport, Connecticut, 1975, p. 3. He argues that an intuition of personal experience can be used to understand an external process as the
the philosophy teacher Dr Hába, a 'výlučný indeterminista',\textsuperscript{16} seeks the company of the attractive Sóňa to demonstrate his freedom to resist erotic seduction.\textsuperscript{17} Hába’s experiment is disastrous because it is ‘successful’; by resisting the woman he loves, he loses her to a rival, the ‘nadšený deterministamonostra’ Dr Spěška.\textsuperscript{18} The young philosopher Dr Čemus in Psychologie bez duše (1928) conducts a similar experiment on himself.\textsuperscript{19} His failure to resist temptation may be interpreted either as the cause of his subsequent miserable co-existence with Marie, or as an opportunity to escape a sterile bachelor’s life which he bungles by refusing to have sexual intercourse, or any affectionate physical contact, with Marie again.\textsuperscript{20}

Besides their parallel experimentation and invention, thinkers and artists are comparable because of the character of their mental activity. The narrator of Větrník compares his narrative technique with that of the mathematician, ‘jenž vyráběje řadu konečnou, napíše jen první její členy, prostředek její vypuntikuje a připíše pouze její n-tý, závěrečný člen’.\textsuperscript{21} As with the sculptor Rozkoč, inspiration comes to the mathematician Max Hlouba in a dream state.\textsuperscript{22} Like Rozkoč who creates in a trance as if possessed by a demon, Max is so obsessed with disproving Fermat’s theorem, that he is indifferent

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\textsuperscript{17}Ibid., pp. 197, 203-4.

\textsuperscript{18}Ibid., p. 173. By indicating that a demonstration of ‘independence’ brings Hába no happiness, Čapek-Chod may be criticizing Bergson’s conception of free will.

\textsuperscript{19}Čapek-Chod, Psychologie bez duše, Prague, 1928, pp. 17-8.

\textsuperscript{20}The conclusion of the novel, Čemus’s realization that he must die because he has never loved anyone, suggests the latter interpretation. Ibid., p. 82.

\textsuperscript{21}Čapek-Chod, Větrník, pp. 78-9.

\textsuperscript{22}Čapek-Chod, ‘\(x^n + y^n = z^n\)’, Ad hoc!, p. 59.
to his family and the war in which he serves. Šmarda and Slaba are likewise subject to a scientific passion. Šalvěj sacrifices himself for science as if he were a priest in the service of a secret cult. The philosopher Hába relies on intuition, according to Bergson a higher stage in the evolution of intelligence, proper also to the artist. When absorbed by a philosophical question, Čemus appears to fall into a trance. The unknown force which dominates an artist or thinker is identical to that which seizes a chess player. Hvězda describes playing chess in a café before his physical and mental breakdown:

Kolem nás všechn ruch kavárny, přeplněné studentstvem a hlučným jich počínáním zmízel v jediném, nás nerušícím chasu, zapadli jsme úplně v nirvanu kouzelného toho černobílého Caïssina oltáře, zapomněli i na představu vlastní bytnosti a vhloubali

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23 According to Fermat's Great Theorem, 'there are no natural numbers $x$, $y$, and $z$ such that $x^n + y^n = z^n$, in which $n$ is a natural number greater than 2'. Fermat was a leading seventeenth-century French mathematician. The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, vol. 4, 15th edn, Chicago, The University of Chicago, 1987, p. 739.

24 Slaba experiences a 'vědeckou rozkos' at the opportunity to conduct research on the rare specimen Julie. Čapek-Chod, 'Experiment', pp. 47-8. Šmarda is ecstatic when describing his experiment on the Nepenthes Rajah: 'Bezvýrazné jeho, jako ztracené oči prudce se roztočily, jako by vidiny honily.' Čapek-Chod, 'Herbanimal', p. 205.

25 The narrator comments: 'byl ochoten obětovat ještě i druhé oko svaté vědě, nebot to kázal mu její zákon jako jejímu veleknězi esoterického stupně'. Čapek-Chod, 'Mimořádný profesor dr. Šalvěj', p. 60.

26 Hába lets a half-formed thought travel over the roofs he can see from his window to the, 'výšin zorného úhu věchnosti', whence it returns, 'jako včelí královna, na výšinách oplodněná, do svého úlu, jeho mozu, docela podle intuitivního vzorce Bergsonova!!'. Čapek-Chod, 'Liberum arbitrium', p. 193. For Bergson, intuition is 'Instinct become self-conscious, reflective, disinterested, fused with intelligence'; the artist is engaged in the 'intuition of meaning'. Luce, Bergson's Doctrine of Intuition, pp. 21, 23.

27 'Utonul tak do své filosofické spekulace, že se ho zmocnil stav jakési náměšťnosti'. Čapek-Chod, Psychologie bez duše, p. 54.
For Vondrejc chess is 'nirvána i narkotikum'; while playing a game, he 'utonul v ní tak důkladně, že zapomenul úplně na Hejholu, na to "děvče u šaršlů", na Freunda i na celý svět jako na smrt'. The violinist Löberle in 'Beethovenův večer', is a chess enthusiast; the narrator comments, 'nebot jej chodil jsem já zase navštěvovat na šachy, jež miloval snad ještě nad hudbu a při nichž tetrve pozbyval smyslu pro čas'. In Větrník, the activity of the writer is compared with that of the chess player; the narrator recommends chess to every littérature, 'jakožto výtečný kombinační training'.

The identification of the artist with the scientist, philosopher, mathematician and chess player suggests the common character of all mental activity. The author argues with the nineteenth-century notion that the artist is superior not only to the ordinary man but also to the 'thinker'; Schopenhauer regarded the latter as limited because his mental activity was subject to the principle of sufficient reason, whereas the artist could transcend the categories of space, time and causality.

Čapek-Chod is not consistent; one does encounter in his work a few sentimental depictions of artists, for example, that of the

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28Čapek-Chod, Nejzápadnější Slovan, p. 18.
29Čapek-Chod, Antonín Vondrejc, 8th edn, Prague, 1971, pp. 75, 78.
30Čapek-Chod, 'Beethovenův večer', Z města i obvodu, p. 102.
32'All these, the common name of which is science, therefore follow the principle of sufficient reason in its different forms, and their theme remains the phenomenon, its laws, connexion, and the relations resulting from these. But now, what kind of knowledge is it that considers what continues to exist outside and independently of all relations, but which alone is really essential to the world, the true content of its phenomena, that which is subject to no change, and is therefore known with equal truth for all time, in a word, the Ideas that are the immediate and adequate objectivity of the thing-in-itself, of the will? It is art, the work of genius.' Arthur Schopenhauer, The World as Will and Representation, translated by E. F. J. Payne, New York, 1969, vol. 1, p. 184.
violinist in Kašpar Lén mstitel. Most often, however, Čapek-Chod’s depictions of artists recall Schopenhauer’s understanding of the intellect as a faculty which serves the preservation of the human species. The implied author’s view, however, does not generally concur with Schopenhauer’s assertion that the artistic genius frees himself from the will in contemplation. Thus intellectual activity, in the creation of art or the conducting of an experiment, is sometimes depicted as motivated by sexual desire. Němák reproduces Cimabue’s Madonna, using the typesetter’s punctuation marks, because of his obsession with Maryša, who resembles the woman in the painting. Rozkoč accepts a commission to sculpt busts of Eva Pivková and her mother because he desires Eva. His eagerness to sculpt the mature Madla is inseparable from his sexual attraction to her. The narrator of ‘Experiment’ asserts that the aim of Slaba’s experiment had been the seduction of Julie. By associating creative mental activity with the sexual drive the author comments on the relation between the psyche and the body. He also

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33Sensibility, nerves, brain, just like other parts of the organic being, are only an expression of the will at this grade of its objectivity; hence the representation that arises through them is also destined to serve the will as a means for the attainment of its now complicated ends, for the maintenance of a being with many different needs. Thus, originally and by its nature, knowledge is completely the servant of the will’. Ibid., vol. 1, p. 176.

34Schopenhauer states: ‘For genius to appear in an individual, it is as if a measure of the power of knowledge must have fallen to his lot far exceeding that required for the service of an individual will; and this superfluity of knowledge having become free, now becomes the subject purified of will, the clear mirror of the inner nature of the world.’ Ibid., vol. 1, p. 186.


37Ibid., vol. 3, pp. 189-94.

uses creative activity as a metaphor for the relationship between men and women. The creative act involves a violation. That almost all of Čapek-Chod's artists are male reinforces the parallel between the violence of creative activity and sex. The individual exploits and sometimes destroys others, especially women, in his creative endeavours. Rokyta uses the misery of the working class as a source for his paintings. His attempt to seduce Kateřina parallels his exploitation of the workers. The narrator of 'Zpověď naturalistova' is responsible for the suicide of the object of his artistic and sexual interest; he states, 'pokládám se beze všeho za vraha'. Rozkoč's rape of Madla provides the inspiration for his 'Animal triste'. When he wakes the next day and sees the sculpture, the narrator comments, 'Bylo mu jako vrahu, jenž přespal se svou obětí v téže místnosti.' Slaba's experiment drives Julie to suicide. The narrator of Větrník describes his use of aspects of 'real' people in the creation of characters as theft. The comment is ironic, but it corresponds with the frequent depictions of the creative individual as a parasite or violator.

The artist or intellectual is also portrayed as having some physical or, less frequently, mental, disability. Of approximately fifty characters in Čapek-Chod's works who are in some way 'abnormal' -- deprived of a sense or a limb, wounded, disfigured or extremely ugly, mad or diseased -- twenty-seven are associated with the arts; eight are associated with

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39 The female artists are either singers or musicians: Hildegarda in Výchry a prohry, Tynda in Turbina, Kačenka in Větrník and Julie in Humoreska.


41 Čapek-Chod, Vilém Rozkoč, vol. 1, p. 70.

42 Čapek-Chod, Větrník, p. 60.

43 Josef in 'Na valech' (he sings); Němák and Baruša in 'Němák'; Rudolfek, Frýda and Bacháč in V třetím dvoře; Kryštufek in 'Jak Tondovi Nemanskejch pomohli'; Rokyta in 'Snivá Kateřina'; Bureš in 'Znova a lépe'; Ruprecht's father in 'Tiiiiiiš'; the hunchback sister in 'Zpověď' naturalistova'; Löberle in 'Beethovenův večer'; Armin Frey and Rudolf Vážka in Turbina; Rudolf Karabík, Freund and Vondrejc in Antonín Vondrejc; Irma-
intellectual activity." From another perspective, of approximately forty main characters who are either artists or intellectuals, five have disabilities: Němák is a deaf-mute; Rokyta and Slaba limp; Frey and Kačenka are hunchbacks. Of the remaining thirty-five, three are particularly ugly: Dr Freund, Rudolf Vážka and Dr Černý; four are wounded in the course of the story: Loberle, Dr Šmarda, Jindra Junior and Rozkoč; six suffer, or appear to suffer, from an illness: Hvězda, Strýc Jan, Vondrejc, Arnošt Zouplna, Jiří Stach and A.V. Lisolej; three attempt or commit suicide: the narrator of 'Zpověď naturalistova', Karel Svítěk and Dr Čemus; four meet with a sudden death: Dr Šalvěj, Máňa Ulliková, Max Flouba and Dr Multrus; six suffer a traumatizing shock: Benýšek, the narrator of 'Balíček', Vojtěch Kopicius, Tynda, Jindra Senior and Julie (in Humoreska); five are degraded through disillusion: Sovák, Dr Bazanelli, the narrator of 'Beethovenův večer', Dr Hába and Dr Spěška. Only two artists or intellectuals might be seen as escaping 'degradation': Hildegarda in Výchry a prohry (1915) and the child musician Ludvík in 'Nejvyšší "H"'. Hana Jechová's analysis of the function of disability in Čapek-Chod's works is unfounded: 'Moral disproportion is translated by some physical disability or monstrousness, the external aspects of which

Máňa and Jiří Stach in 'Dceruška Jairova'; Dr Černý in Jindrové; A.V. Lisolej in 'Prapory paní kalkulatorové'; the devil in 'Páchlíček a čert'; Kačenka and Josef Pulpit in Větrník; Hupka Senior in Humoreska; Rozkoč and the novice Aloisia Peklová in Řešany.

"Hvězda in Nejzápadnější Slovan; Jan in 'Strýc Jan'; Šmarda in 'Herbanimal'; Mr Mour and Arnošt Zouplna in Turbina; Slaba in 'Experiment'; Max Blaustern in 'Polichinell Maxl'; Čemus in Psychologie bez duše. Those characters who are physically abnormal, or suffer from an illness, and are not associated with artistic or intellectual activity include: Kačaba, Franta and Michael in 'Frantův román'; Benýšková and pan hejtman in V třetím dvoře; Jirka in 'Prasátka se ztratily...'; Klára in 'Znova a lépe'; Ruprecht in 'Tiííííís'; dědek fajfka's grandson and Mařka in Kašpar Lén mstitel; the eponymous Konteska Fina; Ada and Dr Gotold in Antonín Vondrejc (the latter might be considered an intellectual); Rudolf in 'Deset deka'; Mariana in Psychologie bez duše.
prevail over psychological or social comment.\textsuperscript{45} That interpretation might apply to Rokyta and Slaba, but Rudolf Karabík, the limping illustrator of Vondrejc’s epic poem ‘Živý zvon sevillský’ is not presented as embodying a ‘moral disproportion’. From Čapek-Chod’s first published book, 

\textit{Povídky}, a more complex use of disability as metaphor is evident than that which Jechová suggests. Physical abnormalities can be regarded as part of a general pattern of degradation, in Bakhtin’s sense of the word. Bakhtin regarded degradation, ‘the lowering of all that is high, spiritual, ideal, abstract’, as characteristic of the grotesque.\textsuperscript{46} To degrade an object is ‘to hurl it down to the reproductive lower stratum, the zone in which conception and a new birth take place’.\textsuperscript{47} Degradation consists in materializing the creative individual.

Physical abnormality is depicted as the cause of creativity, which thus is reduced to a physiologically explicable phenomenon. The resonant quality of the hunchback’s voice is due to the breadth of his chest: one thinks of Baruša in ‘Němák’, Kryštúfek in ‘Jak Tondovi Nemanskejch pomohli’, and Kačenka in 

\textit{Větrník}.\textsuperscript{48} Němák’s unusual perception and sensitivity result from his deaf-mute condition.\textsuperscript{49} Creative passion -- artistic or intellectual --


\textsuperscript{46}Bakhtin, \textit{Rabelais and His World}, pp. 19-20.

\textsuperscript{47}Ibid., p. 21.


\textsuperscript{49}The narrator analyses the Němák’s conception of language. Čapek-Chod, ‘Němák’, p. 96. The impact of the disability on his perception of people is emphasized. Ibid., pp. 111, 113. Human behaviour appears absurd to him. Ibid., pp. 153, 156. His perception of beauty and mystery seems enhanced. For example, the narrator describes the Němák observing the workers returning from an outing: ‘Najednou kmitlo se před ním nedaleko růžové světlo, vedle něho modrávě, tří, čtyři, zelené, červené, celé množství jich, řada -- jako kdyby všechna byla nesena jednou osobou,
- may result from a wound or disease; in this respect Čapek-Chod diverges from the nineteenth-century conception of disease, particularly tuberculosis/consumption and mental illness, as the outcome of excessive creativity and intelligence. The violinist Löberle in 'Beethovenův večer' has an inconspicuous scar on his face.\(^{50}\) The botanist Šmarda has an open sore on his head; he begins to experiment with carnivorous plants after he suffers this wound.\(^{51}\) The tobacconist Frýda in \textit{V třetím dvoře}, who suffers from an eye disease, is a poet.\(^{52}\) In 'Prapory paní kalkulatorové', A. V. Lisolej's desire to write dramas is caused by a phosphate stone in his nose.\(^{53}\) The portrayal of Dr Freund, an intellectual who is eventually confined to an institution for the insane, might lead one to suspect that Čapek-Chod accepted the Romantic association of madness and poor health with genius.\(^{54}\) One might argue, however, that Freund's madness constitutes another mask, rather than a psychopathological phenomenon. Through the portrayal of Vondrejc's death the author

\(^{50}\) The narrator says of Löberle's shaving cut: 'snad hrou si je až k smrti zhoršil, snad už jednou kdysi podobným způsobem svoje zdraví ohrozil, něco jako jízvu z dávné doby pod uchem jsem při něm viděl'. Čapek-Chod, 'Beethovenův večer', p. 106.

\(^{51}\) For an account of how Šmarda received the wound, see: Čapek-Chod, 'Herbanimal', pp. 245-8.

\(^{52}\) For a description of her eyes, see: Čapek-Chod, \textit{V třetím dvoře}, p. 33. That she writes love poems is revealed at her trial. Ibid., pp. 144-5.

\(^{53}\) When the stone is removed from his nose, Lisolej feels liberated from the desire to write. Čapek-Chod, 'Prapory paní kalkulatorové, \textit{Ad hoc!}, pp. 395-6.

\(^{54}\) Schopenhauer writes, 'it might appear that every advance of the intellect beyond the usual amount, as an abnormality, already disposes to madness'. Schopenhauer, \textit{The World as Will and Representation}, vol. 1, p. 191. Williams notes the impact that Dr Moreau's studies of psychology had on the mid nineteenth-century French littérateur: 'They gained from him [...] the assurance that strength is not in muscles but in nerves, that genius is necessarily a neurosis, and that excesses of sickly sensibility are the outward sign of superiority.' Roger L. Williams, \textit{The Horror of Life}, London, 1980, p. 94.
parodies the nineteenth-century legend of tuberculosis as the disease of the artist, as a sickness which individualizes and spiritualizes. Disease and death degrade, that is, materialize, Vondrejc, who is depicted as pitiable but not tragic. Arnošt Zouplna and Jiří Stach, also supposedly consumptive, recover from their illness and abandon their intellectual pursuits.

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55 Susan Sontag discusses the Romantic mythologizing of tuberculosis in *Illness as Metaphor*, London, 1979. She states that TB was considered to be a painless, 'edifying, refined' disease. Ibid., p. 16. As it was associated in particular with the lungs, TB 'takes on qualities assigned to the lungs, which are part of the upper, spiritualized body'. Ibid., p. 17. It was regarded as a disease of the soul, rather than of the body; the TB death was lyrical in that it supposedly 'dissolved the gross body, etherealized the personality, expanded consciousness'. Ibid., pp. 18-20. TB was thought to be provoked by a passionate feeling, which the individual may have repressed. Ibid., p. 22. TB was seen as the disease of 'born victims, of sensitive, passive people who are not quite life-loving enough to survive'. Ibid., p. 25. It was considered to be a disease of the artist, especially the lyrical poet. Ibid., pp. 29, 32. TB 'individualized' in the sense that it separated the sufferer from his community; and it was thought that 'a certain inner disposition was needed in order to contract the disease'. Ibid., pp. 37-9.

56 The narrator does not state that Vondrejc has tuberculosis. Indeed, Dr Vejborný asserts that the problem is with his heart. Čapek-Chod, *Antonín Vondrejc*, p. 295. Vondrejc, however, like Kašpar Lén, has the symptoms of pulmonary tuberculosis: lack of energy, weight loss, a persistent cough and blood in the sputum. That the disease will degrade rather than spiritualize Vondrejc is indicated in the description of the first time he coughs up blood 'namistě veršů'. Ibid., p. 267. The account of his final struggle to prevent the blood from gushing from his mouth, emphasizes the material aspect of his being. Ibid., pp. 473-4. That the narrative point of view shifts almost entirely from Vondrejc's consciousness in the later chapters (from 'Onoho dne', with the exception of the penultimate chapter, 'Ještě jedno noturno') suggests that even before his death he is hardly more than a body. All sense of tragedy is dispelled by the description of the dissection of Vondrejc's corpse. Ibid., p. 490.

57 Arnošt was misdiagnosed by his future wife Máňa. Turbina, p. 298. After recovering his health he abandons astronomy to become an auditor. Ibid., p. 299. In this respect he resembles Hvězda in *Nejzápadnější Slovan*. The would-be poet Stach plans to move to America with his robust country wife and son when he 'recovers' from the alleged tuberculosis.
Creativity is also depicted as pathologically explicable; it arises out of the neurosis of the socially ostracized 'freak'. Armin Frey’s art of illusion can be traced to a desire to disguise his deformity. Dr Černý’s eccentricity is inseparable from his ugliness. The shy composer Rudolf Vážka and the anti-social philosopher Cemus are likewise described as very ugly. Physical abnormality is a device used to explain creativity and to represent and comically to degrade the alienation experienced by the creative individual.

The author also uses deformity as an emblem of creativity. The artist or thinker’s power is represented by an image of fertility. It is clear from the depiction of the lame devil in 'Páchliček a čert' that Čapek-Chod was aware of the tradition which associated that physical defect with Satan. The author may draw on this tradition in his characterization of Rokyta and Slaba. The defect has also been associated in myth with fertility; Hays elaborates on this in The Limping Hero: Grotesques in Literature. In antiquity the feet, as well as the thighs and knees, were regarded as containers of sperm, the life source. The ‘limper’ was a fertility figure; his vitality was prevented from being dispersed by contact with the earth. The lame foot was thus an image of castration, performed in ritual because it was believed to ensure the retention of sperm, thus vitality, within the body. Hays writes:

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58The dandy Frey wears a long black velvet robe to hide his deformed body. Turbina, p. 29. The forging of manuscripts similarly involves the art of illusion. Ibid., p. 37. Frey regards himself as an artist. Ibid., p. 80. He is depicted as a dandy. Ibid., pp. 161-62, 213.

59Čapek-Chod, Jindrové, p. 119. Paní Půtová describes Černý as an ‘ohava obsahem i formou’. Ibid., p. 120.

60The narrator of Turbina comments: ‘Skladatel Rudolf Vážka byl jinouch, za nímž se dívky ohlížely pro jeho šerédstnost.’ Čapek-Chod, Turbina, p. 88. The young Cemus, ‘skutečně šereda’, was afraid women would reject him. Čapek-Chod, Psychologie bez duše, p. 23.

the ritual practices of castration and live sacrifices changed to castration alone or ritual laming, and finally to the wearing of buskins to imitate laming [...] all these signs manifested sacred kingship: the lame figure was a fertility deity whose disfiguration or wound portended greater goods -- more crops, flocks, children -- and, thereby, greater happiness for his people.\textsuperscript{62}

That both 'Snivá Kateřina' and 'Experiment' depict the (failed) courtship of characters who can be interpreted as fertility figures -- Rokyta and Kateřina, and Slaba and Julie -- suggests that the author deliberately makes use of this mythical connotation of the limp. The hunchback's hump, another image of procreation, as Bakhtin has noted, is also used as an emblem of the artist or thinker's creative power.\textsuperscript{63} All the hunchbacks in Čapek-Chod's works are associated with the arts or creative activity: the hump represents the individual's animality and, by implication, sexuality, which are thus associated with his creativity.

In his analysis of \textit{Z města i obvodu}, Šalda identifies but does not fully assess a pattern evident in Čapek-Chod's portrayal of the creative individual. The latter is always degraded, that is, anchored in the body. This is often accomplished by identifying the creative with the sexual drive, and/or explaining creativity as the result of a physical abnormality. The creative individual who has no physical defect or wound (as well as some who do) is degraded by illness or death. This degradation is not tragic, as Šalda claimed, but an affirmation of the physical world, the life force manifest in the cycle of birth and death. The artist or thinker cannot escape this cycle or rise above his animality. In his attempt to distance himself from the material world, the creative individual approaches it in the form of death.

2. Music and Instinct

\textsuperscript{62}Ibid., p. 26-7

\textsuperscript{63}Bakhtin writes: 'Various deformities, such as protruding bellies, enormous noses, or humps, are symptoms of pregnancy or of procreative power'. Bakhtin, \textit{Rabelais and His World}, p. 91.
In 'The Shadow of Schopenhauer on Čapek-Chod', Rayfield states that Schopenhauer's 'ideas, formulae, sources and moods predominate in the complex chemistry of the Čapek-Chod novel'. Although Rayfield does not discuss the theme specifically, the depiction of music and musicians in Čapek-Chod's works manifests Schopenhauer's influence. Schopenhauer disdained the individual's tendency, when listening to the 'extracted quintessence' of passions represented in music, to 'clothe it in imagination with flesh and bones, to see in it all the different scenes of life and nature'. Čapek-Chod ironizes this tendency through the characters of Bureš, in 'Znova a lépe', and Vojtěch Kopicius, in 'Mendelssohnův koncert'. In addition to mocking man's emotional reaction to music, however, the author also portrays the consoling power of music. In 'Dceruška Jairova', for example, the power of the pianist Osip Dulévč to move and soothe the fellow soldiers of his audience, is related without irony. Schopenhauer regards the arts, except music, as copies of the Platonic Ideas, the grades of objectification of the Will, which is the source of being. Music, however, is 'a copy of the will itself'; he writes: 'For this reason the effect of music is so very much more powerful and penetrating than is that of the other arts, for these speak only of the shadow, but music of the essence.' For Čapek-Chod, as well, music represents the Will

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64 Rayfield, 'The Shadow of Schopenhauer on Čapek-Chod', p. 8.


66 Čapek-Chod, 'Dceruška Jairova', Ad hoc!, p. 234. One might interpret Dulevic's death as grotesquely ironic: a bomb fragment tears off part of his head while he is playing for his company in an abandoned villa near the front.

67 Quoted in Alperson, 'Schopenhauer and Musical Revelation', p. 157. Victor Bennett has represented Schopenhauer's theory thus:

Will
Music
to Life. In his works music appeals to 'areas' of the psyche which are inaccessible to reason or the other arts. The narrator of Větrník states of music: 'stačí k ní výborně resonantní srdce a není k ní zapotřebí inteligence'. He asserts that music's greatest possibility is to, 'pověděti, co slova nedovedou, zmocniti se onoho zbytku duše, který zůstává každému jinému umění nepřístupným'.

In his conception of the musically sensitive individual, however, Čapek-Chod diverges from Schopenhauer. The latter held that aesthetic appreciation did not involve conceptual reason, but he did not therefore regard the 'excessiveness of genius' as 'mere excrescence of unruly will'. For Schopenhauer, 'the excess of energy which the genius displays also reveals a surplus of intellect [...] Through this surplus of contemplative intellect, the genius sees the will in the form of its universality, prior to the subject-object split and the dispersion of will into the multiplicity of phenomena.' One assumes that this would pertain in particular to the musical genius as Schopenhauer regards music as superior to the other arts. For Čapek-Chod, however, the individual with a high susceptibility to, and talent for, music, is one who embodies

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Ideas
Arts
Phenomena


68 Čapek-Chod, Větrník, p. 82.

69 Ibid., pp. 82-3. Hübscher discusses Schopenhauer’s acceptance of the Romantic ‘assessment of the pure instrumental music as the highest of all the arts’, his belief that words were foreign to the ‘richer language’ of music. Arthur Hübscher, 'Schopenhauer and Wagner', The Philosophy of Schopenhauer in its Intellectual Context: Thinker Against the Tide, translated by Joachim T. Baer and David E. Cartwright, Lewiston, Lampeter, Queenston, 1989, pp. 434.


71 Ibid.
instinct, unrestrained by intellect. While Schopenhauer asserts that women have no susceptibility to the arts, Čapek-Chod represents women, and children, as sensitive to music, because they are creatures of instinct; because they are, like music, 'undiluted' manifestations of the Will.

The numerous female musicians depicted in his works tend to be passionate, sexually attractive and dominating. They are represented as having power over male characters through their sexuality and their playing or singing; music thus represents the reproductive instinct or the Will to Life. The two female characters who constitute the major exceptions to this pattern, the consumptive Irma-Máňa in 'Dceruška Jairova' and the hunchback Kačenka in Větrník, can perhaps be seen as types, also common in Čapek-Chod's works, of the musician as sufferer.

The portrayal of the two female characters in Nejzápadnější Slovan introduces the relation between music and sex. In the first chapter, 'Kapitola romantická', the phantom femme fatale sings and plays on a spinet for Hvězda. Her performance is an

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72Music is sometimes used as a metaphor for emotion; for example, in V třetím dvoře, the painter Benýšek's exultation, on learning that his court case has been taken up by the lawyer Dr Paussig, is described as 'varhany dující v jeho nitru plným strojem symfonii šťastné naděje'. Čapek-Chod, V třetím dvoře, p. 104. Jechová notes Čapek-Chod's use of the fine arts in characterization. Hana Jechová, 'Description and Narration in the Fiction of K. M. Čapek-Chod', p. 57.

73Doležel discusses the relation between music and the feminine in Čapek-Chod's Humoreska: 'Music's powerful aesthetic and emotional effects make it an irresistible force which overwhelms its own masters. In this second aspect, music is just like love and its embodiment, woman. Not surprisingly, the entire core system of Humoreska -- music, love, woman -- operates as a non-agential force which, by its mere presence, by its attraction and repulsion, dominates the individuals of Čapek-Chod's fictional world and motivates all their acting.' Lubomír Doležel, 'K. M. Čapek-Chod and Modernism', Karel Matěj Čapek-Chod, Pynsent (ed.), pp. 78-9.

74Čapek-Chod is also satirizing the nineteenth-century conception of the voluptuousness of music. Baudelaire, for example, described Wagner's Tannhäuser as an 'onomatopoeic dictionary of love'. Quoted in Raymond Furness, Wagner and Literature, Manchester, 1982, p. 33.
attempt to seduce him and it is when she is playing that Hvězda most desires her. He relates:

Obnažená, vysoko podpásaná hrud’ zdvíhá se oddechem, útlá růžová ramena se chvějí.[...]
Ve tvářích plane ruměnc, zlaté řasy žár očí přivírají, hlava pohybuje se melodií nadšeně milostných veršův.
Krev ve mně kypěla varem a šílenou žádostí. Škytavé tóny klavíru pobodávají mne k odvaze.
Tu vzedmula se jí řadra tak, až plný jich obrys napjal řasnatý, nad míru nízký živůtek, hlava naklonila se nadobro zpět, jakoby umírala zároveň s posledním tónem písne, oči se zavřely, tvář tone ve výrazu spité, unavené něžnosti.\(^5\)

The description of her ‘death’ suggests that she experiences orgasm with the climax of the musical piece. She may be acting to elicit a kiss from him; Hvězda comments, ‘Bylo by to býtlo polibeni smrti ici ...’\(^6\) But she may also be independent of him, finding sexual ecstasy in music.

In later works, Čapek-Chod explores the idea that a union of psyches in ecstasy is possible in music. The narrator of Turbina describes Tynda and Rudolf’s performance of the latter’s composition:

Duše obou, hudebníka i pěvkyně, dlely v zámezi vezdejšího světa i nevěděly o níčem jiném, než jedna o druhé. Nemohlo být v rouchnějšího a cudnějšího prolunutí jedné druhou a druhé první, než v onom zásvětí, jehož jedinou hmotnotou jest zvuk.\(^7\)

The description of the two following the performance suggests that the mutual permeation of souls has not been chaste, or perhaps, that the spiritual represents a sexual union:

Ani nevěděla, jak se stalo, že držela jeho ruce ve svých a upjatě pohlížela do jeho lehce spoceného, hnědě červeného obličeje, pleti připomínající skladače cihel.

’Vy?!’ řekla schváceně, ‘jak vy se jmenujete křestním jménem?’
Rozčarovan až k ohromení touto otázkou v takové chvíli, zíral na ni chvíli, než mohl promluviti.

\(^5\)Čapek-Chod, Nejzápadnější Slovan, p. 33.
\(^6\)Ibid., p. 34.
\(^7\)Čapek-Chod, Turbina, p. 102.
Ale její ruce, jimiž držela studené jeho prsty, byly horké, klíční oblouk kypře vymodelovaný na jejím poprsí zdvihal se mocným dechem.78

In 'Beethovenův večer', the author portrays the impossibility of a sexual union of psyches in music or in 'real' life. During a performance of Beethoven's F-major violin sonata, the narrator is distracted by the femme fatale seated next to him.79 In an attempt to seduce him, she clutches his little finger with her own, tightening her grip to indicate the intensity of her pleasure from the music. The narrator comments, 'Docházívá sic za podobných příležitostí, za společných extasií z uměleckých dojmů k splynutí duší na minutu, ale mně bylo, přiznám-li se, jako ptáčku v ruském přísloví, který je celý ztracen, jakmile drápem uvázl.'80 Neither in the concert hall nor in the woman's flat later in the evening do their souls fuse. Although he does have sexual intercourse with her, the narrator's infatuation with the woman ends as soon as he hears her banal interpretation of Beethoven's composition.81 The woman's power over the narrator, her sexual attractiveness, decreases when she reveals her ignorance of music. Indeed, the woman has to insist that the disillusioned narrator come home with her. In Větrník the author again rejects the possibility of a union of psyches in music or reality, although, as in Nejzápadnější Slovan, he suggests that a kind of onanistic ecstasy can be attained in aesthetic experience.82 The author suggests both that human emotions and...
experience, even aesthetic ecstasy, have the reproductive instinct as their source, and that an individual can attain ecstasy and happiness in aesthetic experience but not in reality. For Schopenhauer, these notions would be mutually contradictory; he regards aesthetic contemplation as a moment during which the perceiving subject merges with the object and so is temporarily freed from the strivings of the Will. Happiness consists in the negation of Will. Čapek-Chod may thus be seen as rejecting Schopenhauer’s claim that the individual can transcend egoism and the power of the Will; commentators have noted the apparent contradiction in this claim. One might suggest, however, that the author uses sexual ecstasy simply as a metaphor for the character of aesthetic pleasure.

Female characters whose sexual attractiveness or power over men is represented by their musical talent, like the *femme fatale* in *Nezjúpadnější Slovan*, include Ilóna (the mother) in ‘Herbanimal’, Hildegarda in *Výhry a prohry*, Tynda in *Turbina*, Julie in ‘Experiment’, and Lisi and Julie in *Humoreska*. Róza, the earthy baker in ‘Polichinin Maxl’, might also be included in this group. These characters may be distinguished from Madla, in *Nezjúpadnější Slovan*, and Rezinka, in ‘Zpoved’ naturalistova’, also singers, whose attractiveness derives from their vulnerability and innocence.

The botanist Dr Šmarda, in ‘Herbanimal’, is fascinated by the beauty and musical talent of the violinist Ilóna, a Prague German of Magyar and Gipsy descent. His acquaintance with her and his patronage of her art is fateful: one evening, on his way to visit her, he suffers a severe head injury while attempting to prevent her Gipsy lover from jumping on a train. Though the

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injury is not fatal, Šmarda's mind and career are impaired. Ilona leaves the country and dies several years later, when she is conductor of a women’s band in Croatia. On her death-bed she writes to Šmarda, asking him to care for her four-year-old daughter, also named Ilona, who is inadvertently responsible for the failure of Šmarda’s experiment. The cabaret singer Hildegarda -- a stage name for Františka Sopotecká -- controls the male characters and the outcome of Výhry a prohry. She intimidates the nobleman Zobotitz, threatening to tell his wife that he had once sought out Hildegarda as if she were a prostitute. He is thus afraid to claim the lottery prize which Hildegarda wins with the ticket given her by Zobotitz in return for her company. Likewise, he is cowed into keeping silent about the smuggling ring organized by Hildegarda’s father. By withholding and revealing information about the other characters, she helps to arrange the engagements between Robert Zobotitz and Lízinka Sopotecká and Rudolfina Zobotitzová and Jan Kubát. Both Jiří and the elder Jan Kubát propose to Hildegarda, as does the detective Neklouda, who is willing to become her ‘slave’. One might argue that Hildegarda’s power over men is more clearly represented by the diadem she wins in the lottery than by her singing talent. Neklouda says to her, ‘Zpěvačka, která má diamanty, nemusí mít ani tuze hlasu’. But like Ilona, Hildegarda’s character is identified with her musical occupation.

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86 The carnivorous plant starves to death while Šmarda is tending Ilona’s lover, who has wounded his knee when departing from a nocturnal rendezvous with Ilona. Čapek-Chod, 'Herbanimal', pp. 268-9.

87 Čapek-Chod, Výhry a prohry, Prague, n.d. [1915], Act II, sc. 15 and Act III, sc. 4. In the latter, the detective Neklouda, informed by Hildegarda of the location and plans of the young couple, betrays Jan and Dolfa to paní Zobotitzová.

88 Ibid., Act II, sc. 13.

89 Ibid., Act II, sc. 12.
The woman who attracts and controls the fates of men is identified with the female musical performer.\(^90\)

The opera singer Tynda, who dominates Prague’s haute bourgeoisie, enthral three men: her accompaniest Rudolf Vážka, the proletarian student and athlete Václav Nezmara and the Czech-American industrialist and reputed millionaire Mr Mour. She loses two of her admirers following the debacle of her first professional appearance as Elsa in Lohengrin and marries the ugly but devoted and talented Rudolf.\(^91\) Her failure as a performer is accompanied by the collapse of the family industry due to the faulty installation of the eponymous turbine, with which Tynda is identified. She subsequently also loses her beauty. When Václav sees the now rotund Tynda on her wedding day, he hardly recognizes his former lover. The narrator comments, ‘tahle nynější živá Tynda ubila v něm bývalou Tyndu nadobro a ne-li nadobro, tož ještě hůře, ubíjela ji každodenně’.\(^92\) Like the femme fatale in ‘Beethovenův večer’ who, because of her inability to whistle a Chopin nocturne, becomes ridiculous for the narrator,

\(^90\)The depiction of Hildegarda may conform to the ‘woman-on-top’ topos discussed by Davis. She writes: ‘The most popular comic example of the female’s temporary rule, however, is Phyllis riding Aristotle, a motif recurring in stories, paintings, and household objects from the thirteenth through the seventeenth centuries [...] Phyllis’ ambiguous ride brings us to a third way of presenting the woman-on-top, that is, where the license to be a social critic is conferred on her directly. Erhard Schoen’s woodcuts (early sixteenth century) portray huge women distributing fools’ caps to men. This is what happens when women are given the upper hand; and yet in some sense the men deserve it. Erasmus’ female Folly is the supreme example of this topos.’ Natalie Zeman Davis, ‘Women on Top’, Society and Culture in Early Modern France, Stanford, 1975, pp. 135-6.

\(^91\)Čapek-Chod parodies late nineteenth-century ‘Wagneromania’ in his depiction of the opera singers, particularly Tynda’s rival paní Boguslavská-Zmajová. Both Tynda and paní Boguslavská-Zmajová are comparable to the robust, sensual and manipulative singer Linda Barochová in Felix Tèver’s ‘Mezi břehy’. See: Tèver, Duše nezakotvené, Prague, 1908. Tèver’s depiction of Barochová, however, is conventional rather than ironic. Machar’s depiction of the suicide of the greengrocer-turned-opera-singer in the poem ‘Marie Wiltová’ verges on the grotesque. Josef Svatopluk Machar, Zde by měly kvěst růže ...[1894], Prague, 1957, pp. 76-82.

\(^92\)Čapek-Chod, Turbina, p. 575.
Tynda loses her power over men when she loses control of her voice (and her virginity). In 'Beethovenův večer', music is compared with a flower; describing his experience playing the piano, the narrator states:

In 'Beethovenův večer', music is compared with a flower; describing his experience playing the piano, the narrator states:

Zdávaly se mi [the keys] prodloužením mého organismu, připojením k mým ramenům, jichž se chopil fortýř jiného světa a uváděl mne na louku blažených, a tu rostly -- nikoli nevonné asfodély -- ale dívuplná flóra, jejíž vůní intensivní, ale prchavou byly tóny.

Women and music are identified with Nature, with sexuality and sensuousness, beauty and power.

In Humoreska woman’s musical talent is identified with her power to attract man. A man’s passion for music represents his desire for woman; this passion is portrayed, with some irony, as his ruin. Hupka, the student of music, later clerk in the Multrus law office, falls in love with the violinist Lisi, who plays in a trio with her father and sister. Because of his attraction to Lisi, Hupka leaves his father’s home and his studies to travel and perform with the itinerant musicians. Hupka and Lisi’s musical performance is described as sexual intercourse. Her influence over him is suggested in the description of their performance:

její houslíčky, po sklíření skvostně znějící, přílíny k jeho houslí neméně těsně a náruživě večer, jako ona sama k němu za dne. Vedla se ho i tady ztuha, při jeho improvizacích nadcházel mu na svém nástroji s překvapujícími kombinacemi vstříc rozohnující jeho inspiraci [...]
Hofeli pělí oba pějíce na svých strunách o svém milování, a Hupka zapomněl persiflovat odbornou pečaváčkovou sentimentalitu vidu, jak zelenavé oči Lisiny o něj opřené tonou v rozkoší a závěrečné fermaté kusu, jejž spolu sehrál, dával se na její víru a stával se sám stále víc — Pečavákem. Hupka tries to discourage his son from playing the violin, convinced that the instrument will curse him as well. Ironically, however, it is Hupka Senior who eventually arranges for Hupka Junior to play in the law-office quartet, where he meets the *femme fatale* 'cello player/variety performer Julie (Emilie's stage name).

Julie destroys the lives of the two men who are obsessed with her: her husband, the lawyer Multrus, who has a heart attack when he learns of Julie's affair with Hupka Junior; and the latter, who kills himself out of shame. The parallel between Multrus's passion for music and obsession with Julie is established in the description of his childhood infatuation with her. Emilie's face reminds him of an ivory sculpture on the scroll of his father's viola d'amore. When Emilie moves to France with her father, the viola becomes Multrus's favourite

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95Čapek-Chod, *Humoreska*, pp. 49-50. Pečavák is the family name of the itinerant musicians.

96Ibid., p. 65.

97Like Hildegarda, Julie's sexuality, hence power over men, is related to her position on the fringe of society: she is described as a 'circus performer'. Čapek-Chod, *Humoreska*, pp. 90, 125. That she wears a man's costume when she plays the 'cello may suggest her usurpation of the male role and power, her sexual self-sufficiency or the androgynous character of the Will.

98Doležel states that Julie is 'a force, rather than an agent'; he regards her narrative role, which consists in 'manipulating others by a forceful, almost demonic presence', as an indication that the text may be classified as Modernist: 'Separately or conjointly, diverse non-agential and, therefore, ultimately, non-human forces determine the fate of the inhabitants of the Modernist fictional world.' Doležel, 'K. M. Čapek-Chod and Modernism', pp. 75, 79.

99Doležel comments that this likeness establishes the 'structural link between the musical and the feminine'. Ibid., p. 72. The choice of the viola d'amore as the instrument with which Multrus falls in love indicates the author's playfulness.
instrument; the narrator comments: 'zamiloval se tak do milostné violy, že k vůli ní opustil housle i nevrátil se k ní'. When Multrus meets Emilie, now called Julie, twenty-five years later, he marries her. Hupka Senior says that Multrus is muddled 'Od ženskýýýy, -- od muziky!'. Hupka Senior’s description of Julie playing the ‘cello compares the seductiveness of music with that of woman and the performance of music with sexual intercourse:

když se jí to mezi koleny rozdovádí, zapomeneš na všechno. Ta ti veme forte, že ti až v křízi zabrní, kantilénu má jako světle hnědá sametka a když se v adážijo dostane do výšky, hraje jako při offertoriem v kostele. To se rozumí, že je to hlavně zas jen instrument po Herdovi otcí; je v něm peklo i nebe. Bez techniky by je ven nedostala a tu má [...] Trvám, že se starej zbáznil spíš do toho čela než do ní.

The old writer who observes Róza through the bakery door, in 'Polichinell Maxj', is fascinated as much by the 'rudo-hnědou hudbou tohoto Benskeho hlasu, znějícího jako z fujary', as by her beauty and semi-nudity. Afterwards, whenever he sees the reproduction of Nefertiti’s head in his study, he hears the 'kontraflétnový tón' of Róza’s voice. Róza is not a musician and is only described once singing; the coarse lyrics summarize the sexual histories of her fellow workers in the bakery. The writer’s admiration for her voice, however, may be interpreted as representing his desire for her.

Neither Madla in Nejzápadnéjší Slovan nor Rezinka in 'Zpověď' naturalistova is a talented singer. Hvězda comments that Madla sings 'jako jiná děvčata té končiny pronikavým hlavovým hlasem'. Her untrained voice and the folk songs she

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100 Čapek-Chod, Humoreska, p. 21.
101 Ibid., p. 90.
102 Ibid., p. 92.
103 Čapek-Chod, 'Polichinell Maxj', p. 236.
104 Ibid., p. 237.
105 Ibid., pp. 286-7.
106 Čapek-Chod, Nejzápadnéjší Slovan, p. 90.
sings suggest her innocence, which is what attracts him to her. The narrator of 'Zpověď' naturalistova' is likewise attracted to the femme enfant Rezinka. He states, 'co bylo nejvlastnějším kouzlem, skutečnou exotikou jejího pohledu, byla to prostě její panenská neporušenost, nevědomost ženskosti'. Her naivety is evident in the nightly concerts she gives at her window in the hope that some local music lover will 'discover' her. The narrator implies that having insinuated himself into her life as her patron, he is able to abuse her trust. His 'appreciation' of her voice disguises his lust. Like the other female musicians or singers, Madla and Rezi's attractiveness for men is represented through music; in their case, however, unconsciousness of sexuality rather than predatory sexuality, as was the case with Tynda and both Julies, constitutes seductiveness.

The identification of women and the reproductive instinct with music and aesthetic ecstasy with onanism suggests mankind's animality and subjection to the Will. For the most part, Čapek-Chod takes literally Schopenhauer's claim, 'We could just as well call the world embodied music as embodied will' and portrays its logical conclusion.

3. Music and the Human Lot

If music represents 'the world in sound as it were, just as the world might be viewed as music in corporeal form', one might expect musicians to represent humanity as embodied Will or music. This interpretation underlies Čapek-Chod's ironic depictions of

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107 For a description of his fascination with her childlike manner, see ibid., p. 93.


109 Ibid., p. 332.

110 Ibid., p. 343.

111 Quoted in Alperson, 'Schopenhauer and Musical Revelation', p. 158.

112 Hübscher, 'In the Tracks of Romanticism', The Philosophy of Schopenhauer in its Intellectual Context, p. 51.
the musician as a typification of the human lot. Musical talent is often portrayed as inherited, suggesting biological determination. That an individual's fate is determined by his character is also hinted at through music; for example, one thinks of Vojtěch in 'Mendelssohnův koncert'. The depiction of the composer in 'Variace Kamila Svitenského' suggests man's lack of free will. In Humoreska, man's behaviour is portrayed as motivated by the reproductive instinct. With Čapek-Chod, as with Schopenhauer, because 'our individual wills are phenomenal, they are determined, and because we sense that we are linked to the noumenal Will, we believe we are free'. The view that man's fate should be depicted as ludicrous rather than tragic also coincides with Schopenhauer's view:

The life of every individual, if we survey it as a whole and in general, and only lay stress upon its most significant features, is really always a tragedy, but gone through in detail it has the character of a comedy. For the deeds and vexations of the day, the restless irritation of the moment, the desires and fears of the week, the mishaps of every hour, are all through chance, which is ever bent upon some jest, scenes of a comedy. But the never-satisfied wishes, the frustrated efforts, the hopes unmercifully crushed by fate, the unfortunate errors of the whole life, with increasing suffering and death at the end, are always a tragedy. Thus, as if fate would add derision to the misery of our existence, our life must contain all the woes of tragedy, and yet we cannot even assert the dignity of tragic characters, but in the broad detail of life must inevitably be the foolish character of a comedy.

The former opera singer Kamenský in 'Jak Ferdinand Sovák pochodil' is described as a vain man who lives in the past, cherishing old trophies and newspaper clippings. His wife indulges his childishness and seeks to protect him from knowledge of their poverty. To this end she is willing to deceive the sculptor Sovák, who gives her money to buy medicine for her

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114 Quoted in Frederick Copleston, 'Schopenhauer and Nietzsche', Friedrich Nietzsche: Philosopher of Culture [1942], London, 1975, p. 145.
husband, whom she claims is ill. Sovák later meets Kamenský returning cheerfully drunk from a wine bar. As well as contrasting the self-indulgent and dependent character of man with the resourceful and practical character of woman, the short story also depicts the transient and insubstantial nature of Fame. At one time adored by the women of Prague society, able to throw away money gambling as easily as he could sing a high C, the tenor retains only his ridiculous pride from the days of his triumph. The narrator does not account for Kamenský’s fate, except to say that his poverty is a result of debts incurred during the time of his success. Kamenský may represent deluded man, ignorant of the cause and nature of his fate and a burden to others in his ignorance.

Karel Svítek in 'Variace Kamil Svitenského' -- Kamil Svitenský is his nom de plume -- has no control over his fate. Svítek’s hopes for a successful career are threatened when he is expelled from the conservatory for reasons not given. The narrator comments that Svítek was sacrificed for the rest of his class, which suggests he was an innocent victim. Twice it seems that Svítek’s situation will improve and that he will no longer have to work as a pianist in a disreputable night club; on both occasions he is disappointed and no change takes place. His former school-friend promises to secure him a position in a military band, but the offer is revoked when the school-friend learns that Svítek is a person 'known to the police' because of his place of work. He does not profit from the public’s admiration for his one composition for the double-bass, Themae con variazioni sul G. He is not even recognized as the composer of the piece; a security guard refuses to let him take a bow on stage, assuming that the shabby Svítek has gone mad. Svítek is blamed when he is not responsible, and cannot take credit for his own creation, for which he is responsible. He tries to put an end to his humiliation by hanging himself from the G string of his double-bass, but his freedom is limited by his character: he

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116 Ibid., p. 40.
believes it is pointless to kill himself without leaving a letter, but the woman to whom the letter should be addressed should never find out that he loves her. So he goes to sleep, leaving the string hanging from the ceiling as a reminder of his final option; for the reader, the string represents Svítek’s lack of freedom. The short story concludes with the news that Svítek will most likely be conscripted; his fate will be determined by the war.

As in ‘Beethovenův večer’, ‘Nejvyšší “H”’ and *Humoreska*, musical talent in ‘Mendelssohnův koncert’ is portrayed as hereditary.117 Vojtěch plays the violin as had his father and uncle; the family is described as ‘muzikantská’.118 The author may suggest that this ability is biologically determined, or he may use it as a metaphor for man’s subjection to instinct. Vojtěch regards his artistic aspirations and his sexual desire for his cousin Cecilie as antipodes; the narrator comments: ‘Marně přirovnával vzlet uměleckého života, jaký mu kynul, s nízkým životem duše, ke kteréž nesměl a nemohl se upoutati’.119 The structure of the story, however, suggests they are parallel. Vojtěch’s violation of his uncle’s death-bed wish that the precious Guarnerius violin be played only in a church for the glory of God is paralleled by his violation of his uncle’s daughter. These two events constitute alternating motifs which

117 The narrator/pianist of ‘Beethovenův večer’ is the son of an organ-builder. Čapek-Chod, ‘Beethovenův večer’, p. 90. The father of the child musician Ludvík in ‘Nejvyšší “H”’ was also a violinist. Ludvík is self-taught, implying an inborn talent. Čapek-Chod, ‘Nejvyšší “H”’, Romanetto, pp. 360-61. The narrator of *Humoreska* states that the Multruses had a ‘hudební genealogii’ and that in academic bourgeois Prague circles ‘vyskytují se takové rodiny s dědičnou resonancí hudební’. Čapek-Chod, *Humoreska*, pp. 14-5. Both Hupka Senior and Junior are gifted violinists. Hupka Junior is also self-taught.


119 Ibid., p. 131.
eventually merge. In answer to the question 'jak naložil i s dcerou i s houslemi strýce Xavera?' the narrator states:

Na obou téhoto odkazech jeho prohřešil se Vojtěch zcela patrně. Dva příbuzné tóny byly toho v mysli jeho, roznícené zimníci, důkazem a stále hladající výčitkou: Zaznění prasklé struny uvnitř houslového pouzdra a dušené losknutí klíče v zámku Cilčíných dveří.

The sound of the string breaking, reminding him of his failure on the stage of the Rudolfinum during his solo debut playing Mendelssohn’s E-minor violin concerto, and the sound of the key turning in Cecilie’s door, indicating her intention to protect herself from him, form a melody in Vojtěch’s head as he falls asleep. Having 'sinned' against both the violin and Cecilie, Vojtěch suffers the consequences: he is no longer able to play the violin; and he marries Cecilie and takes over the family tanning business. The narrator may suggest that while man has no control over his instincts, which determine his life, he is made responsible for them.

The author may also suggest that a man can have only one master: art or a woman. This interpretation is weakened by the narrator’s indications that Vojtěch will never be a great

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120 Furness follows Walter Sokel in claiming that 'the adoption of the principles of musical composition by the other arts is the most dominant characteristic of modernism'. Furness, Wagner and Literature, p. 5. See in particular chapter 1: 'Symbolism and Modernism'. In his discussion of the 'musicalisation of fiction' Furness is concerned with the literary use of the leitmotif. Sokel considers the impact of Kant and Schopenhauer’s aesthetics, particularly as it is manifest in Expressionism. Walter H. Sokel, ‘Music and Existence’, The Writer in Extremis: Expressionism in Twentieth-Century German Literature, Stanford, 1959, pp. 24-54. One might see Wagner’s method of characterizing through the ‘aesthetic attribute, the musical theme which signals an emotional attitude to the audience’, in the uses to which Dvořák’s composition is put in Humoreska; Hupka and Hynek often make appearances whistling or playing bars from the piece. Čapek-Chod, Humoreska, pp. 26, 94-5, 137, 149. Sokel, ‘Music and Existence’, p. 34.

121 Čapek-Chod, ‘Mendelssohnův koncert’, p. 132.

122 Ibid., p. 134.

123 The conclusion to the story is also ironic in that Cecilie is the patron saint of musicians.
musician and that his debacle in the concert hall is predetermined by his character. Vojtěch’s talent is inherited; he is self-taught.\(^{124}\) His attitude to music, however, limits him as an artist. The music of his consumptive uncle Xaver was inspiring for the neighbours, who stood on their balconies to listen to him play; Xaver was such a great musician, Vojtěch is told, that even the stars trembled to his music.\(^{125}\) The balconies remain empty while Vojtěch plays; the reason for this, the narrator implies, is Vojtěch’s pride and individualism. Vojtěch improvises instead of playing his uncle’s compositions. The narrator comments ironically:

Through the depiction of Vojtěch’s debacle, the narrator suggests both that great art has humility and suffering as its sources, and that in his attempt to master his fate, man brings disaster upon himself. If Vojtěch has no power over his character, then he represents man undermined, but not tragically, by his aspirations.

4. Music as Religion

For Schopenhauer the artist was not an Everyman, but a more highly evolved being than the ordinary human being.\(^{127}\) What distinguishes the creative genius from others Schopenhauer describes as a second faculty, an ‘abnormality’, which is evident

\(^{124}\)Ibid., p. 117.

\(^{125}\)Ibid., p. 95.

\(^{126}\)Ibid., p. 101.

\(^{127}\)Terri Graves Taylor, ‘Platonic Ideas, Aesthetic Experience, and the Resolution of Schopenhauer’s "Great Contradiction"’, p. 49.
even in the physical appearance of the gifted individual.\textsuperscript{128} The artist’s greatness consists in his ability to transcend his individuality, perceive and portray the noumenal reality beyond the world of appearances. Because of his gift the artist suffers more than others; Schopenhauer states:

\begin{quote}
in proportion as knowledge attains to distinctness, consciousness is enhanced, pain also increases, and consequently reaches its highest degree in man; and all the more, the more distinctly he knows, and the more intelligent he is. The person in whom genius is to be found suffers most of all.\textsuperscript{129}
\end{quote}

Desmond indicates that Schopenhauer was indebted to Kant’s doctrine of genius;\textsuperscript{130} Sokel also suggests this when he states that for Kant ‘art became an end in itself’: ‘since it was the only realm in which man could be free [of the yoke of empirical necessity and the categorical imperative of moral law] it also became man’s salvation’.\textsuperscript{131} Furness elaborates on the Romantic reverence for music and the musician:

\begin{quote}
The musician, above all the lonely impoverished and misunderstood musician, becomes visionary and seer [...] the supreme portrayal of the Romantic musician, that lonely figure who believed that music was the key to an invisible world, is Wilhelm Wackenroder’s Berlinger, who knew that the nonrepresentational world of music reflected an ultimate reality, but also exacted a fearful penalty: loneliness and alienation from normal life [...] Wackenroder’s praise of music as an ultimate revelatory experience certainly foreshadows Schopenhauer’s claim that music, being non-representational, comes closest of all the arts to
\end{quote}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[129] Schopenhauer, \textit{The World as Will and Representation}, vol. 1, p. 310.
\item[131] Sokel, ‘Music and Existence’, p. 10. Of Schopenhauer’s aesthetics he writes, ‘Music becomes man’s salvation, as art had been earlier for Schiller and the Romantics, because it liberates man from delusion, initiates him into knowledge, and creates meaning in a meaningless universe. It is not a means to redemption; it is redemption itself.’ Ibid., p. 25.
\end{footnotes}
expressing the ultimate essence of existence itself.\textsuperscript{132}

The influence of Schopenhauer's 'revelation' theory of music and the Romantic conception of the artistic genius is also evident in Čapek-Chod's novels and short stories, where music is sometimes described as a religion, demanding a sacrifice and 'purity of heart' from its priests. These musicians are also sufferers; their ability to move their listeners is sometimes related to their experience of suffering. A great musician becomes one with Nature (the Will) in his music and can communicate his awareness to others. This conception of music is usually expressed through characters of secondary importance, so that it is more palatable for the reader. It almost seems as if the author wishes to protect the conception, by ironizing it elsewhere, from the reader's scepticism.

In \textit{Kašpar Lén mstitel}, the consumptive violinist's room is located above the building site so that the music falls to the workers as if from heaven.\textsuperscript{133} The first 'performance' Lén hears ends with the violinist's coughing fit; his window is slammed shut, suggesting that someone is frustrated with the musician for endangering his health by playing at an open window.\textsuperscript{134} It is implied that the musician's desire to play costs him his life; in the courtroom scene the worker Ferdinand Fučík describes seeing the musician's corpse.\textsuperscript{135} Even though the narrator comments that young men of Lén's class have no deep appreciation for music, the construction workers are described as moved by the violinist's music and fate, which perhaps prefigures their own.\textsuperscript{136} They work silently after his coughing fit and stare at his window. Fučík cries when he learns that the musician is dead. The violin is portrayed as expressing the misery in the workers'
lives; it seems to add a refrain, following immediately on dědek fajfka’s description of his blind orphaned grandson: ‘Píseň houslí pláčem žalujíc po vzdusných stupních kráčela s výšin dolů a tu v hloubce vzlykala a doplakala, aby znovu vzlétla ještě výš než předtím.’ The music reminds Lén of his drowned friend Kryštof and the tears of Kryštof’s daughter, driven to prostitution. The violin ‘plays’ Lén’s fate; after hearing the music he realizes, ‘že kleště, srdce jeho svírající, už nikdy se nerozevřou’. Music is used to suggest the pitiable aspect of Lén’s fate.

A similar consumptive violinist is portrayed in ‘Mendelssohnův koncert’; uncle Xaver plays on his balcony at night until he is exhausted and starts to cough. His listeners are likewise moved by his music and terrified by his illness. Xaver Kopicius, however, probably has more in common with Máňa in ‘Dceruška Jairova’ than with the Kašpar Lén violinist. Music and unrequited love kill both of them: Xaver longs for his dead mistress, Cecilie’s mother, and ruins his health in the night air; Máňa tries to seduce Jiří Stach, singing a duet from Dalibor with him although she has been warned by a Prague doctor that singing will be her death.

The violinist Zdenko Löberle, in ‘Beethovenův večer’, dies from an infected shaving cut, rather than from love. Both Zdenko’s brother and the narrator, however, are convinced that

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137 Ibid., p. 69.

138 Ibid., p. 70. Čapek-Chod uses military music and the military band to suggest man’s subjection to Fate. See V třetím dvoře, pp. 116-8, 214. In ‘Žebrák’ references to ‘vojenská hudba’ open and close the story, suggesting that man is caught in a vicious circle. Čapek-Chod, ‘Žebrák’, pp. 49, 63.

139 Čapek-Chod, ‘Mendelssohnův koncert’, p. 95.

140 Čapek-Chod, ‘Dceruška Jairova’, p. 266.

Zdenko's playing kills him. Zdenko seems to suggest this himself when he breaks off from playing Beethoven's F-major sonata and leaves the room saying, 'I shouldn't have done that'; he dies a day later. Zdenko's death is comic; he appears to the narrator in a dream, touches the wound under his chin and states, 'To jsem také neměl dělat'. But even if Zdenko is 'degraded' by his death, his attitude to music is idealized in contrast with that of the professional musicians the narrator hears perform in the Rudolfinum. The narrator states that when Zdenko plays Beethoven, 'počínal si jako obřadník kultu, modlící se k proroku a zakladateli sekty modlitbou, jím samým zůstavenou'. Zdenko is a 'purist', intolerant of any fanciful interpretation of a piece, respectfully deferring to the composer. The narrator says of him,

byl to výkonný nadšenc hudební nejčistšího zrna, jeden ze št'astlivců, jimž hudba dala, co odepřela každému posluchači a každému hudebnímu profesionálu, nebot' tomu tomuto, i když se vyskytne v nejskvělejší formě virtuosní, je úspěch vždycky větší rozkoší než hudba sama. As Xaver is contrasted with the individualist Vojtěch, so Zdenko is with the musicians in the Rudolfinum who perform Beethoven's A-minor sonata as if speed were the crucial factor; the music enthusiasts, checking the time of the performance with their watches, applaud approvingly. The Prague German audience and

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142Čapek-Chod, 'Beethovenův večer', p. 106.
143Ibid., p. 105.
144Ibid., p. 99.
145Ibid., pp. 100-1.
the emotive musicians are satirized as adherents of a religion.\textsuperscript{147} The satire is not directed against the Germans; Zdenko is also German. Nor does it attack the religion of music; it defines it. The presence of an audience is a profanation; the narrator comments, ‘dnes poznávám, co je to vlastně intimita komorního dua. Třetí už je pri ném nadbytečný jako pri milostném dostaveníčku a jestliže má vůbec míti posluchačů krom hráčů -- tedy ve vedlejším pokoji za přivřenymi dveřmi.’\textsuperscript{148} The narrator, but especially the superior musician Zdenko, are the true ‘initiates’. Music, like love, a god or Fate, requires a sacrifice from those it has ‘singled out’.

Ludvík in ‘Nejvyšší "H"’ is the only musician (aside from Hildegarda) who neither suffers nor fails. Because Ludvík is a child and the short story is a fairytale, the conception of music elaborated is sheltered from the reader’s scepticism.\textsuperscript{149} Ludvík can be seen as the divine incarnation of Music. He may inherit his musical ability from his natural father, who also played the violin, but he is described rather as the heir of the beggar musician who asks for a roof under which he can die and in return bequeathes his ancient violin to Ludvík.\textsuperscript{150} Amazed by Ludvík’s untrained talent, the father wonders if the violin is not magic

\textsuperscript{147}The narrator comments, ‘pokud se týče pánů, vůbec každý příchozí byl jenom dalším svědkem, že pro komorního Beethovenu není v Praze zájmu než mezi pražskými Němcí. Sotva že některý referent českého listu byl výjimkou’. Čapek-Chod, ‘Beethovenův večer’, p. 110. For descriptions of the audience as adherents of a faith, see ibid., pp. 112-3.

\textsuperscript{148}Ibid., p. 118.

\textsuperscript{149}Walker claims that Schopenhauer overlooked the fact that ‘Music is the only art form in which it is possible to be an infant prodigy’. Walker states that music is ‘ideal for the expression of the emotional, plastic world of the child’. Alan Walker, ‘Schopenhauer and Music’, \textit{Times Literary Supplement}, 3 January 1975, p. 11. One might suggest that Čapek-Chod was aware of this possibility. In \textit{V třetím dvore} the narrator describes the blind child RudolfeK’s fascination with a music box. Čapek-Chod, \textit{V tretím dvore}, pp. 176-8.

\textsuperscript{150}The narrator comments, ‘tak se stal Ludvík právoplatným dědicem staršíčkého muzikanta’. Čapek-Chod, ‘Nejvyšší "H"’, p. 360.
and the beggar a spirit. The father decides that Ludvík’s
talent is a gift from God. The abbot who hears Ludvík perform
during the mass celebrating the Assumption, also believes that
the boy’s talent is a sign he is one of God’s chosen. The
narrator, with slight irony, represents Ludvík as kin to Nature.
He can represent the natural world in his music and communicate
this to his listeners; the father realizes that Ludvík is
portraying the rising of the moon in his improvisations. The
woods, to which he escapes from the monastery to play, are his
first violin teacher. His composition ‘Tanec ohnivých skřítků’
originates as a competition between Ludvík and a ‘cricket-
violinist’, accompanied by the sound of wood burning in a
stove. His oneness with Nature is also suggested by the
description of the trance into which he falls while playing:

Skočná zprvu potichu hraná posedla Ludvíka za
chvílik až divoce a rozehrála v něm každou žílku,
vířící v něm se strunami o závod [...] Hrál a hrál s
cvrčkem o závod, až mu houslíky v rukou jen svištely
a nevěděl ani, jak dlouho hraje [...].

The purity of the eponymous note is compared with a ray of
sunlight. Music is associated with the source of light and life,
but not with the Christian God; in keeping with the anti-clerical
tone of the short story, Ludvík listens impatiently to Father

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151 Ibid., p. 361.
152 Ibid., p. 363. The author’s attitude to such a possibility
would seem to be sceptical. In ‘Páchlíček a čert’ the devil’s
plough makes the sounds of a ‘kládynet’ (clarinet) as it is
dragged over the field. Čapek-Chod, ‘Páchlíček a čert’,
154 Ibid., pp. 361-2.
155 Ibid., p. 367. The narrator suggests ironically that the
woods made a poet out of Jiří Stach. Čapek-Chod, ‘Dceruška
Jairova’, p. 213.
157 Ibid., pp. 370-1.
Julius's description of the note as the sound of the Lord's love. Under the cover of a fairytale is revealed a conception of music elsewhere only suggested or ironized: it is the force of Nature, embodied most distinctly in individuals who are 'instinctual', women and children, or those who, through suffering, have been cleansed of egotism. In Čapek-Chod's depictions of music and musicians the apparently contradictory aspects of Schopenhauer's aesthetics are portrayed: music represents the Will, manifest in the determined phenomenal world to which the individual belongs; and the artist sometimes momentarily transcends the demands of the Will by becoming one with it in aesthetic experience.

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158Ibid., p. 378.
Conceptions of Woman

1. Introduction

In ‘Věda, erotik a metafora v románě’, a polemical article addressed to Šalda, Čapek-Chod writes:

Mým povoláním jako romanopisec jest demaskovatí hysterku, nymfu, polopannu, zkrátka intersexuální ženu, o níž by se to nejméně mohlo myslití, kde ji dopadnu. Podáří-li se mi, otevřít mladému muži tím směrem oči, tak zhusta a tak valně zaslepene bubřící sentimentalitou, gongorovskými, z hrdla lezoucími odulostmi a přepjatostmi o metafysiologické ženě, budu si to klásti za velkou zaslouhu.¹

The statement indicates that he interprets some of his female characters as suffering from psychological disorders which are manifested sexually. The author expects that these characters will strike the reader as abnormal, if not perverse; and the responses of contemporary critics indicate that the characters were indeed perceived in this light. For example, in his review of Nové patero, Arne Novák describes both Anna (of the ‘Antonín Vondrejc’ short stories) and Mařka (Kašpar Lén mstitel) as hysterical.² The late-twentieth-century reader is struck rather by the satire which informs Čapek-Chod’s depictions of woman than by the peculiarity of the ‘psycho-sexual’ disorders portrayed. The female characters in Čapek-Chod’s works transcend the conceptions of woman which he satirizes: the femme enfant, femme fatale, New Woman and ‘fallen woman’. By revealing the inadequacy of these conceptions, the author suggests the anxieties that give rise to male definitions of woman; thus, he may be interpreted as commenting on the fin-de-siècle male crisis of identity.³

In the ascription of similar qualities to characters of different classes, occupations, nationality and levels of education, the author indicates his understanding of the feminine. He perceives the prototypical woman as practical, sensual and assertive. These qualities do not manifest woman’s selfishness or narcissism: they derive, at least in part, from her biological function. In this sense, woman is dominated by her sex organs, but no more so than man, whose behaviour is often depicted as determined by his sexuality and his dependence on woman. The representation of woman, by contrast, approaches that of a self-sufficient being. The author or his narrator rarely implies criticism of a female character from a moral standpoint; he suggests that the actions of woman which might be regarded as ‘immoral’, for example, concealing the fact that she is pregnant from a prospective suitor, are determined by need, or by man’s behaviour. Indeed, the implied author’s contempt for male vanity and irresponsibility is expressed by female characters, a social outcast like the prostitute Rezi ('Otec'), or the childlike Madlenka, the temporary object of Rozkoč’s lust (Vilém Rozkoč). Woman’s essentially active nature, however, precludes any definition of her as victim. Her ‘activity’ is represented in particular by her transformations: from child to sexually mature woman, from unattainable object of desire to ‘fallen woman’ or mother. The capacity for transformation of Čapek-Chod’s female characters in part belies the attempt to interpret them under different headings; his conception of the feminine underlies the portrayal of various ‘types’.

In representations of the femme enfant and femme fatale, the author ironizes male misconceptions of woman. He heightens this irony by embodying the distorted conception in sister-doubles. In depictions of New Woman, the author rejects the contemporaneous notion that intellectual inclinations in a woman are an indication of unnatural barrenness. He also satirizes a feminist interpretation of woman as superior to man in her indifference to ‘animal’ desire, as exemplified in Felix Tèver’s
(1852-1932) *Duše nezakotvené* (1908). 'Emancipated' female characters like Kateřina Vokáčová ('Snivá Kateřina'), Máňa Ulliková (*Turbina*) and Jiřina Menotová (*Jindrové*) are portrayed as dominated by desire, despite their intellectual ambitions or achievements. Female sensuality and vitality are epitomized in representations of the fallen woman, in particular the Jewish fallen woman (Anna in Antonín Vondrajc). In the representation of these 'outsiders' the author treats the masculine identity crisis most extensively.5

2. The Femme Enfant

Although she was of interest to his contemporaries, Čapek-Chod does not frequently represent the *femme enfant* in his works, but when he does the author either satirizes literary conventions and popular taste, or the male misunderstanding of woman.6 The depiction of Anička ('Frantúv román'), the beggar's daughter with whom the eponymous village 'idiot' falls in love, constitutes a parody of the literary type. The narrator ironizes the impact of the beloved's strange, diseased gaze: 'I do temného srdce blbého Franty jich zâf nalezla skulinu, ale on neměl onoho prismatu jiných, Šťastných lidí, aby ji byl rozložil v nadheru sedmi barev'.7 The description of Franta's small, pale blue eyes, 'tonoucí v úžasu', spying on Anička's eyes, is probably intended to parody the sentimental conception of love.8 This conception

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4See, for example, the contrast between Iza and her betrothed in 'Mezi břehy', *Duše nezakotvené*. On the perception of female passionlessness, see: R. v. Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis* [1886], London, 1901, pp. 14-15; and Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy*, pp. 21-22, 45.


6Compare with Otakar Auředníček, 'Karriéra', *Intimní dramata* (1895); Růžena Jesenská, *Román dítěte* (1906); Božena Viková-Kunětická, *Holička* (1905); or Zeyer, 'Zvěst lásky z provence', *Z letopisů lásky* II (1889).

7Čapek-Chod, 'Frantúv román', p. 35.

8Ibid., pp. 35-6.
is ironized further by the description of Franta lifting Anička’s eyelids as she lies frozen in the graveyard by her father: Franta identifies her by her lifeless eyes.\footnote{Ibid., p. 43.}

Maryša Zapletalka, in ‘Němáč’, also constitutes a representation of the femme enfant; she is barely explored as a conventional type. The portrayal of the innocent sixteen-year-old Maryša, compared, for example, with that of Sefa in Viková-Kunětická’s (1862-1934) Holčička (1905), seems superficial and unrealistic. In her lack of resistance or resentment towards her mother, who beats her for talking with a soldier, Maryša resembles a child rather than an adolescent; it is her mother’s blows that teach her the significance of the lewd glances men have given her.\footnote{Ibid., p. 70.} Until she develops into an inconsiderate flirt while working at the factory, Maryša is portrayed as a child, ‘bez rozumu, lehkomyslného a nade vše nevinného, na němž ani povrch nebyl zkažen’\footnote{Ibid., p. 84.}. Neither the psyche nor the sexuality of the child is explored in the character of Maryša. As first introduced, her character conforms to the ‘ideal’ sheltered young girl of the period, as described, for example, in Stefan Zweig’s memoirs.\footnote{Stefan Zweig, ‘Eros Matutinus’, The World of Yesterday [Die Welt von Gerstern, 1941], London, 1953, p. 79.}

Maryša does not exhibit the ‘freedom from sexual inhibition’ associated with the femme enfant; nor does she meet with the suffering and the early death typical of the type.\footnote{Edward Timms, ‘The "Child-Woman": Kraus, Freud, Wittels, and Irma Karczewska’, Vienna 1900. From Altenberg to Wittgenstein, E. Timms and Ritchie Robertson (eds), Edinburgh, 1990, p. 91.} She enters into the role of untroubled motherhood. By meting out a happy destiny to this character, the author satirizes the conception of the doom awaiting the femme enfant. He also satirizes male misunderstanding of female sexuality: Němáč, Maryša’s future
husband, is mystified by her flirtatious behaviour. Far from discerning her shallow, self-centred, somewhat cruel nature, Němák idealizes her. The progress of Němák’s disillusion constitutes the plot of the story.

In Vilém Rozkoč, Čapek-Chod treats adolescent sexuality in greater depth with the portrayal of the *femme enfant* Madlenka. When first introduced, the seamstress Madlenka is more androgynous in appearance than Maryša. Her boyish torso resembles that of Skřivánková (Antonín Vondřejc). Her red hair and freckles align her with other Čapek-Chod characters whose ‘desirability’ derives from some unusual, conventionally unattractive feature. Madlenka’s ‘charm’ also derives from her animality; the narrator comments: ‘hodila by se i do družiny Panovy a proč Panovy? Řekněme raději Vološovy, snadno by mohla být tohoto boha dcerkou anebo lesní ženkou, to formálně animální ve své tváři má’. Before losing her virginity to Rozkoč, Madlenka is described as ‘innocent’; that is, she does not flirt and she does not know about sexual intercourse. The transformation from child to woman occurs instantly with sexual intercourse, a brutal and ‘unjust’ act; the narrator states that she becomes a woman, ‘jíž se po jejím právu právě stalo hrozné bezpráví, jakéž je lůsem všech žen, mají-li se jimi státi’. Although as a ‘child’ she is ignorant, Madlenka experiences sexual desire, which impels her to pursue Rozkoč. She is the victim of instinct and of his brutality; at the same time, she instigates their relations. She also expresses the narrator’s judgment of the arrogant Rozkoč when she curses him as he tries

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15Madla, in Nejzápadnější Slovan, is a red-head, as is Cecilie (‘Mendelssohnův koncert’), the prostitute in ‘Beethovenův večer’ and Iza (Antonín Vondřejc). Pavlina (V třetím dvoře) has a birthmark, as does Miss Reed (Antonín Vondřejc). Elvira (‘Znova a lépe’) and Mařka (Kaspar Lên mstitel) are stout.


17Ibid., p. 67.

18Ibid., pp. 65-66.
to pay her for her services as a model. The moral superiority of the *femme enfant* (and of woman in general in Čapek-Chod's works) derives from the fact that she suffers, on account of Nature and at the hand of man. Like Maryša and Madla (*Nejzápadnější Slovan*), Madlenka is spared the fate of the *femme enfant*, maturing into a beautiful and self-confident woman who rejects Rozkoč.  

The adrognynous ideal of beauty admired by the Pre-Raphaelites is satirized in the depiction of the ballerina Skřivánková, who dances the role of Prince Modráček in 'Král Ječmínek a královna Pšenička' (*Antonín Vondrejc*). Like Madlenka, the *femme enfant* Skřivánková reveals the weaknesses of the male protagonist. The red-headed 'child', 'ještě spíš polohocha než už polohenušky', wins the audience's praise, rather than the composer or Vondrejc, the author of the libretto on which the pantomime is based. She is physically stronger than Vondrejc, and sexually assertive, offering her lips for the poet to kiss and taking his arm after they leave the theatre. Vondrejc's attempts to catch glimpses of her flesh as she dances reveal the poet's lustful attraction to her. Skřivánková also flatters the poet's vanity; Vondrejc is so intoxicated on hearing his verse recited by Skřivanková that he does not immediately perceive the girl's intention to make use of him. 

Likewise Žofka highlights the physical and intellectual 'deficiencies' of her lover Armin Frey. Unlike the other *femme enfant* characters, Žofka does not have a frail or childlike

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19 Ibid., p. 78.  
23 Ibid., pp. 11, 15.  
24 Ibid., p. 9.  
25 Ibid., pp. 13-14, 17.
figure. Her height and large bosom contrast with Frey’s dwarfish, deformed body; however, her youth, childlike face and naivety are emphasized. Her aggressive nature is suggested not only by her physical appearance (for example, her nipples are described as ‘drzé’), but also by her first visit to Frey’s flat, after which she refuses to leave. This stubborness is also childlike. It may be her simplicity and seemingly transparent nature that baffle Frey. He is unable to interpret her behaviour at the moment she decides to accept his money and leave him to his death in the Ullik family home. Frey cannot determine whether Žofka acts out of cunning or the instinct of self-preservation; this failure in discernment is fatal for him.

3. The Femme Fatale
As in the case of the femme enfant, representations of the femme fatale satirize conventional attitudes and, through grotesque exaggeration, man’s dependence on woman. In The Romantic Agony (1933), Praz identifies the main characteristics of the femme fatale as she is represented in nineteenth-century literature: she is beautiful, cruel and unattainable, inspiring fear and horror, but also inflaming a desire which she does not satisfy; she is vampiric, killing the male whom she loves, and derives pleasure from the spectacle of suffering. This type of femme fatale is embodied in the character of paní Dragopulos in Zeyer’s Jan Maria Plojhar (1891).

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26Čapek-Chod, Turbina, pp. 433-41.
27Ibid., p. 230.
28Ibid., p. 540.
29One notes the irony in the choice of names: Žofka, wisdom; and Frey, suggesting freedom (frei).
30Praz, The Romantic Agony, see pp. 215-300.
31Antonín Vondrejc can be interpreted as a parody of Jan Maria Plojhar.
The *femme fatale* in *Nejzápadnější Slovan* is described as conventionally beautiful: pale skin, slender neck, noble nose, lips like a rosebud, eyes which burn like a thousand stars. She has blond hair, rather than the standard titian or black for the *femme fatale*. The narrator ironizes Hvězda's attraction to this beauty: having described her as a bird of paradise in a primeval forest, Hvězda adds, 'Nu vezměte si z toho, co chcete, takové to bylo, já jsem sice nikdy v trópech nebyl, ale ...'. Her standard scornful laughing gaze indicates power and awareness of her power over men. In Hvězda's desire for a woman who humiliates him the narrator ironizes man's passive and masochistic sexuality. Moreover, in representing the male thus, Čapek-Chod diverges from the contemporary sociological and medical identification of masochism with woman. The first chapter of the novel, however, also constitutes a parody of the Decadent stylization of sexuality. This is apparent in the account of the *femme fatale*’s attempt to seduce Hvězda.

Masochistic desire for a dominating, ‘man-devouring’, woman is also ironized through Bureš’s obsession with Elvira ('Znova

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33 Ibid., p. 28.

34 Ibid., p. 12.


36 See, for example, Jiří Karásek's 'Smrt Salomina', *Posvátné ohně* (1911), or Miroslav Rutte’s *Maria z Magdaly* (1908).

a lépe'). Bureš appears even more foolish and feeble in that the object of his desire, Elvira, is a most unlikely femme fatale. Her name sounds slightly ridiculous, as is suggested by Bureš’s private nickname for her; the narrator comments ironically, 'nenazýval Bureš Elviru ve svých horoucích modlitbách k ní jinak leč "Elzevirou", ačkoli věděl, že je to nesmyslná pošetilost a že "elzevirem" rozumí se určitý druh starých tisků'. The baroness is not pretty; in fact, she is more hirsute than the men who blush under her gaze. The narrator draws attention to her large feet. She has a stronger physical constitution than the timid Bureš. In their relations, he has the weaker, 'female’, role. Her aggression, as suggested by the fact that she proposes marriage to him and not vice versa, is apparent throughout. In his desire for this female colossus, Bureš is portrayed as ludicrous, helpless and diminutive; thus the narrator underlines man's enslavement to instinct and masochistic dependence on woman.

By having Elvira as Austrian-German and Bureš as Czech, the author comments on the cultural, social and political position of his fellow nationals; the Czech sense of inferiority and subservience to German power is portrayed ironically.

4. Sisters

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39Ibid., p. 29.

40Ibid., p. 41.

41Ibid., p. 63.

42Ibid., p. 42.

43Ibid., p. 37.

44When the short story was rewritten and performed on stage (Beglý samokres, 1911), contemporaries perceived the conflict between the nationalities as one of the main themes of the play.
The author highlights, by doubling, a conception of the female in sister pairs. Man's misunderstanding of woman, which Čapek-Chod often represents as fatal, thus is also highlighted: man is unable to fathom one or the other manifestation of the same essence. In 'Znova a lépe', the blind Klára serves as a foil to her younger sister Elvira; Klára constitutes an example of the 'deformed sibling' topos.\(^4\) Klára's presence provides a distorted reflection of Elvira's behaviour. Klára appears on two occasions. She is present when Elvira, 'moved' by Bureš's violin playing, first kisses him; Klára's mistrustful curiosity, the narrator suggests, provides an unheeded warning to the foolish Bureš.\(^5\) Klára's second appearance following the couple's quarrel emphasizes her function. Bureš recalls her face as a mask, materializing at the critical moment of the scene.\(^6\) The despairing gestures with which she seeks her sister's body on the floor add a sombre note to the otherwise comic-ironic tone of the short story.\(^7\)

Pairs of sisters also occur in 'Zpověď naturalistova', Turbina, Antonín Vondrejc and Jindrové. In 'Zpověď naturalistova', the hunchback sister Margl may function as a distorted double of the object of the narrator's obsession, Rezinka. Margl's coughing fits, culminating in hysteria, prefigure Rezinka's despair following her seduction by the

\(^4\) Compare with the depiction of Josefinka's crippled sister Katuska in Neruda's 'Týden v tichém domě' (Povídky malostranské, 1878). Aarne and Thompson summarize the 'Beautiful and the Ugly Twin' type of folktale thus: 'A queen is childless and gets from a witch advice how to have a child, but she breaks a condition connected with the advice and has two girls, a very beautiful one and one deformed (with an animal's head). The ugly sister always assists the handsome one, and is at last to marry a prince. On the wedding day she is transformed and becomes as pretty as her sister.' Antti Aarne, The Types of the Folktale. A Classification and Bibliography, translated by Stith Thompson, 2nd revised edn, Helsinki, 1961, p. 247.

\(^5\) 'Čapek-Chod, 'Znova a lépe', p. 44.

\(^6\) Ibid., pp. 56-7.

\(^7\) Compare with the grotesque function of the blind grandson in Čapek-Chod, Kašpar Lén mstitel, pp. 106-7, 112-13.
narrator. This is suggested in that the author represents female desire as a violent process which distorts the body. On a more obvious level, Margl’s deformed body manifests the absurd and devastating workings of Fate. The outcome of events in Turbina reveals the similarities between seeming opposites, the New Woman Máňa and her sister Tynda. In the latter, the narrator depicts an unlikely femme fatale. Although she uses and torments men, Tynda is also subject to instinct. In her the narrator ironizes male conceptions of unattainable woman.

The narrator of Jindrové indicates that the hunchback sister constitutes Jiřina’s double: ‘Bylat’ sestře filozofce podobná jako její obraz ve vydatém zrcadle’. The hunchback supports the student of aesthetics Jiřina by selling flowers; thus, the sister represents Jiřina’s ‘roots’, her ties to Nature and biological processes. For Čapek-Chod, woman’s work in a garden indicates her material, instinct-driven character. That the sister may personify instinct is suggested by her watchful presence during Jindra Junior’s visits to the cottage by the river. On the night that Jiřina asks Jindra to return to her after the others have gone to sleep, their conversation is interrupted by the sister’s cry, ‘Dost!’ The exclamation refers to the garden water supply which the pair has been replenishing, as well as to the mounting sexual tension between them. The cry also expresses Jiřina’s unspoken plea to Jindra: ‘Šetři mě! ... Zhynu však, budeš-li déle otálet.’

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50Ibid., p. 326.
51Čapek-Chod, Jindrové, p. 165.
52One thinks, for example, of panímáma Tichá in ‘Němák’, both Ilona in ‘Herbanimal’, Marysa Zavazelka in ‘Kdo s koho’, and Madlenka in Vilém Rozkoč.
53Čapek-Chod, Jindrové, p. 187.
54Ibid., p. 186. The sister leads Jindra from the riverbank, where he had intended to commit suicide; thus, she also acts as an instrument of Fate. Ibid., p. 300.
A contrast is established between the two sets of sisters Vondrejc encounters (Antonín Vondrejc). This contrast is underlined by the names of the characters (Mirza/Ada, Anna/Iza). For Vondrejc, Mirza represents the ideal, and Anna, the material, woman. Vondrejc comments: 'Anna a Mirza?! Incommensurable! Láska nebeská a pozemská'. Through the sister-doubles, Ada and Iza, the narrator ironizes Vondrejc's conceptions of woman and reveals the poet's self-deception.

In her arrogance and self-serving behaviour, the Romanian-born Mirza is a typical femme fatale. Her exotic origins recall those of Zeyer's paní Dragopulos, whose legal father was a Romanian prince; her actual father was a Gipsy. Mirza's beauty is conventional, except for her intensely red eyebrows. The narrator satirizes the male perception of the femme fatale, together with Czech nationalism, through the portrayal of Mirza's ardour for the Czechs. According to her father's wishes, Mirza has been brought up a German, while her deformed twin Ada has been brought up a Czech. Vystyd comments resentfully, 'pro nás bela dost' dobrá křevá Ada, Němcům věnovaná boheňa Mirza'. Mirza becomes acquainted with Vondrejc for 'patriotic' purposes; she wishes to be aligned with the Czech national faction. Ada insists, however, that her sister is merely seeking a diversion in her relations with the poet. Ada's role consists in holding a distorted mirror to the femme fatale. The sisters are identical from the waist up; but they can be distinguished in that one of

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56Julius Zeyer, Jan Maria Plojhar, Prague, 1891, p. 56.

57Čapek-Chod, Antonín Vondrejc, p. 59. The reader expects that the ode which Vondrejc writes to her beauty, originally entitled 'Nedostižný ideál', is correspondingly banal. Ibid., p. 56. In this poem Vondrejc gives a definition of beauty - 'nenadálý, nejlépe nahlý objev k naplnění lidské touhy po dokonalejším' (ibid.) - which is similar to that proposed by the narrator of Větrník: 'nenadálým splněním podvědomě touhy po nejodkonalejším'. Čapek-Chod, Větrník, p. 49.

58Čapek-Chod, Antonín Vondrejc, p. 45.

59Ibid., pp. 58-59.
Ada's legs is shorter than the other. Mirza's 'hidden' defect, that is, her deceit, may be represented by Ada's physical defect. Vondrejc's lack of understanding of Mirza is portrayed in his courtship of both sisters; the narrator states of Vondrejc, 'sám sebe podezříval, že jest asi spíš zblázněn do oslnivého typu štefanovičovského vůbec, než do jediné Mirzy'.

Male misconception of the femme fatale is further ironized in the description of Mirza's fate. Like Vondrejc, she lives unmarried with her partner, her one-time betrothed Schreckenstein. The narrator turns on its head the 'inaccessible' nature of the femme fatale; Mirza's availability is represented by her occupation on leaving Mirostřez: she becomes a travelling performer, singing to the piano accompaniment of Schreckenstein. In the Fin de siècle, the female performer's social status was dubious.

5. The Jewish Woman
The author repeatedly draws attention to the 'Jewishness' of the second set of sister pairs in Antonín Vondrejc. Contemporary critics also saw in Anna a study of a racial type. Anna and Iza together constitute one aspect of Vondrejc's conception of femininity: sexual, material woman, in contrast with the 'ideal'

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60 Ibid., p. 57.
61 Ibid.
62 Čapek-Chod, Antonín Vondrejc, p. 43.
63 Ibid.
65 See: Arne Novák, 'Román Antonína Vondrejce'.
woman, represented by Mirza/Ada. In the depiction of Anna and Iza, the author makes the stock association of sensuality with the Jewess, evident, for example, in Otto Weininger's *Geschlecht und Charakter* (1903). Unlike Weininger, Čapek-Chod does not express loathing for the 'type' he presents. Moreover, while contemporaries and the author himself may have perceived Anna as the 'quintessential' Jewess, she has the qualities evident in most of Čapek-Chod's non-Jewish female characters.

Like Pavlína (*V třetím dvoře*) Anna is not intellectual. Like Elvira, she is stronger than her male partner. Like both of these female characters, Anna is sexually assertive, as is indicated, for example, by her violent kisses. Like the prostitute who judges Chocholouš in 'Otec', and the model Madlenka who judges Vilém Rozkoř, Anna also wields moral authority in relation to the male; she insists that Vondrejc has a responsibility to marry her. Her 'proposal' of marriage indicates her practical nature, further evinced by her intention to recover some of the money she has spent on clothes for Vondrejc for the wedding, and by her sale of the goose which her uncle gives her as a wedding present. Her practicality, even cunning, is associated with her appreciation of money, represented as a 'Jewish' trait. Most of Čapek-Chod's female characters, however, are represented as practical and concerned about money. The pregnant serving-maid in 'Na valech', for example, attempts to find a husband who can provide a name for her child; this motif occurs also in 'Nedonošený ...'. Pavlína contrives to marry the elderly postal official in order to secure

66As noted above, however, Mirza's 'ethereal' nature is qualified by the depiction of Ada.


68Ibid., p. 114.

69Ibid., p. 95.

70Ibid., pp. 378, 457. Máňa also proposes to Arnošt Zouplna (*Turbina*).

71Ibid., pp. 117, 256.
financial and social respectability for herself. Such characteristics demonstrate Anna’s ‘will to life’ in contrast to Vondrejc’s passivity.\textsuperscript{72} The order of publication of the original Vondrejc short stories draws attention to this difference between Anna and Vondrejc.\textsuperscript{73}

Like Cecilie (‘Mendelssohnův koncert’) who snuffs out the candle so that her cousin will not see her arousal, Anna is modest.\textsuperscript{74} Anna has never allowed Vondrejc to see her naked.\textsuperscript{75} Anna is not a femme fatale, as is indicated by the fact that she is neither vain nor conscious of her beauty. The narrator comments on her, from Vondrejc’s perspective: ‘Jako taková Michelangelova Noč bez uvědomění a bez marnivosti - smutná.’\textsuperscript{76} She is a sensual being. Vondrejc perceives her as, ‘tato semitka, beze vzletu pro věci mimo erotiku ležící’;\textsuperscript{77} ‘tato překrvená židovka, na jejíž horoucí smyslnost nalétí jako mol a nyní se polospálen svíjí’.\textsuperscript{78} Although she prides herself with not ‘looking’ Jewish, Vondrejc regards her sensuality to be evident in her ‘Jewish’ features; the narrator comments: ‘Jindy, když v takovém okamžiku výrušení z básnivé nálady utkvěl na nejsemitštější známce její rasy, na téhle překrvených, pro plnost nedovřených pyskách, vypadajících jako hluboká pečet střebavých vášní Anniných — kterak dovedl být sprostým tento

\textsuperscript{72}‘odhodlání k životu’. Ibid., p. 345. Despite her strength, however, Anna is also represented as childlike. She cries with the abandon of a child. Ibid., p. 121.

\textsuperscript{73}In the first story, ‘Antonína Vondrejce státní stipendium’, for example, Anna stays awake all night worrying when her lover will return home. In the second story, ‘Poslední večer Antonína Vondrejce’, Vondrejc is bedridden and tormented by a fear of death. Each night he lies awake waiting for Anna to return home from work; only her presence can banish his fear (Nové patero, 1910).

\textsuperscript{74}Čapek-Chod, ‘Mendelssohnův koncert’, p. 131.

\textsuperscript{75}Čapek-Chod, Antonín Vondrejc, p. 16.

\textsuperscript{76}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{77}Ibid., p. 90.

\textsuperscript{78}Ibid., p. 119.
lyrický básník! Again, with respect to her sensual nature, Anna does not differ from other female characters in Čapek-Chod’s works, except in that she represents the epitome of the desirable woman. The miller’s daughter Markytka, Rozkoč’s lover in Řešany, for example, and Sóňa in ‘Liberum arbitrium’, are also described as passionate and sensual. Košťál, in ‘Kdo s koho’, is as much a slave to his passion for Maryša, as Vondrejc is to his desire for Anna.

Anna’s nature is parodied in the character of her sister Iza. Like Mirza and Ada, Anna and Iza are so similar in appearance that Vondrejc at first mistakes Iza for Anna; thus, one can assume that the character of Iza is intended to comment on that of Anna. Only Iza’s complexion, her blue eyes and red hair distinguish the model physically from the pub waitress. Iza’s occupation identifies her as an ‘immoral’ woman like the prostitute. As a pub waitress, Anna’s social position is similar to that of Iza’s; women of such occupations were considered likely to resort to prostitution. Vondrejc regards the sisters as two predators, one phlegmatic, the other choleric. The distinction between them is one of degree rather than of kind. Anna’s characteristics are present in extreme form in Iza: ‘ruthless’ practicality, a certain black humour, passion tending towards hysteria, superstition, sexual aggression. The main

79 Ibid., p. 268.
81 Čapek-Chod, Antonín Vondrejc, p. 82.
82 Ibid., p. 83.
83 See, for example, the attempts of the customers to seduce Hana in Marie Majerová’s Panenství (1907). On the vulnerability of waitresses, see ‘Pryč s prostitucí z hostinců!’, Naše doba, 5 (1898), pp. 767-8; and ‘Instituce čišnic a prostituce’, Ženská revue, 4 (1909), June, p. 136. For a rating of occupations according to risk in nineteenth-century Britain, see Linda Mahood, The Magdalenes. Prostitution in the Nineteenth Century, London and New York, 1990, p. 73.
distinction between them is that Iza's sexuality is unproductive; thus, according to contemporaneous attitudes, she is represented as perverse. Anna's desire, however, is likewise not consciously directed towards reproduction. She 'gives' herself to Vondrejc in order to save him from suicide.\textsuperscript{85}

Like Anna, Iza is defined by her sexuality, as is suggested in the description of Vondrejc's first encounter with her; he sees her as she poses nude for the sculptor Klauda. In appearance, however, in her consciousness of her own beauty and in her behaviour, she resembles more the conventional \textit{femme fatale}. The description of her hair, for example, recalls that of paní Dragopulos.\textsuperscript{86} Iza's sexual aggression is indicated by her pursuit of Vondrejc; until the poet falls ill, she pesters him whenever Anna leaves the two of them alone in the flat.\textsuperscript{87} The narrator suggests that Iza indulges in 'perverse' acts with the Decadent art critic Nečásek. Anna is amazed to hear the reason why Iza has run away from her husband, commenting, 'Takhle nebude te mit žádný děti do smrti', and 'Já bych to neudělala za půl světa'.\textsuperscript{88} It is revealed that the effete Nečásek has bitten her.\textsuperscript{89} Anna, however, is not horrified by Iza's confidences; the two sisters laugh over the account.\textsuperscript{90} Iza refuses to submit to Nečásek's demands until he signs over half his property to her.\textsuperscript{91} One can hardly distinguish between Anna's cunning and Iza's stubborn practicality. The physical and psychological similarity between Iza and Anna illustrates the proximity between conceptions of the \textit{femme fatale} and 'natural' or instinct-driven

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{85}Ibid., p. 89.
\item \textsuperscript{86}They both have the same thick, coarse red hair with shades of gold. Zeyer, \textit{Jan Maria Plojhar}, p. 51; Čapek-Chod, \textit{Antonín Vondrejc}, p. 370.
\item \textsuperscript{87}Ibid., p. 273.
\item \textsuperscript{88}Ibid., p. 369.
\item \textsuperscript{89}Ibid., p. 388.
\item \textsuperscript{90}Ibid., p. 369.
\item \textsuperscript{91}Ibid.
\end{itemize}
woman. Both reveal man’s fear of female sexuality and concomitant fear of powerlessness.

Whereas in Antonín Vondrejč two conceptions of woman are represented by the sister pairs, in 'Dceruška Jairova' they are combined in one character, Irma-Máňa, the younger sister of the Jewish war-profiteer Artur Stein. Whereas Anna represents the prototypical woman, Irma-Máňa represents the divided soul, like Čapek-Chod's male Jewish characters. Her pair of names, identifying her associations with both German and Czech nationalities, suggests the duality within her nature; acoustically, it constitutes a variation on the names of the sister pairs, Anna/Iza and Ada/Mirza. Like Anna and Iza, Irma-Máňa's first language is German; she speaks German with her brother, that is, within the private sphere of the home. By insisting that her brother speak Czech with her in the presence of others and that he address her as 'Máňa' rather than Irma, she demonstrates her Czech patriotism. She identifies Czech with her public self and with sexual maturity. Irma-Máňa is an adolescent, which for the central character Jiří Stach and for the narrator means both child and woman, a femme enfant. From the photograph which Stein shows him, Stach learns that as a young child Irma-Máňa had been obese. Under the care of a doctor, she has lost weight; as a result of this treatment her health had been destroyed. Irma-Máňa's mind has also been moulded at a boarding school, which has not eradicated, however, her errors in the use of Czech. An ethereal, Czech-speaking 'lady' has been sculpted from a fat, German-speaking child. As well as her childish self, Irma-Máňa has also rejected her Jewish identity; addressing his sister and Stach, Stein states: 'A nemám pravdu, že je to hezká židovka? [...] ona to nerada slyší, ne to, že by byla hezká, ale, že je židovka ... chtěla bys být radši snad ošklivá křest'anka, Irmo?’ Her change of allegiance, like her illness, represents

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92 Čapek-Chod, 'Dceruška Jairova', p. 266.
93 Ibid., p. 232. She was taught Czech at a Prague boarding school. Ibid.
94 Ibid., pp. 231-32.
her transition to sexual maturity. Thus in the portrayal of Irma-Máňa the narrator ironizes patriotism, as a metaphor for desire, as well as the Romantic and Decadent identification of desire with the death-wish.95

The narrative of Antonín Vondřejc suggests that the poet is deluded in his perceptions of woman. Neither Mirza nor Anna is adequately described by Vondřejc's labels: ideal, in contrast to sensual, woman. The apparently contradictory aspects of Irma-Máňa's character remain likewise unresolved.

6. New Woman

In Geschlecht und Charakter Otto Weininger expresses an attitude to 'emancipated' woman typical of the Fin de siècle: 'A woman's demand for emancipation and her qualification for it are in direct proportion to the amount of maleness in her.'96 This perception of the New Woman informs the depiction of the schoolmaster's daughter Kamiša, in Sova's (1864-1928) Ivův román (1902). Kamiša is accustomed to the company of intellectuals and artists, and boasts of her interest in the most modern publications.97 Her knowledge is superficial; from her reading she has acquired trite phrases and 'postures', such as Decadent ennui.98 Kamiša affects irony and an aggressive curiosity. She has 'masculine' mannerisms and a manly physique.99 She takes no care over her appearance.100 The eponymous protagonist comments

95On her disease as a metaphor for desire, see ibid., p. 231.

96Otto Weininger, Sex and Character [Geschlecht und Charakter, 1903], London and New York, 1975, p. 64. Reprint of the 1906 edition. The author's overall assessment of this 'mannish' woman, however, was not typical; he writes: 'homo-sexuality in a woman is the outcome of her masculinity and presupposes a higher degree of development'. Ibid., p. 66.

97Antonín Sova, Ivův román, Prague, n.d. [1902], p. 130. Sova and Čapek-Chod were friends. See: Papers: Čapek-Chod; letters from Antonín Sova to Čapek-Chod, 1910-1924.

98Ibid., pp. 130-1.

99Ibid., pp. 109, 130.

100Ibid., p. 130.
that she is: 'Jedna z těch sto jiných, které se nedovedly vymanit ze špatně pochopené horečky emancipační.'\(^{101}\) In her portrayal of the 'liberated' female art student Máňa Špačková, in V rozkvětu léta (1916), Zieglozerová (1883-1942) adheres to the conventional view according to which woman only displays an interest in an intellectual subject in order to attract a man.\(^{102}\) Máňa is tasteless, aggressively sexual and ultimately bourgeois: the aim of her licentious behaviour is to find a husband and attain a respectable social position.\(^{103}\)

The New Woman represented in four works by Čapek-Chod, 'Snivá Kateřina', 'Tři dopisy MUC. Růženy Hamáčkové MUDru Marii Loukotové' (hereafter 'Tři dopisy'), Turbina and Jindrové, contrasts with this conventional depiction in that she is almost identical to 'natural', or instinctive, woman. New Woman tends to be more idealistic, self-deluded, thus, for Čapek-Chod, more 'masculine' than his other female characters; she retains, however, her practical, life-affirming, creative nature, which in some instances derives from her childbearing capacity.

The emancipation of woman is first addressed by Čapek-Chod in 'Snivá Kateřina'. That the narrator's treatment of the 'woman question' is distant both from the earnestness of Machar or Viková-Kunštická, and from the sarcasm of Sova, is suggested in the account of Kateřina's present circumstances. When her uncle, a journalist and enthusiastic supporter of the woman's cause, dies, Kateřina has to leave grammar school and work as a seamstress with her aunt; they fall victim to the short-sightedness of the uncle, who has incurred debts in the course of his campaigning for the cause.\(^{104}\) As well as debts, the narrator implies, the uncle has burdened Kateřina with

\(^{101}\)Ibid., p. 119.

\(^{102}\)See Weininger, *Sex and Character*, p. 70. Zieglozerová's portrait of the female student contrasts with that drawn by Růžena Svobodová in V říši tulipánků (1903) and Viková-Kunštická in *Cop* (1905).

\(^{103}\)Anna Zieglozerová, *V rozkvětu léta*, Prague, 1916, pp. 95, 120.

\(^{104}\)Čapek-Chod, 'Snivá Kateřina', pp. 171-73.
impractical conceptions of her position; the narrator comments on her reaction to Rokyta’s satirical self-portrait: ‘Zbytky zdravého pudu, pokud v ní nebyly zdušeny chybným vychováním a falší názoru o vlastním postavení, do něhož se vmluvila, hlasily se k slovu velice chabě, ale přece jenom pocítila jakýsi zmatek zahanbení’. The short story consists in an exploration of the conflict within Kateřina between her practical nature and the tendency, fostered by her incomplete education, to escape from misery into daydreams. Driven by desire, notions of free love and an impulse to debase herself, Kateřina becomes pregnant by the worker Klimt. She considers suicide, but abandons thoughts of self-destruction because of her duty to her unborn child.

Kateřina’s material nature is suggested by the story’s first sentence, describing her sigh; the narrator asserts that she is not sighing out of sorrow but relief that the morning visitors to the gallery where she is temporarily employed at the cash desk have left. Sure that no one will disturb her, she unbuttons her blouse, removes her shoes and starts to drowse. The narrator emphasizes the changes that have occurred in her body as a result of her advanced pregnancy. The reader is always aware of the possible physical motivations for Kateřina’s responses. After relating that Kateřina wears her uncle’s ring in the hope that others will mistake it for an engagement ring, the narrator states: ‘"Lžeš!" ozvalo se náhle v Kateřině, už ne dvojaké, blažené a ubohé, povznesené a ponížené, nýbrž jen ubohé a ponížené a hrozně trpící - šněrovačkou ...’ Her sexual assertiveness is manifest in her seduction of Klimt, who is unaware of her desire until one evening, in the course of a conversation about social theory, she grabs his hand in response to his question, ‘Und sind Sie selbst etwas anderes, als ein Proletarierkind?!’. This ironic, unsentimental depiction of assertive female desire contrasts with the representation of

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105 Ibid., p. 279.
106 Ibid., p. 274.
107 Ibid., p. 193.
Eliška Medřická’s almost unintentional seduction of Bohuslav Dašek in Viková-Kunětická’s Medřická (1897).  \(^{108}\)

Kateřina’s intellectual shortcomings are ironized by the narrator, but he may also be indicating that such shortcomings are a manifestation of ‘healthy’ common sense. For example, the narrator states of Kateřina’s response to Rokyta’s speech at a private view: ‘Nechápala ani slova z celého toho ručeje s vysoka padající honosivosti’.  \(^{109}\) Peering at Rokyta’s self-portrait, modelled after the Belvedere Apollo, Kateřina mistakes the object which the figure holds in his left hand for a tube of toothpaste; the object is intended to represent a tube of white paint (‘kremžská běloba’).  \(^{110}\) That Kateřina is struck dumb when she attempts to interpret for Klimt at a political rally may indicate her ‘feminine’ modesty; it functions as a satire on her intellectual pretensions, but also on the coarse mud-slinging which makes for the agenda of such rallies altogether.  \(^{112}\) The narrator repeatedly indicates that Kateřina’s education and intellectual accomplishments are a veneer behind which dozes sensual, material woman.  \(^{113}\)

The portrayal of the medical student Růžena Hamačková in ‘Tři dopisy’ is more ambiguous. Like Kateřina’s, Růžena’s ‘emancipated’ views do not negate her femininity, understood in conventional terms. Růžena gives up her studies after fainting in the operating theatre, when her fourteen-year-old patient dies while giving birth.  \(^{114}\) Růžena’s modesty is evinced by her angry

\(^{108}\)Božena Viková-Kunětická, Medřická, Prague, 1897, p. 109.


\(^{110}\)Ibid., p. 277. The narrator may be thus satirizing the ‘clumsiness’ and pretensions of contemporaneous painters.

\(^{111}\)Showalter writes that for late Victorians it seemed a ‘transgression of “womanly” modesty’ for a woman to speak from the podium. Showalter, Sexual Anarchy, p. 24.


\(^{113}\)Ibid., p. 192.

reaction to her suitor, Dr Bazanelli's, lewdness. On a walk in
the woods, the two of them find an unusual mushroom ('jelenka
obecná'); Bazanelli recalls the Latin term for the mushroom, and
laughs when he realizes that she understands the Latin (Phallus
impudicus). She claims to have a 'romantickou báživou
duši'. Her sensuality is indicated by her initial attraction
to Bazanelli; she writes to her friend: 'Nevím, milá Máňo, zdali
bys o něm na první pohled řekla, že je krasavec. Ale muž je.'
In her reaction to Bazanelli, however, the character of Růžena
differs from that of Kateřina. Bazanelli's distinguishing feature
is his long blond beard; when he kisses her in greeting, she is
overwhelmed by the unfamiliar scent which his beard emits. The
beard is an emblem of his masculinity. Their exchange over the
strange-smelling mushroom recalls her ambivalent reaction to his
beard. When he proposes to her, she suddenly perceives his
extravagant beard to be ridiculous on his small face. Although
she hesitates for a moment, Růžena chooses the life of a single
woman and 'devotion' to science over the prospect of marriage to
a German scientist. This does not constitute a sacrifice for
her; she relishes the return to her studies. In this respect, she
differs from the independent schoolmistresses portrayed in
Medřická, whose lives are said to consist in self-denial and

115 Ibid., p. 284.
116 Ibid., p. 275.
117 Ibid., pp. 280.
118 Ibid., pp. 279-80.
119 Compare with the description of the beard comb which Dašek
forgets in Medřická's room. Viková-Kunětická, Medřická, p. 133. On
the beard as an emblem of virility, see Krafft-Ebing,
120 Čapek-Chod, 'Tři dopisy', p. 289.
121 The narrator also ironizes Czech anti-German sentiment in
Růžena's rejection of Bazanelli. She writes to her friend:
'Nezapírám, milá Máňičko, že byly chvíle, že mne tenhle Artur
neodstraňoval, a krutě činím pokání za to, že ani národnostní
otázka nezněla dost čistou odpovědí ve mňě jako nyní.' Ibid., p.
289.
obligations.\textsuperscript{122} Růžena also differs from the student Arnošt Zouplna (Turbína), who loses his idealism and passion for science when he marries Máňa Ulliková.

The portrayal of the aunt Lucy, at whose home Růžena stays while in Horní Šlaky, also diverges from the conventional depiction of the withered, hopeless old maid. Lucy acts as housekeeper for the workers at the family factory; Růžena comments that the aunt conducts her work with an energy that would do justice to any man.\textsuperscript{123} Like the New Woman Růžena, Lucy is an outsider in her family: 'také takový rodinný odlétlý odštěpek'.\textsuperscript{124} Lucy's antipathy to Bazanelli and jealous possessiveness of her niece further indicates the camaraderie between the two women.\textsuperscript{125}

The depiction of Máňa Ulliková (Turbína) reflects, superficially, the conventional perception of the New Woman.\textsuperscript{126} Máňa wears her hair short;\textsuperscript{127} her attire is plain;\textsuperscript{128} she is so absorbed in her studies as to be ecstatic over the gift of a microscope.\textsuperscript{129} Her severity and self-possession intimidate men.\textsuperscript{130} In her apparent ascetic studiousness, she is an inspiration for contemporary feminists.\textsuperscript{131} She is not, however,

\textsuperscript{122}Viková-Kunětická, Medřická, p. 171.
\textsuperscript{123}Čapek-Chod, 'Tri dopisy', p. 277.
\textsuperscript{124}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{125}Ibid., pp. 279-82. A friendship between a 'New Woman' and an old maid is also portrayed in Ziegloserová's 'Návrat', V rozkvětu léta, p. 90.
\textsuperscript{126}On the perception of New Woman as unnatural, masculine and sterile, see Showalter, Sexual Anarchy, p. 39.
\textsuperscript{127}Čapek-Chod, Turbína, p. 128.
\textsuperscript{128}Ibid., p. 67.
\textsuperscript{129}Ibid., pp. 84-85.
\textsuperscript{130}Ibid., p. 127.
\textsuperscript{131}Ibid., p. 118.
asexual, nor able to suppress her desire. She perceives a conflict between her 'progressive' principles and her 'reactionary' heart. The narrator's treatment of this conflict as non-essential may suggest the self-sufficiency of woman:

In her proposal of marriage to Arnošt, Máňa does not differ from such 'non-emanicipated' female characters as Elvira ('Znova a lépe'), or Anna (Antonín Vondrejc). Máňa displays the sexual assertiveness and practicality which Čapek-Chod identifies with femininity. As was the case with Anna, however, sexual assertiveness does not preclude shame or modesty. That Máňa gives birth to twins suggests her fecundity, which has not been diminished by her intellectual powers; in this respect, she contradicts the popular conception of the 'mannish' emancipated woman. Woman's child-bearing capacity is also used as an

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132 Ibid., p. 127.
133 Ibid., pp. 128-29.
134 Ibid., pp. 142-43. Čapek-Chod may here anticipate Freud's comment: 'Even a marriage is not made secure until the wife has succeeded in making her husband her child as well and in acting as a mother to him.' Freud, 'Femininity', New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis, translated by James Strachey, London, 1974, pp. 133-4.
135 Čapek-Chod, Turbina, p. 308.
136 Nietzsche writes: 'If a woman has a tendency to learnedness, there is usually something wrong with her sexuality. Infertility predisposes to a certain maleness in taste; the man is, if you will permit me to say so, the "unfruitful animal".' Quoted in: R. B. Pynsent, 'Conclusory Essay: Decadence, Decay and
emblem for her material nature; the pigment spots caused by pregnancy, a recurring motif in Čapek-Chod's works, function in the same manner. Čapek-Chod represents man's material nature through his dependence on woman; one thinks of Vondrejc and Kašpar Lén. That Máňa's diagnosis of Arnošt is inaccurate need not be interpreted as an indication of woman's professional incompetence, or of a typical novice's error, but rather of the partiality of an individual's views. Likewise, the doctor Jiří Stach ('Dceruška Jairova') misjudges the nature of Irma-Máňa's illness: 'Tedy nikoli fthise, nýbrž puberta, odkudž plameny, hrdopých a stesk v jejich tvářích, opravoval dr. Stach svou domněnku prvotně.' In her reaction to the illness of her beloved, Máňa contrasts with Stach. She marries Arnošt in the hope that she will be able to treat him and provide for him better than his family can. She does not hesitate to demonstrate her love and belief in his recovery by kissing him. Stach assumes the role of bridegroom unwillingly, as a means of indulging the dying Irma-Máňa. He kisses her only when he believes that he is already terminally ill himself.

Jiřina Menotová (Jindrové) shares certain characteristics with earlier representations of the New Woman in Čapek-Chod's works. Her attractiveness derives from her buxom figure and healthy radiance. Although sexually assertive, she is also shy. She adopts the poses and principles of radical feminism:

Innovation', p. 185.

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137 For example: Turbina, pp. 304-5; 'Znova a lépe', p. 47; 'Snivá Kateřina', p. 314; Jindrové, p. 278.
139 Čapek-Chod, Turbina, p. 171.
140 Ibid., p. 173.
142 Ibid., p. 350.
143 Čapek-Chod, Jindrové, pp. 132-4.
144 Ibid., pp. 125, 187.
she cuts off her long hair after Jindra Senior praises it;\textsuperscript{145} she argues that woman is physiologically superior to man; ironically, when Jindra Junior asserts that the answer to the 'woman question' is maternity, Jiřina counters that for lack of men willing to take responsibility for a family, many women cannot consider maternity as an option and must seek employment.\textsuperscript{146} Like so many other male and female characters in Čapek-Chod's works, the outlook identified with Jiřina's public self constitutes a façade; it masks her nature like the veil which she wears in public to hide her blushes.\textsuperscript{147} When Jindra Junior visits her cottage and sees her, barefoot, drawing water from the river, Jiřina's fundamental self is revealed: unaffected, vibrant, tied to the processes of creation.

The narrator represents Jiřina's animality as dominant over her intellect; this, however, does not diminish her 'moral authority'. Jiřina becomes a 'fallen woman' after having sexual intercourse with Jindra Senior;\textsuperscript{148} the narrator, however, seems to endorse her criticism of Jindra Junior. She claims that she has had sexual intercourse with the father out of love for the son, and that the latter has wronged her by not satisfying the desires forced on her by the will of her child to be born.\textsuperscript{149} Jiřina defends her intention to marry Jindra Senior, stating that the life of a single mother is other than its representation in

\textsuperscript{145}Ibid., p. 162.

\textsuperscript{146}Čapek-Chod, Jindrové, p. 147. The irony derives from the outcome of the story: Jiřina becomes pregnant by Jindra Senior, and Jindra Junior decides to accept paternal responsibility for the child. On the social problem of increasing numbers of unmarried women in Britain at the Fin de siècle, see Showalter, Sexual Anarchy, pp. 19-20.

\textsuperscript{147}Čapek-Chod, Jindrové, p. 164. Showalter points out that the veil is associated with the veil of the hymen and thus is an emblem of female chastity and modesty. Showalter, Sexual Anarchy, p. 145.

\textsuperscript{148}This is represented by her embrace of Jindra Junior's feet, when he returns from the war. Čapek-Chod, Jindrové, p. 274.

\textsuperscript{149}Ibid., pp. 281-2.
novels like Medřická. Jindra Junior accepts Jiřína’s accusations, acknowledging that it was cowardice, rather than a delicate conscience, which had prevented him from seducing her. Whereas in earlier depictions of the New Woman Čapek-Chod explores the relationship between woman’s will and her nature, with Jiřína the author expounds the theme of the Will to Life as the motivator of all human actions.

7. Fallen Woman
The subject of much debate at the Fin de siècle, it is not surprising that Čapek-Chod treats the themes of prostitution and the ‘fallen woman’. That he returns to the themes throughout his career indicates the metaphorical and philosophical possibilities which the character of the fallen woman suggested to him. The depictions of fallen woman, that is, one who violates social conventions by her sexual behaviour, have aspects in common; they also, however, cover the spectrum of Čapek-Chod’s conceptions of female nature.

The fate of women like Pepička (‘Na valech’), a village girl who returns pregnant after working as a maidservant in Vienna, was a familiar contemporaneous concern. In the depiction of Pepička, however, the author diverges from conventional perceptions of the fallen woman as a victim or as the bane on society. The character of Pepička constitutes a miniature of the prototypical Čapek-Chod woman: practical, energetic, cunning but not malicious. Pepička’s physical appearance is not given in detail, but from the first description of her one has the

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150 Ibid., p. 284.
151 Ibid., pp. 297-98.
152 Ibid., p. 297.
153 Compare, for example, the depiction of the fallen maidservant in: Božena Benešová, ‘Památka’, Tiché dívky, Prague, n.d. [1922, story written in 1900], pp. 5-75; Tèver, ‘Samota’, Duše nezakotvené, pp. 193-224; Viková-Kunštická, Co bylo, Prague, 1902.
impression of a robust and sensual woman. The tailor Josef, who had lost his legs in the Austro-Prussian War, on seeing the smoke rise from her cottage, imagines Pepička lighting the fire: ‘předobře vidí dvě jiskry v černých očích, pod nimiž dmou se ruměné tváře a úži se rozkošné, horlivě do ohně dmychající rtíky jako do prsténku z pouti’. The introduction of Pepička contrasts her with Josef; while she is vigorously engaged in a domestic chore, Josef sits motionless at his window dreaming of her. Throughout the short story, Pepička’s mobility is contrasted with Josef’s ‘stationariness’. While Pepička hurries back and forth between her cottage and Josef’s window, Josef moves perceptibly only twice, if one discounts his use of a needle and scissors: when he shifts back from the window to reveal to Pepička his crippled state; and when he wipes away his tears with the sleeve of the narrator’s coat. Just as Josef’s immobility is emblematic of his dreamy, passive character, Pepička’s mobility indicates her active and shrewd nature. That her attentions to Josef are calculated and self-serving is indicated by her immediate flight from him when she learns that he is crippled.

Pepička’s rejection of Josef prefigures Elvira’s disdain for the invalid Bureš. That Čapek-Chod does not identify contempt for weakness with female nature, however, is indicated by the portrayal of the housekeeper Máry (V třetím dvoře), who attains social respectability through her marriage to the senile and crippled retired officer. Indeed, the depictions of Pepička and Elvira comment, with varying degrees of irony, on male fear that woman judges a man according to his physique (that is, as man appears to judge woman). This is expressed by Ondřej Andrysek Junior, in ‘Nedonošený ...’, after he has been conscripted:

Když jednou zastavil syna dútkou, že je samá holka a samá cigareta, kam to povede, odpověděl Ondřej, až

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155The fact that they have the same name may suggest that they are male and female prototypes.

156One might, however, claim that sexual potential is in the end more important to Pepička than money, as Josef has an army pension.
Male fear of impotence and of female self-sufficiency is also treated in the theme of uncertain paternity in 'Na valech' and 'Nedonošený ...'. Anna’s predicament ('Nedonošený ...') resembles Pepička’s; seduced and impregnated by her employer, Anna pursues her former suitor Andrýsek as a husband. The narrator indicates that Anna has no desire for Andrysek and accepts his proposal for practical reasons. Anna is conventionally pretty, while Andrysek is toothless and twice her age. For Čapek-Chod, this does not constitute a barrier to desire; in ‘Úvodník’, Plecitý attracts a woman who is younger than his son. However, when Andrysek tells Anna that he knows of an honourable man who would like to make her acquaintance, she replies, 'Je-li ten řádný a poctivý muž taky hezký a mladý, ale hodně ...'. Anna’s playful, but also cunning, nature is indicated in the description of her eyes: 'naklonila hlavinku a šelmovským pohledem, jenž někdy dovedl být i šelmí, zdola pohlédla na Andryška, a hned je zase sklopla'. The account of her ‘trapping’ Andrysek indicates guilelessness in combination with assertiveness. Dismissed from the laundry, she asks Andrysek to carry her belongings to her new lodgings. When he asks where these lodgings are, she gives him the address of his recently acquired laundry. In both short stories, the role of the prospective husband is that of provider rather than progenitor. In neither case does the narrator condemn the ‘immoral’ behaviour

158Čapek-Chod treats the theme most extensively in Jindrové.
162Ibid., p. 119. A similar word-play occurs in Jindrové, p. 129.
of the female. That her 'fall' is not represented suggests, first, the view that no moral value can be attached to the act of sexual intercourse in itself; and second, that the woman is sexually sufficient unto herself.\(^{164}\) The deception practised by the female characters is represented as necessary, if hurtful. Indeed, Anna is most selfish and cruel when she reveals her deception to Andýsek.\(^{165}\) Her confession, with which she attempts to atone for her earlier behaviour, precipitates Andýsek's suicide.\(^{166}\)

Čapek-Chod treats prostitution briefly in 'Berane burc'. The poor prostitute Dodlička is a minor character whose one petticoat, hanging out to dry at night, is attacked by the protagonist, a he-goat. In the depiction of Dodlička, the narrator satirizes the idealistic notion of free love:

'mrkavá Dodlička', aniž by byla četla anglicky, v život uváděla nejkrájnější zásady nejmodernějšího hnutí emancipačního o ženě, jakožto svobodné zakladatelce rodiny a svobodné volitelce předmětu své lásky. Až dosud volila nejméně sedmráte, a sedm živoucích dokladů [...] bylo dokladem řečených jejich zásad.\(^{167}\)

The character of the fallen woman is treated in greater depth in Kaspar Lén mstitel and 'Experiment'. The depiction of the prostitute in the former is both true to life in detail and unconventional. Perhaps the one conventional aspect of the depiction is the account of her 'fall'; she is a victim in that she is raped by the entrepreneur Konopik. He demands that she have sexual intercourse with him in exchange for the freedom of

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\(^{164}\)See Auerbach, Woman and the Demon, p. 180.

\(^{165}\)Čapek-Chod, 'Nedonošený ...', pp. 154-55.

\(^{166}\)Ibid., pp. 157-8. In his description of Anna's almost joyful reaction to the news of her son's death, Čapek-Chod's narrator may be exploring the relations between the mother and the illegitimate child who made marriage necessary. Ibid., p. 150. See also Čapek-Chod, 'Vítězství dobytč', Siláci a slabosi, p. 26.

\(^{167}\)Čapek-Chod, 'Berane burc!', Dar svatého Floriána a Zvižátka a Petrovští, pp. 208-09. The narrator states that men mistake Dodlička's tic (she winks constantly) for an amorous proposition.
her father, who had been caught stealing from Konopík’s stockroom. Once driven to prostitution, Mařka accepts her lot; the narrator comments: ‘o Mařce bylo jisto, že je "ráda proto že je ráda"’. That she is not resigned, however, is evident in her escape from the second brothel in which she is being held. The description of her preparations for escape present her plight in realistic, unsentimental detail. Because this is only her second place of employment, she is not greatly in debt to the madame; thus, she is not closely guarded. Because the prostitutes have been deprived of street clothes, so that they can be easily recognized should they try to flee, Mařka must steal a shawl and hide a skirt under her bodice. She steals a bonnet from a girl who is beaten when first brought to the brothel. On running away, Mařka hears the whistle of the pimp, who has influence with the police. The narrator depicts the full extent of the misery of her predicament; he cannot resist, however, describing her flight in gently ironic terms: the plump Mařka runs away on tip-toe, ‘mys nemohla se ztrácet tišeji’.

Although she is a victim of Konopík, Mařka does not remain a victim; she gains her own power, which is comically portrayed in her first encounter with Lén after his return from military service. Her ‘fall’ is represented by her prostration before Lén. She grips his feet so tightly, however, that his balance is threatened; when he tries to escape from her, she knocks him

168 Čapek-Chod, Kašpar Lén mstitel, pp. 239-41.

169 Ibid., p. 181.

170Prostitutes were tied to the brothel on account of the high prices they had to pay for board and the rent of clothing. See Linda Mahood, The Magdalenes. Prostitution in the Nineteenth Century, 1990, p. 43. On the role of the pimp, see ibid., p. 44. On Mařka’s plans for escape, see Kašpar Lén mstitel, pp. 181-7.

171 Ibid., p. 183.

172 Ibid., p. 182.

173 Ibid., p. 187.

174 Ibid.
over. She is ashamed when he finds her at the brothel; after his arrest for murder, however, this shame vanishes because she considers they are now equal. Thus her shame derives from her sense of inferiority to him, rather than from any abhorrence of prostitution. She expresses desire for Lén, attempting to lure him up to her room 'jen na jedno polibeni'. She exhibits the tendency to self-dramatization which one associates with Čapek-Chod's intellectual or artistic characters, like Antonín Vondrejc or Kačenka in Větrník. In the narrator's description of Mařka's sentiments during Lén's trial, he ironizes this tendency, as well as the sentimentalizing language of journalism:

I zatožila Mařka vášnivou závratí ztracenou, opovrženců, kteří v sensaci, do jaké uvíznu nejširší veřejnost, jimi opovržující a je zatracující, vidí svou rehabilitaci, aby se mohla postavit tam napřed po boku 'hlavního reku dnešního přelíčení', i aby se na ni ukázalo jako na spoluvinnici ...

Mařka's self-dramatization is a product of her youth. That she is both a child and a woman is repeatedly stated. She has 'dětská očka'. The narrator describes her at the witness box: 'Třásla se jako malé dívče před panem učitelem a také její vzlykot byl pláčem dítěte, dopadeného při poklesku, pro který se bojí výprasku.' Her pudginess may indicate that she has not yet lost her 'baby fat'. That her hair is naturally of two colours, blond at the ends and red at the roots, may suggest the child/woman duality within her. Despite her childishness, however, Mařka hardly requires Lén as a protector; that she is able to defend herself is demonstrated by the slap she gives him

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175 Ibid., pp. 34-5.
176 Ibid., p. 35.
177 Ibid., pp. 196-97.
178 Ibid., p. 87.
180 Ibid., p. 33.
181 Ibid., p. 238.
182 Ibid., p. 28.
when he first finds her soliciting for 'business' by the brothel.  

Mařka is a victim of her material nature. This is represented by her hysterical fits, brought on by moments of distress. The changes to her face during these fits recall the author's descriptions of female sexual arousal, for example, that of Cecilie in 'Mendelssohnův koncert': 'celá tvář její nabyla a ztuhla návalem krve, jako kdyby ji někdo rdousil, až do očních důlků stoupla záplava a rty vzdutím se rozepíaly'. The pattern of imagery employed at the conclusion to the novel suggests that the convulsion which distorts Mařka passes from her to Lén: foam pours from her red face, as if her mouth had been stuffed with it. When Lén stands to give his last statement, blood gushes from his white face; the hand with which he covers his mouth is stained as if he had crushed a handful of cherries. Death is represented as moving through Mařka to Lén. The narrator thus ironically identifies enslavement to desire with mortality. The narrator also suggests that while woman is slave to the body, man is slave to woman.

In his portrayal of the hysterical prostitute, the author also ironizes the theories of social scientists who linked the 'female' crime of prostitution with certain forms of mental and physical degeneration.

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184Ibid., pp. 38, 243.
186Ibid., p. 243.
187Ibid., p. 246.
188Krafft-Ebing comments: 'In the hysterical the sexual sphere is often abnormally excited [...] Shameless prostitution, even in married women, may result.' Krafft-Ebing, Psychopathia Sexualis, p. 468. He defends the association of epilepsy with abnormal manifestations of the sexual instinct. Ibid., pp. 453-
In descriptions of Mařka's fits, attention is focused on her throat: "Ježíši Kriste, Ježíši!" chrčela hrdlem do široka rozestouplym';\(^{189}\) 'Lénovi připadalo, že se nešt'astnici jinak ulevití nemůže, leda vyhřeznutím části útrobu ústy, jak se zdálo, do hrdla se ji tlačí';\(^{190}\) 'Bylo podívání na Mařku, zrudla ve tváři, hrdlo její div se nerozstoupilo, z kulatosti jeho vypnuly se kolmé svaly a na nich ukázaly se žíly jako brky'.\(^{191}\) In 'Experiment', mastery of Julie, who is 'fallen' although still a virgin, is represented in terms of control over her throat, or voice.\(^{192}\) This is conveyed in the description of her suicide, when her character is first introduced to the reader. After she takes the mercury tablet, her would-be protector, Dr Slaba, grabs her throat to prevent her from swallowing it; the customers in the café in which the action is set assume that Slaba is trying to choke her and release her from him.\(^{193}\) The narrator comments: 'osvobozené její hrdlo s vítěznou urputností provedlo své'.\(^{194}\) Julie asserts her independence in dying; her death may thus suggest the 'transforming power' of the fall.\(^{195}\)

That the conflict between Julie and Slaba manifests the latter's crisis of sexual identity is also suggested in this scene; the man who pushes Slaba off Julie represents his sexual identity crisis.

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61. Lombroso identifies the 'born criminal' with the epileptic. He asserts, however, that in the prostitute, epilepsy is replaced by hysteria. See Cesare Lombroso and William Ferrero, *The Female Offender* (*La Donna Delinquente*, 1893), London, 1895, p. 243. In 'Experiment', Slaba refers to the association of hysteria with prostitution; because Slaba is an unreliable narrator, the reader is suspicious of his opinions. 'Experiment', p. 42.

\(^{189}\)Čapek-Chod, *Kašpar Lén mstitel*, p. 37.

\(^{190}\)Ibid., p. 38.

\(^{191}\)Ibid., p. 239.


\(^{193}\)Čapek-Chod, 'Experiment', p. 21.

\(^{194}\)Ibid., pp. 21-2.

rival. This is indicated in part by his occupation: Alberti is a fencing master. A week before the suicide, Alberti provokes Slaba by making a comment about Julie’s attractiveness. In the suicide episode the minor character Alberti represents Slaba’s serious rival, his nephew Jindřich. Slaba’s attempt to prevent her suicide is the last in a series of manoeuvres to assert himself through control over her sexuality.

One night when he is returning to his clinic the gynaecologist Slaba meets Julie, the orphaned daughter of his former best friend; it is her first day as a streetwalker and he is the first client she propositions. For the sake of his friend, Slaba endeavours to save her from the wretched life of the prostitute, with which he is familiar from his studies. He first confines her and then convinces her to stay on the grounds of his clinic and the adjoining garden. To add weight to his argument, he draws her attention to the instruments of his profession:

Udeřil jsem dlani na kovovou desku jistého nářadí, jaké v ordinaci gynaekologově nikdy neschází. ‘Chcete se dříve či později dostat na takový stůl?’ křikl jsem na ni.
Otázka tato měla na ni ohromný účinek. S očima a ústy, hrůzou rozeklanými, hleděla na neznámou věc, třpytnou od novoty svých kovů.

His altruistic intentions mask other motives. The garden represents the territory of desire: ‘Počínal se podletní den už v prvních ranních hodinách velmi parný, a moje zahrada, bita žhavým sluncem, stále bezohlednějí na ni dokročujícím, sténala hořce sladkou vůní, silně opojnou.’ The use of the surgery as a setting represents Slaba’s desire to understand and direct her sexuality. The doctor himself makes it clear that Julie cannot be saved from a ‘fall’; he states that her nature is ‘fallen’, that is, libidinous. Commenting on their first encounter, he states: ‘Nebylo už pro mne pochyby, bylo pro mne nutno zařaditi

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197 Ibid., pp. 44-45.
198 Ibid., p. 56. Compare, for example, the description of the green house in: Karel Sezima, Passiflora, Prague, n.d. (1903), p. 52.
ji do kategorie "rozených", předurčením ztracených.'\textsuperscript{199} Her mind is that of a child, he claims, adding, 'ale právě takové dívky bývají nejerošičtěji založeny'.\textsuperscript{200} Her virginity does not constitute proof of her innocence, as far as Slaba is concerned.\textsuperscript{201} Her sexuality is indiscriminate, like that of the \textit{femme enfant}; indeed, Slaba suggests that she has not yet reached the age of puberty.\textsuperscript{202} Slaba may associate the 'polymorphous' sexuality of the child with that of the prostitute, a connection which Freud makes in 'Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality'.\textsuperscript{203} Although he traps her, and establishes his authority by reducing her to an object of physical and psychological study, she none the less threatens to overpower him. Julie's strength is represented ironically through her debasing herself before Slaba: 'Padla k mým nohám a sevršela mi kolena s takovou silou, že - abych tak řekl - uvedla celou mou stabilitu v pochybu. Byl jsem doslova nucen roztrhnouti její lokty, abych neupadl.'\textsuperscript{204} Slaba's attempt to remove her from the garden and find her a flat elsewhere represents his intention to isolate her from desire. His sending her to singing lessons suggests an intention to tame her. Jindřich, Slaba's nephew, pursues her as she goes to and from these lessons; thus, the symbolic character of her voice is emphasized.\textsuperscript{205} With his final experiment, the arranged encounters between Julie and Jindřich, Slaba hopes to demonstrate that he has dominated her, that is, established himself as the one object

\textsuperscript{199}Čapek-Chod, 'Experiment', p. 38.

\textsuperscript{200}Ibid., p. 73.

\textsuperscript{201}Ibid., p. 78.

\textsuperscript{202}Ibid., p. 57.

\textsuperscript{203}Slaba, however, does not follow Freud in seeing the 'disposition to perversion' as a 'general and fundamental human characteristic'. Freud, 'Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality', p. 191.

\textsuperscript{204}Čapek-Chod, 'Experiment', p. 60.

\textsuperscript{205}Ibid., p. 99.
of her desire. Her suicide confirms her love for Slaba; at the same time the act manifests her independence from his control.

8. Conclusion
In Maryša Zavazelka ('Kdo s koho'), the author caricatures his own conception of the feminine; thus, in her portrait one can clearly see the prototypical features of Čapek-Chod’s female characters: vitality, practicality, a capacity for self-sacrifice, but also for deceit. She is portrayed as passionate and sexually assertive, but not, in contrast to man, a slave to desire. Like other female characters in Čapek-Chod’s works, such as Anna/Elsa Pinkusová, Jiřina Menotová and Máňa Ulliková, Maryša defies definition as a particular literary type; her character is that of the femme fatale; her circumstances as an adultress, those of the fallen woman. Her character makes manifest the features common to these types.

Maryša’s appearance is described in conventional terms as manifesting innocence and health: her complexion is the colour of milk and blood. In her imperiousness and seeming despect for men, however, she resembles the femme fatale. She treats her admirer Košt’al as an inferior; the narrator comments: ‘ťáhl udatněji než ten pes v jejím vozíku a jestliže při tom někdy krel, jeho velitelka jako by neslyšela. Zacházelá s ním jako s chlapcem, a nikoli jako s mužem [...] nescházelo věru, než aby mu tykala.’ Košt’al’s dependence on her is indicated by the fact that she is a fetish for him; he attempts to hang himself when she encourages him to give up lodging at her house. She has sexual intercourse with him to prevent his carrying out his intention, as Košt’al later acknowledges. However, having ‘given herself’ to him once, she does not allow him to make any claims on her: ‘Maryša chovala se tak, jako by se nebylo vůbec

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206 Čapek-Chod, ‘Kdo s koho’, Čtyři odvážné povídky, p. 29.
207 Ibid., p. 37.
208 Ibid., p. 41.
209 Ibid., p. 53.
nic mezi nimi přihodilo, nejvýše snad, že byla k němu ještě bezohlednější a na práci vyděračnější než kdy předtím.210 She acts in a sexually provocative manner in order to enjoy the spectacle of his frustrated desire.211 In this respect, she resembles Tynda (Turbina).

However imperious, even barbaric, Maryša may be in her treatment of her husband, Zavazel, she respects certain social conventions; she puts on an act in order to preserve her reputation. The narrator comments on her grief on learning of her husband’s fatal injury: ‘Její kvílení široko se rozléhalo, zvláště když se octla na kraji vesnice. Zavazelka přece věděla, co se na pořádnou ženu patří, když se muži něco takového přihodí.’212 Her behaviour, it appears, is also intended to deflect suspicion from her and her lover Košťal. Woman’s practical nature is satirized further in Maryša’s intention to discover the password with which her dying husband has protected his bank account. Her determination leads her to bribe the priest who gives Zavazel Extreme Unction to try to pry the secret from him. Her concern for the money is not peculiar to her, however; it is shared by Košťal, who pays for it with his life. As in ‘Znova a lépe’, Kašpar Lén mstitel and Antonín Vondrejc, in this story obsession with a woman leads to the death of the male protagonist, but his weakness is to blame, rather than any vampiric or destructive impulse on the woman’s part.

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210Ibid., p. 43.
211Ibid., p. 47.
212Ibid., p. 66.
Jews in the Works of Čapek-Chod

1. Čapek-Chod and Antisemitism

That critics questioned Čapek-Chod’s attitude to the Jews was a source of resentment to the author, as is evident in his interview with the publisher Otakar Štorch-Marien (1897-1974). When the latter stated, ‘Mluví se někdy, Mistře, o vašem antisemitismu’, Čapek-Chod replied:

Jsem rád, že jste se o tom zmínil. Rozhodně antisemititou nejsem, naopak nalezl jsem mezi židy mnoho znamenitých lidí. Mám naopak jistou příčynnost k židům - našel jsem u nich řadu interesantních typů. Jeden židovský časopis mne před válkou zuřivě napadal pro můj domněný antisemitismus - a když jsem pak o válce napsal řadu feuilletonů o polských řídech, otiskl je týž časopis všecky doslova. Což takovou "Dcerušku Jairovu" by napsal někdo, kdo nenávidí židy?¹

In a short article in 1919, Karel Čapek (1890-1938) argues against criticism directed at the Jewish character Žibřid Paprštejn, portrayed in ‘Dvě vdovy’. Čapek argues that Čapek-Chod had not singled out the Jews as targets of his satire; many groups, he writes, had been offended by Čapek-Chod’s pen, including copy-editors, Czech Americans and the nobility.²

Pavel Eisner (1889-1958) addresses the question of whether or not Čapek-Chod was antisemitic in ‘Choulostivá procházka s K. M. Čapkem-Chodem’. He relates a conversation during which Čapek-Chod expressed distress that Josef Kodíček (1892-1954) had described him as an antisemite.³ Eisner defends Čapek-Chod as a


²K. Č. [Karel Čapek], ‘Drobnosti. Hlídky časopisecké’, Česta, 1 (1919), 17, pp. 468-9. Considering the treatment of Jews in Čapek’s works, one would not want to set much store by his judgment. See, for example, the characterization of Bondy in Čapek’s Továrna na Absolutno (1922).

³Josef Kodíček was active in the Czech-Jewish movement in the early twentieth century. As a literary and theatre critic he contributed to the Czech-Jewish newspaper Tribuna. Hillel J. Kieval, The Making of Czech Jewry: National Conflict and Jewish Society in Bohemia, 1870-1918, New York and Oxford, 1988, pp. 154, 185. See also the correspondence between Čapek-Chod and Arne Laurin (pseudonym for Arnošt Lustig, 1889-1945). In a letter from
philo-Semite: 'Táhla jej k židům jejich životní síla všemu navzdory; že je pak mnohdy viděl v zrcadle dost vypouklém, nebyl záměr, nebyl zaujatost - groteskním deformátořem naturalismu byl přec i jinak, je to jedna z jeho autorských zásluh.' Eisner considers the four Jewish characters in Antonín Vondrejc, Freund, Iza, Anna and Jakub Suchář. The latter he describes as a character 'jednoznačně sympaticky pojatá a sympatie budící', adding that he is 'věrojatný až po uši'. He states that Iza is 'prostě typ velmi fikané holky, hysterické vždy v pravý čas'. Of Anna’s arranging her marriage to Vondrejc, Eisner writes: 'jelí to vypočítavost nebo dokonce vypočítavost idovskou, pak jsou vypočítavými idovkami všechny ženy na světě.' He adds that Anna has nothing to gain materially from the marriage. The characters of Anna and Freund, Eisner asserts, claim the reader’s interest at the expense of the central character Vondrejc. Eisner writes of Freund as a grotesque invention without parallel in Czech or German literature; his grotesque qualities place him ‘beyond good and evil’, rendering judgment of him from a racial point of view impossible. Eisner comments on Čapek-Chod’s relationship with the character of Freund: ‘je do té postavy, kterou hýčká a s níž miliskuje, tak velmi zamilován, že jde-li vůbec jestě o nějaký - ismus, je to filosemitismus, nic jiného’.

April 1914, Laurin accused Čapek-Chod of making an antisemitic remark in response to a review (en., ‘K. M. Čapek-Chod: Z města i obvodu’, Rozvoj, 2 March 1914, p. 6). The two men were later on very good terms and Laurin devoted a certain amount of energy to the promotion of translations of Čapek-Chod’s works into Italian and German. Papers; Čapek-Chod; letters from Arne Laurin to Čapek-Chod, 1914-27; PNP.


5Ibid.

6Ibid.

7Ibid.

References to Čapek-Chod’s attitude to Jews in Šach’s *K. M. Čapek-Chod* must be considered in context. An incident related by the author’s brother Václav Čapek suggests that he did hold racist views. Václav states that while he and his brother were on a walk one day during the war they passed a pub regarded as a haunt of Prague Germans. At that moment the owner was playing the ‘Marseillaise’ on a gramophone for the Czech soldiers sitting outside. Václav states that a Jew approached and threatened to have them all arrested for listening to the French national anthem. According to his brother, Čapek-Chod had urged him to attack the Jew; he did so and then fled to avoid the police. Čapek-Chod allegedly protected his brother’s identity from the police. The account does not strike one as plausible. It seems unlikely that Czech soldiers would have gathered to drink at a ‘German’ pub, and that the owner of such an establishment would have shared their anti-Austrian sentiments. Even if the account is faithful, the thuggish cry attributed to Čapek-Chod – ‘Dej mu nějakou na hubu!’ – may have constituted an expression of anti-Austrian, rather than anti-Jewish, sentiment. The hostility towards the Jews expressed in the account appears to be characteristic of Václav’s attitude, rather than of Čapek-Chod’s. Likewise Svatopluk Čech’s comment that Čapek-Chod was collecting material in preparation for the creation of a Jewish userer type

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may reveal more about Čech than about Čapek-Chod. Čapek-Chod does depict a Jewish war-time profiteer in 'Dceruška Jairova'; in the same short story, however, the local non-Jews are also represented as having grown rich through smuggling during the war.

The writer Bohumil Zahradník-Brodský (1862-1939) recalls one occasion on which a Polish Jew mistook Čapek-Chod for a coreligionist; the author responded in a friendly manner and conversed with him using 'Jewish patois'. A similar anecdote is related by František Skácelík (1873-1944). In an article commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the author's death, Jaroslava Pecherová-Jahnová writes that Čapek-Chod had a ready supply of Jewish jokes and that he delighted in often being mistaken for an orthodox Jew. These accounts provide some justification for interpreting the character of Freund as an ironic self-portrait of the author. Pecherová-Jahnová's description of the author also reminds one of the character of Artur Stein in 'Dceruška Jairova': 'Pod maskou ironika skrýval se člověk milující svou rodinu'.

The author's identification with his Jewish characters is further suggested by his remarks in a letter to a Jewish physician friend, J. Friedmann, from September 1927. Čapek-Chod urges Friedmann to marry a beautiful Jewish woman, rich enough to enable him to set up practice in a spa. He adds: 'vítě

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15Šach, K. M. Čapek-Chod, p. 44.
16Ibid., pp. 50-51.
18Pecherová-Jahnová, 'K. M. Čapek-Chod', p. 239.
While self-irony is intended, Čapek-Chod’s advice none the less suggests his acknowledgment of the practical necessity of such marriage ‘deals’: ‘Vím, že je těžko v kruzích židovských českého přesvědčení najítí družku se všemi “p” zvláště pak s oním velikým “P”, ale pokuste se o to, radím Vám tak přes nebezpečí výtky materialismu jako Váš přítel, zajisté dosti upřímný.’ Čapek-Chod depicts such a marriage ‘deal’ in ‘Polichinell Maxl’. I do not set out to demonstrate in this chapter that Čapek-Chod was a philo-Semite. He was not antisemitic, but contemporaneous perceptions of the Jews do inform his writings. I shall consider the image of the Jew as revealed not only in his major fictional Jewish characters, but also in his feuilletons, and in peripheral references in his fiction. When treating his Jewish characters, I shall consider his interpretations of conventional conceptions, for example, that of the Jew as outsider, or as indifferent to national loyalties. Through analysis of these interpretations one is able to place the Jewish characters within the wider framework of Čapek-Chod’s ‘grotesque vision’ and his understanding of the nature of the self.

2. Feuilletons
Three feuilletons, printed in Narodní listy and included in the Čapek-Chod papers in the National Literature Museum may provide evidence of the author’s attitude to the Jews. The feuilletons are unsigned, but stylistic features, as well as the fact that they are included among Čapek-Chod’s clippings of his own newspaper articles, suggest his authorship. All three, ‘Čtyřjazyčná Praha’, I and II, and ‘Das jüdische Prag’, were printed during World War I, thus at a time when Czech hostility

19Papers: Čapek-Chod; letters from Čapek-Chod to J. Friedmann, 1922-27; letter dated 11 September 1927; PNP.

20Ibid.
to the Jews was particularly vehement.\textsuperscript{21} Despite what one would expect, considering that they were printed in \textit{\v{N}árodní listy}, a newspaper with an established antisemitic bias, the articles do not express hostility.\textsuperscript{22} The first two articles treat the influx of Galician Jews to Prague during the war. Part I begins with a discussion of the four languages now common in Prague: Czech, German, Polish and Yiddish. The author then treats the question of the native tongue of the Jews. While conceding that the mother-tongue of a Jew can be any language, and that in the Bohemian Lands it is usually Czech, the author suggests that Yiddish is the language which best expresses the 'spirit' of the Jews:

\begin{quote}
Lze si tudíž představiti a lze i pochopiti, že jest mnoho Židů, a jsou to právě nejnezkaženější, nejpravověrnější Židé, kteří svůj německohebrejský žargon milují tím náruživější, čím více jest posíván třeba - vlastními asimilovanými souvěrci. Lpějí na něm právě tak, jako na svém pravověří, na svém kroji, na svých zvycích, tradicích a znalci z literatury židovským žargonem ujištějí, že srdce židovské nikdy nepronálivilo žádným jiným jazykem tak nefalšované, tak opravdové a tak ryze básnické, tak plamenně a zas tak až k slzám teskne, jako právě milovaným žargonem. Jest jazykem těch mezi Židy, kteří zůstali sami sobě nejvěrnějšími a přes všechno zdání nejsou to právě nejnešt'astnější mezi nimi.\textsuperscript{23}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{21}See Kieval, \textit{The Making of Czech Jewry}, p. 162.


\textsuperscript{23}[\v{C}apek-Chod], 'Čtyřjazyčná Praha. I', \textit{\v{N}árodní listy}, 5 February 1915, p. 3; see also: Papers: \v{C}apek-Chod; the author's own newspaper clippings, 1914-1915; PNP. This article evinces the same perception of the Jews as foreigners which one finds in \v{C}apek's letter to Kvapil. See: Papers: Jaroslav Kvapil; letters from \v{C}apek-Chod to Kvapil, 1912-1920; letter dated 26 November
These words lend support to Donath’s interpretation of Čapek-Chod’s works, which otherwise does not seem plausible. Several paragraphs on, however, the author expresses approval of the efforts of the Czech-Jewish movement. Part II of ‘Čtyřjazyčná Praha’ provides a brief history of the persecution of the Jews in the Bohemian Lands; the author asserts that the Jews felt great empathy for and gave assistance to the persecuted Czech Brethren. The nature of the Galician Jews as outsiders at home and abroad is emphasized; the author writes that in their native towns, ‘chodí jako u nás, v téže odpuzenosti a cizotě, jaké se jim dostalo za úděl, při níž trvají s houžavnatou a téměř fanatickou samovolností, pravzor konservativmu!’ Minor details in the article concur with the representation of the Jews in Čapek-Chod’s fiction; the author comments on the vitality of the Jews, which has persisted despite social and economic restrictions imposed on them for centuries; he praises the beauty of Prague Jewish women; and he comments that while there are few ‘krasavci’ among Galician Jewish men, they served as models for the handsome patriarchal figures Hynais sketched in preparation for his ‘Kristus před Pilátem’.

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25[Čapek-Chod], ‘Čtyřjazyčná Praha. II’, Národní listy, 9 February 1915, p. 3; see also: Papers: Čapek-Chod; the author’s own newspaper clippings, 1914-1915; PNP. Compare, for example, the description of the patriotic Czech Jew Eliab, who shows support for Czechs persecuted after the Battle of the White Mountain, in J. J. Kolar’s Pražský Žid (1872).

26‘Čtyřjazyčná Praha. II’.

27The reference to Hynais also suggests Čapek-Chod’s authorship. In this article the author notes the ‘ťesnohnudost a nepatrná plicní kapacita a celá povšechná nedorostlost postavy’ of the Jews, which he attributes to the unhealthy environments in which they have been forced to live. Ibid. One might relate Freund’s asthma to this.
In the third feuilleton the author reviews *Das jüdische Prag*, produced by the Bohemian Zionist newspaper Selbstwehr in 1917. The anthology is described as, ‘Neobyčejně zajímavý, ano jedinečné interesantní sešit’. The translations of verse from Czech to German are praised. The author concentrates, however, on two essays treating relations between Jews and Czechs in Prague by Theodor Herzl and Hermann Bahr. While not rejecting it outright, the author obviously does not approve of Herzl’s view that Prague Jews should align themselves with the Germans as their cultural kin. The author does agree with the assertion by Paul Leppin (1878-1945) that Jews have had a dominant influence on German art, press, theatre and literature in Prague. The author’s admiration for the poems of Herbert Fuchs, especially the poem ‘Úsměv’, again reveals a preoccupation with the Jew as outsider and as having a divided self:

Pražskožidovský básník H. Fuchs nezná žádného pražského žida s dobrým úsměvem, jaký jest bezděčným reflexem harmonické duše. Usmívají-li se pražští židé, vědí prý velmi dobře, že se usmívají, a vědí také proč se usmívají, někdy prý ze samolibosti, někdy aby se vysmívali, někdy aby jiným byli příjemní. Nikdy však to není výslní latentního veselí, odraz přijatých světelných paprsků. Nejsme to my v tom našem úsměvu, nýbrž stojíme vedle svých navrasklých úst a pozorujeme je. Ale jsme-li docela upřímní, zajde nám i tento úsměv.  

3. Realia
Among Čapek-Chod’s peripheral references to Jews, I treat first popular expressions that serve to characterize the speaker rather than reveal the attitude of the author. The phrase, ‘ani za

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29 [Čapek-Chod], ”*Das jüdische Prag*”, Národní Listy, 20 December 1916, p. 1; see: Papers: Čapek-Chod; the author’s own clippings, Čapek-Chod’s feuilletons published in Národní listy, 1914-1916; PNP. The author notes that in the anthology Czech is referred to as ‘der böhmischen’, a detail which supports the supposition that Čapek-Chod was involved in the ‘böhmisch/čechisch’ polemics (1906). See below.

30 ”*Das jüdische Prag*”. 
pečenýho žida’, uttered by the sanctimonious small-town factory-worker Baruša in ‘Němák’, indicates the character’s milieu.\textsuperscript{31} The phatic function of the expression, the literal meaning of which has become effaced, reveals an historical anti-Jewish prejudice of this milieu. The expression is intended to indicate the narrow horizons of the character. Julie, in ‘Experiment’, utters the same phrase. When Slaba tries to induce her to stay at his clinic with the offer of breakfast, she replies, ‘Ani kdybyste mi dal kus pečenýho žida – nechci’.\textsuperscript{32} Slaba’s comment clarifies the characterizing function of the expression: ‘Pronesla tuto vulgárnost vorařské mluvy se záluskem posupnosti, jen tak zasyčela.’\textsuperscript{33}

In other works one also finds that anti-Jewish expressions manifest the attitudes of poor, provincial or uneducated characters. In \textit{V třetím dvoře} two neighbours, the superintendent’s wife, paní hausinšpektorová, and the grocer’s wife, paní Hudrychová, gossip about Benýšek’s legal case. Paní hausinšpektorová describes the lawyer Paussig as ‘řáléj mazanej žid’.\textsuperscript{34} The conventional phrase suggests both admiration and contempt. That the narrator shares her assumptions concerning the ‘wily’ nature of the Jews is indicated by his description of the ‘rysy vychytralé semitské tváře advokátovy’.\textsuperscript{35} In ‘Dar svatého Floriána’ the town in which the story is set, Zbořov, shares a ‘chapel’ with the neighbouring community Spáňovice; every week the chapel is dragged from one town to the other. The rural dean

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{31}Čapek-Chod, ‘Němák’, p. 104.
\item \textsuperscript{32}Čapek-Chod, ‘Experiment’, p. 56. See Kvapil’s article, in which he mentions that Čapek-Chod used the same expression. Jaroslav Kvapil, ‘Nejzápadnější Slovan’, \textit{O čem vím. Sto kapitol o lidech a dějích z mého života}, Prague, 1932, p. 328.
\item \textsuperscript{33}Čapek-Chod, ‘Experiment’, p. 56.
\item \textsuperscript{34}Čapek-Chod, \textit{V třetím dvoře}, p. 165.
\item \textsuperscript{35}Ibid., p. 176.
\end{itemize}
who serves both communities attacks this kind of devotion as 'pohanským ne-li židovský lakomý'.

Comments on antisemitism occur infrequently. In Antonín Vondrejc Iza describes selling her passport to a Russian Jew whom she meets in Germany; she is shocked by the suffering the Russian Jews have endured in pogroms. Nečasek Senior is horrified when his son marries the Jewish Iza and, had he had the strength to tear up his will on his death bed, he would have disinherited his son. When Elsa Pinkusová is taken on at the 'U Šaršlů' pub, she has to adopt the ethnically-neutral name 'Anna'; she tells Vondrejc: 'Traktér u Šaršlů povídal, že to jednou netrpí, takový jméno že nepatří do poctivého lokálu, a potom, ta Anna, co tam byla přede mnou, prodala mi jméno.'

Other minor references to Jews scattered throughout Čapek-Chod's works provide information about the perception of the Jews as social outsiders, 'parasites' and allies of the Habsburgs. Sometimes the Jews are identified with certain 'ignoble' occupations: in Nejzápadnější Slovan and 'Dceruška Jairova', reference is made to Jews buying hair from the local country girls. In the novel, the shearing of Madlena's hair is related

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37 Čapek-Chod, Antonín Vondrejc, p. 353. Iza almost falls victim to the white slave trade.

38 Ibid., p. 435.

39 Ibid., p. 363.

40 Moldanová writes that Čapek-Chod does not portray Prague as a city of nationality conflicts: 'zachycuje barvitou symbiózu české majority s pražskými Němcí a Židy'. Dobrava Moldanová, 'Zapomínané dědictví: Karel Matěj Čapek-Chod', Literární měsíčník, 16 (1987), 7, p. 102.

41 Čapek-Chod, Nejzápadnější Slovan, pp. 94-7, 106; 'Dceruška Jairova', p. 273-4. Riff writes of the intermediary role of the Jews in the developing capitalist economy of rural Bohemia; many were shopkeepers, pedlars, moneylenders and publicans. Riff, 'The Assimilation of the Jews of Bohemia', p. 109. Compare with the depiction of the Jewish characters who sell spirits in Jaroslav
by Hvězda, an unreliable narrator whose point of view cannot be identified with the author's. Hvězda's antisemitism is revealed by his descriptions of the Jew as a 'malý svrašťelý žid, Semejčik s žilnatýma rukama', and as an 'umazaným Hebrejcem'. Hvězda describes the incident as if Madlena's father were procuring her for the Jew:

Děvče drželo oběma rukama šátek křečovité přes uši a pustilo teprve, když starý nemilosrdně udeřil ji po prstech. Jedním hmatem strl jí šátek s hlavy a na hřbet spadla jí těžce záplava vlasů, na dív mocná, obestřela ramena a lehla vlnou až na desku lávky; [...] Ačkoliv vlasy celou postavu děvčete zastřely, bylo mi, jako kdyby se byla obnažila, zjevila se mi v plné ženskosti. Jakoby ti dva starci, hrabající se v těch kyprých zlatých vláčích, strojili se spáchat hřich proti přírodě. Dívoun neshodu v tou okamžiku napadly mě dvě myšlenky. Že žid smuvil cenu, dřív než předmět koupě viděl, a pak slovo 'zkomolit'.

The narrator ironizes this sentimental reaction with the description of Hvězda slipping and falling on the grass as he rushes to prevent the hair being cut. In 'Dceruška Jairova', Baruška states that she has received twenty crowns and a silk scarf for her hair; resentment and distrust are expressed in Stach's comment: 'Žid vám dá desítku a sám prodá za pět set a šátek je hadr'. Pavlína's mother, in V třetím dvoře, mentions a Jewish seamstress, who charges high prices. In 'Berane burci!', the narrator describes a goat in pursuit of its shadow butting a tree-trunk: 'Rozlehl se třesk, jako když žid před

Hašek's Osudy dobrého vojáka Švejka za světové války (1921-23).


Čapek-Chod, Nejzápadnější Slovan [1921 edition], pp. 95-6. One is reminded of the depiction of the rich Jews in Petr Bezruč's Slezské písně (1909).

Čapek-Chod, Nejzápadnější Slovan, p. 96.


Čapek-Chod, V třetím dvoře, p. 10. A Jewish woman selling cloth is also mentioned in 'Chvojka', Ad hoc!, p. 20.
hospodou báci pytlem kostí o zem’. The similreflects of the association of the Jews with the rag-and-bone trade. In 'Úvodník' reference is made to another of the traditional trades of the Jews: dealing in animal hides. Dr Fux, who examines prospective clients for an insurance agency, tells the journalist Kandrt: 'Bud’te ujištěn, že by žid za mou kůži nabídil o padesát procent méně než za vaši'. The doctor's name suggests that he is Jewish. His portrayal manifests in miniature the main features of other, more complex, male Jewish characters in Čapek-Chod’s works: black humour, and a craftiness which masks, and masochistically serves, sentimentality. Dr Fux’s black humour is evident in his congratulations to Kandrt on the survival of his organism considering the stress that he is under at work. His wiliness and sentimentality are evident in that he dishonestly takes out an insurance policy for himself, so that through his death from an incurable disease he provides for his faithless but beloved wife.

In Kaspar Lén mstitel, 'Dědek fajfka' earns a living in the winter by sewing army uniforms for a Jew, who presumably commissions piece-work to various seasonal workers; in this case the Jew acts as a middle-man between Czech workers and the Austrian Army. In 'Dar svatého Floriána', a Jew is identified with Austrian businessmen. Posel z Capartic, the local newspaper favourable to the mayor Jírovce, relates that a representative of Viennese magnates and 'pashas' of the international grain market tries to bribe Jírovce to destroy the harvest with a hailstorm; Jírovce possesses a magic 'weather rope'. The narrator states: 'Byla prý tenkrát strejčkovi Jírovcojc nabízena nějaká ukrtná suma, ale když mu dáváno na srozuměnou, oč se jedná, jen

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47 Čapek-Chod, 'Berane burch!', p. 201.
48 Čapek-Chod, 'Úvodník', p. 97. See also Munelis in 'Dvě vdovy'.
49 Čapek-Chod, 'Úvodník', pp. 94-5.
50 Ibid., p. 98.
51 Čapek-Chod, Kaspar Lén mstitel, p. 57.
tak jednou rukou popad' podavky a byl by snad žida připíchl ke vratům, jak se po něm rozechnal.\textsuperscript{52} To destroy the impression that Jírovec is above corruption, the narrator reports a story carried by a rival newspaper, Čmertovské listy, detailing a deal which the mayor makes with a sugar refinery.\textsuperscript{53} In 'Mates Holejch' the Jewish Hendrych smuggles horses into Bavaria with Mates and Frolínek. Hendrych, out of fear, fires a shot from his revolver, alerting the customs and excise officers; the two other smugglers are caught.\textsuperscript{54} Rumours spread that Hendrych had collaborated with the officers.\textsuperscript{55}

Other minor details suggest cultural differences between Jews and non-Jews. Dr Paussig, in \textit{V třetím dvoře}, reads the Prague German newspaper Bohemia.\textsuperscript{56} Žibřid's uncle Jakub/Jacques Papperstein reads the Prager Tagblatt, as does Artur Stein.\textsuperscript{57} Jewish children take French lessons from the eponymous konteska Fina.\textsuperscript{58}

\textbf{4. Jewish Male Characters}

I consider male characters specifically described as Jewish, as well as those, like Armin Frey or Dr Freund, who may be identified as Jewish.\textsuperscript{59}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{52}Čapek-Chod, 'Dar svatého Floriána', p. 106. See also the reference to 'židovští pilousové'. Ibid., p. 31-2.
\item \textsuperscript{53}Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{54}Čapek-Chod, 'Mates Holejch', p. 295.
\item \textsuperscript{55}Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{56}Čapek-Chod, \textit{V třetím dvoře}, p. 111. The Germanized Czech Richard Terttlo also reads this newspaper. Ibid., p. 31. A much more condemnatory portrait of Jewish identification with German culture is presented in Šimáček's 'Chamradina', in \textit{Ze zápisků phil. stud. Filipa Kořínka}, vol. 2 (1897).
\item \textsuperscript{57}Čapek-Chod, 'Dvě vdovy', \textit{Ad hoc!}, p. 166; 'Dceruška Jairova', ibid., p. 307.
\item \textsuperscript{58}Čapek-Chod, 'Konteska Fina', \textit{Osmero novel}, p. 377.
\item \textsuperscript{59}I discuss female Jewish characters in the chapter which treats the depictions of woman in Čapek-Chod's works.
\end{itemize}
Dr Paussig, the first complex Jewish character introduced in Čapek-Chod's works, acts as Benýšková's lawyer in V třetím dvoře. He speaks both Czech and German. The defining aspects of later major Jewish characters are manifest in Dr Paussig. He manifests his generosity when he gives his clerk Richard Terttlo a pay rise of three guilder a month; Paussig has just learned that his wife is pregnant and he wishes to share his happiness with others. He has an impulsive temperament, exploding at the news that Terttlo has falsely represented himself as a lawyer, acting on behalf of Benýšek. Paussig's sentimentality is suggested when he commissions Benýšek to produce an oil painting of the lawyer's newborn son. Yet Paussig is also direct and shrewd, commenting on Benýšek's case: 'to jsou nějaké obchody!'. That he is not in the least perturbed to hear that Benýšek lives out of wedlock with Růžena indicates the lawyer's common sense. His earthy, unpretentious nature contrasts with Benýšek's obsequiousness; Paussig objects to the titles with which the painter addresses him, stating: 'Prosím vás, co máte pořád s tou slovutností. Já jsem doktor práv a advokát a dost.' Paussig's education and affluence distinguish him from the other characters living in the third courtyard. But there is more than a social gap between them; Paussig is as far removed from their squabbles and deceptions as the narrator or the reader. This is underlined in that Paussig's 'no-nonsense' letter to Benýšek constitutes the conclusion of the novel. This suggests a proximity between Paussig's point of view and that of the implied author.

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60 See for example: Čapek-Chod, V třetím dvoře, p. 34. Translations of the German are provided in parentheses in the text.

61 Ibid., p. 34.


63 Ibid., p. 114.

64 Ibid., p. 106.

65 Ibid., p. 111.
Two related aspects of Paussig’s character recur in the portraits of other Jewish men: the duality in his nature; and his near identification with the implied author. For Čapek-Chod, the Jewish man embodies the divided self; in Paussig this is manifest in that he is both sentimental and practical, that is, for Čapek-Chod, he has both ‘male’ and ‘female’ attributes. That the author assigns these qualities to sexes, practicality to woman, sentimentality to man, is evident, for example, in the contrast between Josef and Pepička in ‘Na valech’. Even if Paussig were not given the last word in the novel, his divided nature would suggest his similarity to the implied author. Biographical details tend to support this identification. Many personal recollections about Čapek-Chod describe a man who hid his emotions behind a mask of irony or gruffness. The tribute of his opponent in polemics Viktor Dyk is typical: ‘kdo se zahleděl v nestřežené chvíle na tohoto drsného obra, ochotného se své cesty odstraňovat tvrdě překážky, našel u tohoto drsného, rvavého obra něco nečekaně něžného. [...] V podstatě nelíšil se Čapek-Chod od typu, u něhož drsnost je jen maskou citlivosti’.

However, one need not resort to biographical sources. A similar portrait of the author as a Nietzschean ironist was drawn by many critics during his lifetime. Miroslav Rutte’s analysis of the author’s outlook epitomizes this understanding of Čapek-Chod: ‘Touha, z groteskni vše, groteskni vášeň i bolest, víru i skepsi, život i smrt, svléknouti lidskou duši ze všech illusi a zbošiti v ní vše veliké, prorazuje smutnou nevěru, sebou samou zmučenou, v níž výsměch je jakýmsi vzdorným, ukrytým povzdechem.’ This perception of a duality in the author constitutes an attempt to explain the ‘grotesque’ aspects of his


works, that is, the confusion of incompatibles. This 'confusion' is manifest in a large number of Čapek-Chod's characters, for example, in the clash between a character's physical limitations and his or her desires. The Jews are, however, the only group of characters to be described individually as inherently divided; the Jew thus becomes identified with the divided self and Jewishness becomes an emblem of the grotesque. Rutte almost suggests as much in 'K šedesátinám K. M. Čapka-Choda': 'Tato vášeň kontrastů, jež s naturalistickou zvědavostí pozoruje člověka, uchopeného pákou osudu, zatímco se zároveň z výše podivuje s nihilistickým úsměvem dokonalému mechanismu stroje, naplňuje jeho knihy stálou podvojností lítosti a výsměchu.' He adds, in his analysis of 'Dceruška Jairova': 'projevuje se K. M. Čapek-Chod znovu co bystrý znatel židovské duše, která ho přitahuje svým exotismem a prudkými kontrasty hloubky a mělkosti, mysticismu a praktičnosti, osobitosti a kulturního snobismu'.

Turbina begins and ends with the character of the Polish Orthodox Jew Leib Blumenduft. The motif of duality informs the depiction of the Jew in both scenes. Although all the major characters in the novel are divided and practice deception or self-deception, Blumenduft is the only figure who is not only conscious but also tolerant of this duality. In the case of the other characters, one aspect of the self eventually dominates; only Blumenduft sustains a contradiction within his nature. When first introduced Blumenduft stands before a mirror, preparing to cut his side-locks so that he will not be recognized when he visits Frey at the Ullik household. By doing so, Blumenduft violates the Orthodox prohibition on cutting the hair as well as that on working on the Sabbath; his blasphemy is magnified in

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68 My interpretation has been influenced by Le Rider's study of crises of identity and fin-de-siècle conceptions of Jewishness. Le Rider, Modernity and Crises of Identity, pp. 165-83.


70 Ibid., p. 688. In this article, Rutte also points out the similarities between the character Jiří Stach ('Dceruška Jairova') and Antonín Vondrejc. Ibid., p. 687.
that it is committed on the first day of the Jewish New Year. The conflict between Blumenduft’s religious principles and the need to violate these for business reasons is represented by a quarrel which he has with his image in the mirror: ‘Sám sobě podivil se Leib, jak se mu podařil nóbí ironický výsměch do tváře hloupému chudému židu, který naň vyzíral zpoza oprýskanin zrcadla, nebot’ Leib před zrcadlem a Leib v zrcadle byli docela dva různí židé a tomu v zrcadle nic nepomáhalo, že se také smál neméně ironicky.’ With the mirror device the narrator is able to convey the complexities of a character who is at once horrified and pleased that he has been able to pretend to fool himself. The narrator comments:

His rebellious relationship with God and his determination not to be robbed by the earthly representatives of the Lord also manifest Blumenduft’s duality; he does not intend to give the rabbi a percentage of the profit he will earn from the deal with Frey. The depiction of Blumenduft is developed with what the contemporary reader would regard as antisemitic clichés: Leib is avaricious; he utters the words ‘Padesát tisíc zlatých! Padesát! Čistého zisku!’ as if they were a charm; he has no appreciation for the beauty of a work of art. Blumenduft’s

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71Čapek-Chod, Turbina, p. 10. Langer expresses his appreciation of the novel: Papers: Čapek-Chod; a letter on a calling-card, from František Langer to Čapek-Chod, 1920; PNP.

72Čapek-Chod, Turbina, p. 11.

73Ibid., p. 13.

74Ibid., p. 14.

75Ibid., p. 15.

76Ibid., p. 19.

77Ibid., p. 36.
praise of Frey's cunning may strike the contemporary reader as conventional; the narrator comments that for the Jews 'E' geschaitr Mann' is a greater compliment than 'E' gerechtr Mann'. However, the narrator endorses rather than criticizes this point of view; for the narrator, the just man is an impossibility; in the world described in Turbína there can exist only the more and the less deceived.

Blumenduft repeats this praise on hearing of Frey's death: 'E geschaiter Mon wor er!'. It occurs to Nezmará, who informs Blumenduft of the death, that the Polish Jew is the only one to shed tears over Frey. The narrator comments: 'Co však pochopiti nemohl, tot' i dík Blumenduťů sau smrt Arminovu i usedavý pláč jeho nad ní'. This mixed response is not only appropriate to Blumenduft's divided self, but also to the grotesque nature of Armin Frey's death. The narrator attempts to evoke such an ambivalent reaction in the reader; this is underlined by the narrator's description of the response of the Czech workers to Armin's death. The workers laugh when the drowned kitten is found clutched in Frey's hands; the narrator calls them 'surovci', stating: 'Složky tohoto příšerného kontrastu nezasáhly ovšem jich útlocit z té prosté příčiny, že se nenalézal v inventáři jich duševních mohutností.' The narrator returns to Blumenduft at the conclusion of the novel because the Jew is the only character who can respond fully (and thus make explicit for the reader) to the grotesque aspect of Frey's death and the collapse of the Ullik fortune.

The narrator may also indicate that Frey is Jewish, as his name suggests. The reader is first introduced to Frey through

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78 Ibid., p. 46.
79 Ibid., p. 586.
80 Ibid. Blumenduft is relieved that the one man who knows the identity of the forger of the manuscripts is no longer alive.
81 Ibid., p. 562.
82 Several critics have also written about the similarities between the Ullik family and that of the opera singer Ema Destinnová, née Kittlová. See, for example, Bohumil Plevka, 'Ema
Blumenduft’s thoughts. Blumenduft curses Frey for the sum he will demand for the false manuscript bindings. The curse he uses, ‘proklatý hrbač, jemuž by mělo krom jeho křivých zad růst kamení v břišě a rybíz na nose’, is one which he would most likely address to a fellow Jew, as the narrator comments in the footnote. The business transaction between Blumenduft and Frey, during which one forger tries to outwit the other, only to be reassured of the other’s cunning, resembles the interaction between the Orthodox Jew Munelis and the assimilated Jew Žibřid described in ‘Dvě vdovy’. When the livestock dealer Žibřid makes fun of the skin trader’s stinking wares, Munelis pretends to take umbrage, replying: ‘Ale, pane Papperstein, oni provozujou přece ten samej obchod ve velkém, co já v malém! [...] To jest, jistěj rozdíl by tady byl přece jenom, já kupuji kozlečí, králičí, zaječí a taky někdy i psi kůže už stažený, ale oni, pane Papperstein, je shajou lidem s těla.’

As the narrator does not specifically identify Frey as Jewish, one may only speculate. Even if Frey cannot be identified as Jewish by descent, he may possess qualities which the author identifies with the Jews. Weininger, conventionally regarded as the quintessential self-hating Jew, elaborated on the notion that Jewishness was a mental, rather than a biologically inherited, quality: ‘I must, however, make clear what I mean by Judaism; I mean neither a race nor a people nor a recognised creed. I think of it as a tendency of the mind, as a psychological constitution which is a possibility for all mankind’. Thus, according to


Čapek-Chod, Turbina, p. 15.

Ibid., pp. 39-46.


Weininger, some Aryans, like Wagner, are more Jewish than those born of Jewish parents. If Čapek-Chod identifies certain mental qualities with the Jews, then he can be said to have a conception of a Jewish 'type'; one thus may be justified in considering the 'Jewishness' of a character in whom these qualities appear. Frey may be such a 'Jewish' type, even if the narrator does not specify that he is Jewish.

This approach is flawed in that it gives the critic the liberty to decide which characters are Jewish. Čapek-Chod's contemporary, František Sekanina (1875–1958), asserts that at least a third of Čapek-Chod's works are concerned with a Jewish milieu. He assumes that Freund, Tynda and Helena ('Dusza ordynarna ...') are Jewish; among works concerned with the Jews he includes, without explanation, stories from Nedělní povídky. He states that the Jewish milieu attracted Čapek-Chod because he found in it those features of greatest interest to him: 'nejenom vyspělé sklony umělecké ostře vyhraněný kult rodinné intimity, ale i bujnou smyslnost, soběstačnou bezohlednost, společenské siláctví, prudkou robustnost vášní, bizarerii a hysterické záchvaty povahové.' Sekanina's assertion reveals that there is a danger in attempting to derive a 'Jewish type' from Čapek-Chod's works. This problem of interpretation arises with the character of Dr Freund, whom contemporaneous and later critics have assumed to be Jewish, although the narrator only states that Freund is German. An interpretation of Freund's 'Jewishness',

p. 221.

87 Weininger, Sex and Character, p. 305.


90 Ibid., p. 330.

however, is essential to an understanding of the character and his function in the novel.

5. Dr Freund

Various reasons might have led the contemporaneous reader to regard Freund as Jewish. At the turn of the century, most Czechs identified the German minority in Prague with the Jews,\textsuperscript{92} thus, because of his German surname and the fact that he is a native speaker of German, Freund might be automatically considered a Jew by the Czech reader.\textsuperscript{93} Freund's diction suggests that his cultural background is similar to Blumenduft's. Freund tells Vondrejc, 'Když o filosofii slyším, leze mi už veš přes játru!'.\textsuperscript{94} Blumenduft uses the same expression in German; the narrator of Turbina provides a translation and the following explanation in a footnote: 'podle pověry polskočešovské je to příčinou jaterních chorob. Jinak užívá se pořekadla toho na označení něčí svrchnané mrzuté nálady.'\textsuperscript{95} Freund has acquired doctorates in subjects which qualify one for professions which attracted a high proportion of Jews, that is, medicine and law.\textsuperscript{96} Freund's first name, Jakub, is the same as that of Anna and Iza's


\textsuperscript{93}By a decree of 1787, all Jews were required to have German first names and surnames, and thus by name alone tended to be identified with the German minority. Riff, 'The Assimilation of the Jews of Bohemia', p. 11.

\textsuperscript{94}Čapek-Chod, Antonín Vondrejc, p. 144.

\textsuperscript{95}Čapek-Chod, Turbina, p. 19. The expression is provided in German: 'e' Laus is ihm Überde Leber gekrochen, wern se sagn'. Ibid., pp. 18-19.

\textsuperscript{96}See Gary B. Cohen, 'Jews in German Society: Prague, 1860-1914', Central European History, 10 (1977), March, 1, pp. 28-54, p. 43.
Jewish uncle, Suchářípa.⁹⁷ Suchářípa, when he first meets Freund on the street, takes him for a fellow Orthodox Jew and asks him for directions to Vondrejč’s flat. The uncle comments on the fact that Freund sends him in the wrong direction: ‘Spíš žid napálí žída než velebnéj pán, tak jsem si myslel, jináč není, než že ten velebnéj pán zná Prahu špatně …’.⁹⁸

Freund possesses certain characteristics conventionally attributed to the Jews: he is a polyglot; at the pub Upanišády, he declaims in English and Sanskrit.⁹⁹ He claims to be fluent in English and French.¹⁰⁰ The antisemitic stereotyping of the Jews as interpreters rather than creators is ironized in Freund’s comment on his gifts as a translator: ‘Můj talent jest, bud’ to Bohu žalováno, jen reproduktivní’.¹⁰¹ This self-appraisal may be undermined by Freund’s claim, which the narrator and the poet endorse, to have ‘made’ Vondrejč; the narrator states: ‘Vondrejcovi byl dr. Freund milejší než Bůh, nebot’ Bůh Vondrejce toliko stvořil, dr. Freund jej udělal, byl mu tedy vděčen za


⁹⁸Ibid., p. 405. From the uncle’s comments about his good relations with the local priest in his town, one gains an impression of religious tolerance in the countryside. Ibid. This is somewhat undermined by the uncle’s atavistic fear of the priest who arrives to administer the last rites and marry Anna to Vondrejč. Ibid., p. 416.

⁹⁹Ibid., pp. 163, 229. One might add that in this respect, as in, for example, his passion for chess, Freund resembles the author. By the turn of the century the vast majority of Bohemian Jews was bilingual in Czech and German. Kieval, The Making of Czech Jewry, p. 61. On the Jews as a polyglot nation, see Neruda’s antisemitic study, ‘’Pro strach židovský’. Politická studie’, Studie, krátké a kratší [1876], vol. 2, 3rd edition, Prague, 1910, p. 39. The article is derivative of Wagner’s ‘Das Judentum in der Musik’.

¹⁰⁰Čapek-Chod, Antonín Vondrejč, p. 140.

¹⁰¹Ibid. Wagner writes: ‘Our whole European art and civilization, however, have remained to the Jew a foreign tongue: for, just as he has taken no part in the evolution of the one, so has he taken none in that of the other’. Richard Wagner, ‘Jews in Music’, On Music and Drama, H. Ashton Ellis (trans.), Lincoln and London, 1964, p. 52. See also: Neruda, ‘’Pro strach židovský’’, pp. 45–6; for the notion that Jews (and women) lack genius, see Weininger, Sex and Character, pp. 316–19.
prokázanou čest jak náleží.' Freund has 'made' Vondrejc in that he has drawn critical attention to the poet's work through his translations; Freund may also have recreated the poems through his interpretations.

Minor details in descriptions of Freund's appearance align him with Jewish characters. The narrator portrays him with 'mohutnými vlasy nad smolu černějšimi, v týli vodorovně zastříženými, takže vypadaly jako střapcovitý žíněný chochol na příbě dvorního harciře'. Iza's hair is also described as 'žíně'. In 'Dceruška Jairova', Baruška states that Irma-Máňa does not have hair, but 'vlašiny' or 'žíně'. Freund's frame is characterized by a 'gotická hubenost'; the torso of the Jewish prostitute in 'Beethovenův večer' reminds the narrator of late Gothic woodcuts.

The defining feature of Freund's appearance consists in the mask-like quality of his face. That Freund's image is a guise is underlined consistently: the narrator states that Vondrejc, meeting Freund a second time, 'dlouho nemohl zapomenouti na jeho z masky vlasů a vousů bolestně vyzírající oči'.

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103 For example, Vondrejc acquires the nickname 'náš básník' when his co-workers at Mírný pokrok learn of the positive reception of Freund's translations. Ibid., p. 68.

104 See, for example, ibid., p. 142. Thus, with the character of Freund, the author may be participating in the fin-de-siècle debate on the relation between the artist and his critics; that Freund is awarded a state prize for his translation, rather than Vondrejc for the original collection, may constitute an ironic comment on the apparent triumph of the critic over the artist, as well as that of the German over the Czech.

105 Ibid., p. 136.

106 Ibid., p. 370.


108 Capek-Chod, Antonín Vondrejc, p. 137.


110 Capek-Chod, Antonín Vondrejc, p. 78.
detailed description of Freund, on the day the poet and translator encounter one another on the way to the Statthalter’s office, suggests the artificial quality of his appearance:

\[ \text{Blkalo se o něm, že jest černě oblečen až po obočí,} \\
\text{čímž velmi trefně vystižena jeho smolnými vousy až po} \\
\text{ocí zarostlá tvář. Čněl z ní jenom příkře ostrý a} \\
\text{rovný, papírově bílý nos. Leckdo páchil Freundův nos,} \\
\text{podobný půl rovnoměrného trojúhelníka, za falešný.} \\
\text{Zdaleka dodával Freundovi ovšem vzezření směšného.}\]

On the same occasion the narrator refers to Freund as a ‘huňatá maska s mrtvým nosem’.\(^{112}\) His face is portrayed in the same terms in the Upanisády sequence.\(^{113}\)

The description of his face as a mask identifies Freund with Jewish characters. Blumenduft’s disguise constitutes a metaphor for his divided self. Likewise with Freund, the fact that he is concealed and revealed by his appearance corresponds to his nature, which is ‘ironic’ in Schlegel’s sense of the term. The narrator provides information about Freund by commenting directly on his manner of speaking: ‘Vždycky začínal paradoxem, někdy vtipným, někdy nedotaženým’.\(^{114}\) Vondrejc also reflects on Freund’s shifting, self-contradicting nature: ‘Vondrejc počal prozirati temperament dr. Freunda; skládal se z chvíl, z nichž každa byla opakem předešlé. Patrně neměl žádného literárního, uměleckého a filosofického přesvědčení, anebo podle nálady několikrát za den.’\(^{115}\) Freund’s nature is manifest in his habit of contradicting himself; when he makes Vondrejc’s acquaintance, Freund praises the poet’s writing, but adds: ‘Zpravidla není lyrika nic jiného než platonické sebeprznění’.\(^{116}\) Freund states that philosophy is useless: ‘Philosophieren, to znamená upotřebití schopností, daných člověku k účelům biologickým, pro

\(^{111}\)Ibid., p. 137.  
\(^{112}\)Ibid., p. 143.  
\(^{113}\)Ibid., pp. 208-9.  
\(^{114}\)Ibid., p. 136.  
\(^{115}\)Ibid., p. 171.  
\(^{116}\)Ibid., p. 76. The translation of Freund’s German is provided by the editor in a footnote. Ibid., p. 504.
spekulace transcendentní.'"¹¹⁷ Such a statement might lead one to conclude that Freund was a materialist, yet he qualifies the statement with the Kantian comment: 'Systém rodí systém, a žádný z nich nepřišel a nepřijde na poslední příčinu a na věc na sobě.'"¹¹⁸ Likewise in his diatribes at the 'wedding party', Freund's philosophical position is inconsistent."¹¹⁹ Freund's protean character is manifest in that he interrupts his diatribe on the god within us to gulp down a sausage."¹²⁰ It is also suggested by the dying visions Vondrejc has of Freund: while discoursing on the possibility of the subject becoming its own object of contemplation, Freund is transformed into a poodle;"¹²¹ he reappears as Death."¹²² By representing Freund as the embodiment of a paradox, the author gives grotesque expression to the conception of the 'divided' Jew.

This understanding of the double, unstable identity of the Jew is represented in Čapek-Chod's works as an alternation between sentimentality and shrewdness, as in the case of Dr Paussig; between the demands of religion and those of business or family (Blumenduft, Suchářípa); between Czech and German 'national' affiliations (Siegfried Papperstein, Artur Stein);"¹²³ between desire and practicality (Max Blaustern). Weininger

¹¹⁷Ibid., p. 145.
¹¹⁸Ibid.
¹¹⁹His theories combine aspects of monism and Schopenhauerian mysticism (freedom of the Will through the transcendence of desire). Vondrejc also relates Freund's exposition to Bergson's theory of intuition. Ibid., p. 414.
¹²⁰Ibid., pp. 402-3.
¹²¹Ibid., pp. 467-68. Compare with Mephistopheles in Goethe's Faust.
¹²²Čapek-Chod, Antonín Vondrejc, p. 472.
identifies this instability, which he perceives in the Jew, with the néant:

Belief is everything. It does not matter if a man does not believe in God; let him believe in atheism. But the Jew believes nothing; he does not believe his own belief; he doubts as to his own doubt. He is never absorbed by his own joy, or engrossed by his own sorrow. He never takes himself in earnest, and so never takes any one else in earnest. [...] He is not a critic, but only critical; he is not a sceptic in the Cartesian sense, not a doubter who sets out from doubt towards truth, but an ironist; as, for instance, to take a conspicuous example, Heine.

What, then is the Jew if he is nothing that a man can be? What goes on within him if he is utterly without finality, if there is no ground in him which the plumb line of psychology may reach?

The psychological contents of the Jewish mind are always double or multiple. There are always before him two or many possibilities, where the Aryan, although he sees as widely, feels himself limited in his choice. [...] Internal multiplicity is the essence of Judaism, internal simplicity that of the Aryan.\textsuperscript{124}

Through the character of Dr Freund Čapek-Chod represents, and ironizes, the conception of the Jew as the embodiment of this chaotic, creative principle.\textsuperscript{125}

The recurrent description of Freund’s eyes as beasts of prey hiding in the ‘caves’ or ‘lairs’ of their sockets also suggests that his face is a mask: ‘Vypadaly jako dva sousedé dravci v hlubokých jeskyních’;\textsuperscript{126} ‘Freund však zarazil se uprostřed řeči a dravé oči jako by byly vyšly ze svých hlubokých doupat podívat se ven’;\textsuperscript{127} ‘ukrutná obočí, jich husté brvy zastíraly oční důlky jako doupata šelem, zdvihla se a najevě přišly ubohé maniakální


\textsuperscript{125}Beller analyses the paradoxical aspects of the theories of Weininger, for whom the Jew was the embodiment of nihilism and potentially the redeemer of modern society. He writes that for Weininger: ‘At base this Jewish question was one of how to regain belief. The solution to the Jewish question was thus the solution to the general malady of mankind. The answer was self-overcoming.’ Beller, \textit{Vienna and the Jews, 1867-1938}, p. 224.

\textsuperscript{126}Čapek-Chod, Antonín Vondrejc, p. 137.

\textsuperscript{127}Ibid., p. 163.
oči'. On his deathbed, Vondrejc recognizes that the Commodore with whom he has been conversing is Death, and that Death's head is Freund's skull: 'Poznal jej přes to, že zlopostrings jeho oči již nebyly ve svých doupattech'. This metaphor for the eyes recalls the blind cave-dwelling newts of Vondrejc's poem 'Proteus anguineus'; Freund interprets these creatures as symbols of the drives of the unconscious ('zlé pudy dolního vědomí'). Reflecting on this poem, Freund states that the problem of self-awareness ('řešení problému des Ichbewußtseins') will eventually be solved by a lyric poet.

The motif of the eyes identifies Freund with the theme of the mystery of the self: his eyes look out from a mask; they are creatures concealed in a solid structure. The eyes reveal the soul understood as the impulses of the unconscious; the aggression and evil ascribed to the animal impulses of the unconscious are qualified by the description of Freund's eyebrows overhanging the 'den' of his eyes. The motif complements the preoccupation with knowledge of the self which characterizes Freund's philosophical speculations. As they discuss the nature of the self on the way to the Statthalter's office, Freund rejects Vondrejc's mechanistic model, derived from Mach. After the miracle during which Freund seems to raise Vondrejc from the dead, Freund expounds on his understanding of the relation between matter and spirit, or body and soul. In his last

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128 Ibid., pp. 390-1.
129 Ibid., p. 473.
130 Ibid., p. 138.
131 Ibid., p. 140.
132 Ibid., p. 142.
133 Ibid., pp. 143-45.
134 He argues that through successive generations, humankind must become further removed from matter until achieving an astral body. Ibid., pp. 408-10. There can be little doubt that the author satirizes Freund's theorizing, which culminates in the assertion that the energy of the planet, once the will of humans has been united, will take its place in the interplanetary net:
diatribe, in Vondrejc's death-bed vision, Freund reflects on the possibility of humankind's achieving self-knowledge: 'nám tvorům myslícím dotud bude odepřeno postřehnouti nejničnější jádro nepoznatelná - to jest obsah pojmů 'já', objektivaci subjektu -, dokud nebudeme s to sami do svých vlastních očí pohlédnouti'.

The author explores the nature of the self through the depiction of the divided Jew, embodied in grotesque form in the character of Dr Freund.

6. Post-war Works
In post-war works, Čapek-Chod depicts Jews assimilating to Czech society. These short stories can be read as social documents; the analysis, however, is more psychological than social. The imperfect nature of this assimilation corresponds with the author's conception of the divided Jew. The narrator of 'Dvě vdovy' relates the romantic entanglements of the Jewish rake Žibřid Paprštejn/Siegfried Papperstein, the youngest partner in the family agricultural produce firm; the story is set in an unidentified town in the southeastern Bohemian countryside.

The narrator depicts the Jewish family in the process of assimilation. Žibřid's father Siegfried, the senior partner of the firm and an agnostic, has converted to Christianity. That the conversion is motivated by practical considerations rather than religious conviction is suggested in that Siegfried does not adopt the name of a saint; Siegfried also defends his decision against the attacks of his brother Jacques, stating: 'Kdybys ty měl syna, taky bys možná jednal jako já [...] ale ty můž jenom

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Wireless-Telegraph-Company. Ibid., p. 413. Ironically, the greater Freund's preoccupation with freedom from matter, the more animal his behaviour. The reader, like Nečásek, is not convinced that Freund is able to overcome dualism in his theory or action. Ibid., p. 409.

Ibid., p. 467.

The firm deals with grain and farm products. Čapek-Chod, 'Dvě vdovy', p. 165. It also has a cattle-breeding branch. Ibid., p. 163.

Ibid., p. 165.
While Jacques has remained faithful to his religion, however, he has changed his name, during the war, to Jakub. Premature obituaries for Žibřid in the local newspaper appear in Czech, on behalf of the Christian head of the family, and in German, on behalf of the firm. The narrator comments ironically: 'Rovnoprávnost musela být.' Amongst themselves the family members speak a mixture of Czech and German. The family is thus depicted as having an ethnic identity distinct from that of the Germans and Czechs; the family is willing to abandon its attachment to the German language and, at least superficially, to the Jewish faith, in order to find greater acceptance among non-Jewish Czechs. The narrator does not appear to criticize this practical approach to the declaration of national and religious loyalties.

Satire on the ‘turncoat’ character of the Jews, however, becomes more pointed in the description of Siegfried’s response to his frustration in attempting to recover his son’s ‘corpse’. At first, Siegfried turns against the town and argues for the

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138 Ibid., p. 167. Beller notes that at the turn of the century in Austria conversion was ‘a great boost to any career’. Beller, Vienna and the Jews, 1867-1938, p. 189.

139 Perhaps because the latter sounds less foreign. Čapek-Chod, ‘Dvě vdovy’, p. 166.

140 Ibid., pp. 164-65.

141 Ibid., p. 165.

142 Munelis, the narrator states, does not have a good command of Czech or German. Ibid., p. 170. That the narrator does not provide translations for all the German phrases, as he does, for example, in V třetím dvoře, suggests that the use of German in Czech texts no longer raises the issue of national loyalty; certainly readers at the turn of the century would have had no greater difficulty understanding the German. Čapek-Chod was criticized for using German in his plays. See Bor. [Jan Jaroslav Strejček], ‘Begúv samokres’, Samostatnost, 11 March 1911, p. 135.

143 Contrast with the depiction of rural Czech Jews in Vojtěch Rakous’s Vojkovičtí a přespolní (1910).

144 Compare with Karel Poláček’s attitude to conversion in Povídky izraelského vyznání (1926), especially: ‘Rozhovor o náboženských otázkách’ and ‘Následky vystoupení z církve’. 
reinstatement of 'German' order and the rights of the German minority. This minority consists of fourteen people, eight of whom work for Siegfried, that is, are most likely his relations. However, when Karola wins the right to assume the title 'paní Pappersteinová', that is, she is recognized legally as Žibřid's widow, Siegfried turns against the Germans and embraces the Czechs. It is implied that he rejects the German nationality because the authorities have not served his interests in the legal battle with Karola; he prefers to align himself with the Czech 'underdogs'. The narrator satirizes Siegfried's fickle nature, rather than the town's response, with the comment: 'Veřejné mínění v městě vzalo s povděkem toto opětné úplné počestění firmy "Ž. Papperstein a spol.", resp. vrácení národu, všedně na vědomí, ač nebylo v jejich dějinách pořadem první.'

A similar ambiguity informs the narrator's treatment of the business acumen of the Jewish characters. The narrator relishes the wiliness of the Jewish characters; this is evident from the comic tone of the obituary which introduces the short story: 'Ano, Žibřida Paprštejna bylo, avšak není více! Žibřid pursues his own interests in business. His family recognizes the seriousness of his affair with Karola only when he abandons worship of the divine Profit. Žibřid is able to turn even his death to account; it is implied that the family smuggles goods inside his coffin, which is sent six times to Hungary in search of his corpse. Upon returning to his hometown, Žibřid

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146Ibid.
147This is suggested by the phrase: 'zkysl ve svém německém smýšlení tak, že se stal českým rebelantem'. Ibid., p. 202.
148Ibid.
149Ibid., p. 163.
150Ibid., p. 169.
151Ibid., p. 181.
152Ibid., p. 205.
advertises the sale of his coffin. The narrator admires this roguish versatility, but there may be a hint of reproach in the description of Žibřid being called up; he is conscripted as a clerk, not as a front-line soldier. Likewise the depiction of Munelis growing rich through buying up produce during the war may constitute criticism of profiteering from a patriotic point of view. Čapek-Chod employs a conventional interpretation of the Jew as adopting national loyalties for self-serving reasons, while at the same time indicating that the Jew is led to do so because of his social circumstances. The Jew is here portrayed as a trickster: vigorous, manipulative, deceptive, and finally successful. He belongs among Čapek-Chod’s ‘siláci’, rather than the ‘slaboši’; his strength derives from his use of masks, that is, his duality.

The character of Artur Stein, in ‘Dceruška Jairova’, manifests the distinctive aspects attributed to Jews in other works by Čapek-Chod: he is an outsider; and his ironic mask indicates his divided self. The depiction of Stein is complicated in that it is revealed to the reader through the eyes of the bigoted Stach. Since the short story is told from Stach’s point of view, it is only through the occasional ironic comments of the narrator that the reader is able to assess Stach’s perceptions. Through this qualification of Stach’s judgments, the reader obtains a twofold perception of Stein. His character is contrasted throughout with Stach’s: whereas Stein is impulsive, generous and unselfish in his devotion to his sister, Stach is hampered by social prejudices and self-deception.

Stach regards Stein as an outsider attempting to buy his way into Czech society. He is ashamed that Stein once paid his bill at a local pub. Stein is offended when Stach repays the debt, and states that he can only accept such a gesture if Stach will, in return, drink his champagne. That Stach perceives Stein as

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153 Ibid.


155 Ibid., pp. 194-95.
outsider is indicated by his reply: 'dr. Stach ozval se ještě
jízlivěji, že se pan Stein nepochybně domnívá, že "nám" svou
šampaňskou bude imponovat'. The narrator satirizes Stach’s
bigotry by representing him as weak-willed: despite his
reservations, Stach repeatedly succumbs to Stein’s demands. Stach
becomes drunk on Stein’s champagne, takes an oath of brotherhood
and accepts his hospitality. Stach tries to reassert his
dignity the next day by insisting that he will not eat at Stein’s
house. Stein fears social rejection; he tells Stach: ‘To bys mne
urazil a rozhněval na smrt! [...] Anebo abys se ... snad
štítíl?’. Stach submits to Stein’s pressure; the narrator
comments: ‘každým soustem mizelo mu jedno skrupulum po
druhém’. In the course of his leave, during which the army
medical officer visits the Steins’ house every day, Stach is
induced by Stein into an engagement with Irma-Máňa.

The reader learns from Stach of Stein’s poor taste,
characteristic of the nouveau riche. Stach is horrified by
Stein’s social pretensions, revealed by the livery which he
provides for his coachman. Stach assumes that Stein must
expect some material gain from his engagement to Irma-Máňa
because, he comments, ‘tito Arturové a ti ostatní jednají takto
jenom ze zíšnosti’. Stach notices how ridiculous Stein can

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is qualified for the reader later in the short story; the
narrator states that Stein is popular among the peasants and day-
labourers. Ibid., p. 240. Also, the narrator states that many
non-Jews attend Irma-Máňa’s funeral: ‘měšť’ Irmíčku Steinovu kde
do rád’. Ibid., p. 362. Donath’s assertion that Čapek-Chod
satirizes the Czech-Jewish movement through the characters of
Stein and Papperstein is over-simplifying. Donath, Židé a


158 Ibid., p. 224.

159 Ibid., pp. 224-25.

160 Ibid., p. 249.

161 Ibid., p. 322.

162 Ibid., p. 303.
be; he is irritated, for example, to observe Stein's hat, bobbing in time to his sobs.\textsuperscript{163}

The narrator's comments, however, underline the nature of Stein's clowning as a mask to hide emotion: 'Cynismus Artura Steina byl tomuto dočasnému milionáři pouhou maskou. I to bylo jisto, že svou sestru miluje nadě vše'.\textsuperscript{164} Stein clowns even at Máňa's deathbed to conceal his grief and to distract her.\textsuperscript{165} In this respect, the narrator contrasts Stein with Stach, who in deceiving Máňa hides his lack of love. The ugly Stein can make fun of himself; he says of his sister, 'Ta je zrovna taková krasavice, jako já šereda!'.\textsuperscript{166} Stach is dishonest with himself: he indulges thoughts of suicide and at the same time worries about getting caught in the rain.\textsuperscript{167} The contrast between the two men is sharpest in the description of Máňa's funeral. Stein's grief is manifest in his rapid physical decline. Stach attends the funeral for sentimental reasons, and is preoccupied with trivial thoughts. He imagines Máňa approaching the Lord's throne with her plaits flying: 'hle jaká čest pro váženou rodinu páně Steinovu!'.\textsuperscript{168} Yet even Stach is aware of Stein's moral authority over him. The narrator conveys Stach's feelings of guilt, as well as his unworthiness and bigotry, at the funeral: 'Stach cítil se před ním [Stein] nesmírně vinným a zdálo se mu, že by všechnu vinu rázem napravil a Máničku usmířil, kdyby šel a postavil se

\textsuperscript{163}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{164}Ibid., p. 228.

\textsuperscript{165}Ibid., p. 340.

\textsuperscript{166}Ibid., p. 227.

\textsuperscript{167}Ibid., p. 371. This reminds one of Heinrich Bermann's comment in The Road to the Open [Der Weg ins Freie, 1908]: 'If I wanted to kill myself I wouldn't choose either poisoned mushrooms or decayed sausage, but a nobler and swifter poison. At times one is sick of life, but one is never sick of health, even in one's last quarter of an hour.' Arthur Schnitzler, The Road to the Open, translated by Horace Samuel, London, 1922, p. 272.

\textsuperscript{168}Čapek-Chod, 'Dceruška Jairova', p. 363. The narrator notes that the obituaries for Máňa are mostly in Czech; and that the rabbi at her funeral speaks perfect Czech. Ibid., pp. 360, 363.
vedle Artura také jako příbuzný. Představa byla tak nutkavá, že byl rád, když se konečně zástup příbuzných hnal; ten poprask, kdyby se to bylo stalo!"  

Stach’s shallow sentimentality is manifest in his attempt to have one last look at Máňa’s coffin in the grave. His attitude is contrasted with that of the Jewish mourners who adhere to the tradition which dictates that they leave the cemetery without looking into the open grave. As with Stein’s character, the seeming heartlessness of this tradition is deceptive; it conceals a reverence for life, for the emotions of the mourners and their memories of the dead.

That the Jewish protagonist of ‘Polichinell Maxl’ is a clown is indicated by his nickname, which serves as the title of the short story; Max Blauernfool and is made a fool of by others, but his clowning mostly consists in consciously deceiving himself. Only a character whose nature is divided can accomplish this. Max’s dual nature is suggested by his appearance. Like Frey, his diminutive and slightly deformed body contrasts with his handsome face. Like Žibřid Paprštejn and Artur Stein, he has ties with the Czechs and the Germans; his conversion and his decision to write the ‘s’ of his name with a háček signal his adoption of Czech nationality. His ‘son’ is not baptised, which is ambivalent: it might suggest that the family will not assimilate with the Czechs completely; or, secondly, it might suggest that they were good Czech nationalists and refused to

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169 Ibid., p. 364.

170 Ibid., pp. 364-65.

171 Čapek-Chod, ‘Polichinell Maxl’, p. 250. Max has a small hump on his back. Like Freund, he also has respiratory problems. Ibid., p. 253. When the collection in which this short story appears was reviewed in the Czech-Jewish newspaper Tribuna, the reviewer did not comment on the portrayal of the Jews, but objected to the author’s depiction of deformed characters. M. Pujmanová-Hennerová, ‘K. M. Čapek-Chod: “Čtyři odvážné povídky”’, Tribuna, 26 September 1926, p. 7. The reviewer K. J. (probably Karel Juda) describes the Jewish characters in the short story as individuals for whom love and honour are matters of business calculation. ‘K. M. Čapek-Chod, Čtyři odvážné povídky’, Česká revue, 19 (1926), 3, p. 177.

join the Roman Catholic Church. The duality within Max is also manifest in his personality: because he is in love with Sáli, he does not want to believe that she has been seduced by her employer and distant uncle Moritz Baderle. At the same time, he knows that Sáli and Moritz have had an affair and are conspiring to manipulate him into marriage with Sáli; and he intends to arrange the most profitable deal for himself. The narrator comments: 'V jeho duši žil dvojník'. Max laughs to hide his pain when he gives his new wife an ultimatum: have an abortion or end the marriage. He has both a weak and a strong self: he sobs uncontrollably on leaving his wife’s bedroom after delivering his ultimatum; on the same night, he visits a club with the intention of gambling away the money with which Moritz has bought him as a groom. As with Blumenduft, the duality within Max is dramatized as a dialogue between his selves: 'V jeho nitru, na dvě rozeklaném, začala se totiž zase jednou rozmluva mezi Maxlem, sentimentalním, možno říci idealistou a Maxlem, cynickým praktikem.' The knowledge that his wife has become pregnant again by Moritz Baderle provides the occasion for the dialogue; one self confronts the other:

-A kdo ji poslal Baderlovì, než ty sám, hloupý chlape, když jsi řekl: Lepší nějaké dítě než žádné!? -K čemu tedy ta komedie?
-K vůli tobě, sentimentalní blázně, poněvadž jsi svůj vlastní podvodník a komediant!'

Max’s strength derives from this conscious self-deception: he marries the woman he loves and accepts the child she bears by Baderle. By accepting the ridiculousness of his position, he can

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173 He demands that Moritz give him 10,000 crowns to marry Sáli. The negotiations over the settlement resemble the transaction between Blumenduft and Frey. Ibid., pp. 271-75.

174 Ibid., p. 275.

175 Ibid., p. 277.


achieve certain goals; that is, he is granted a son and heir. Max chooses to be cuckolded; in this respect, he contrasts with the Gentile character Ondřej Andrýsek in ‘Nedonošený ...’, who hangs himself on learning that the son for whom he grieves is not his own. The Jewish character confronts his fate with a grimace which conceals his suffering; this mask represents the attitude which critics have consistently attributed to the author. It is also an attitude with which the author identifies himself; in his interview with Štorch-Marien, Čapek-Chod states:


František Bílek

Čapek’s review of the second exhibition of the association of Czech graphic artists Mánes in 1898 initiates the ‘Bílek’ dispute. František Bílek’s (1872-1941) work has been given a place of prominence at the exhibition and thus Čapek concentrates his attention on Bílek’s sculptures. To understand why Čapek’s remarks, which seem to be little more than expressions of taste, provoke a strong response, one must consider the context in which the particular criticisms are made. Before he turns his attention to the exhibition, Čapek comments generally on Mánes and contemporary art. He asserts that of all cultural endeavours, only those in the realm of art should not be conservative; that it is in the nature of art to reject dogma and stagnation: ‘Být originálním ve výtvarném umění, být aspoň jiným než předchozí a současný, to jest heslo celé evoluce umění výtvarného zvlášt’ v době moderní’.

His description of the intransigence and incoherence of the art of the Sezession, however, indicates that he has little admiration for this rebellion against tradition. Czech art, he notes, has been spared this upheaval. He poses the question of whether or not Mánes takes a rebellious stance, and concludes that it does not: ‘na letosní výstavě nelze postřehnouti žádného znamení boje; na celé exposici není jediného předmětu, který by mohl porušití ensemble rudolfínského, posud za oficielní pokládaného Salonu’.

Arnost Procházka makes the same point in his review of the exhibition for Moderní revue. Rather inconsistently, Čapek believes that this dearth of signs of rebellion constitutes one of Mánes’s strengths: ‘Není také, proti čemu by bojoval, není totiž směru, jemuž by u nás mohl vypovědět boj’. Čapek also expresses relief that Decadent trends are not in evidence at the exhibition and praises Czech

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2. Ibid.

3. Arnost Procházka, ‘Druhá výstava spolku "Mánes"’, Moderní revue, 9 (1898), 3, pp. 76-78.

artists for following an independent path: 'Tím liší se náš český nejmladší proud od nejnovějších proudů v umění cizím, že nechce být za každou cenu apartním, odlišným, ale že si váží nikoli pouhé odvahy, nýbrž především jejího úspěchu'.

His comments suggest the social and political importance of the exhibition; the display of works by contemporary artists is perceived as a manifestation of the Czech cultural, hence national, identity. Thus an exhibition commands public attention and provokes debates in the press. Čapek indicates this aspect of the exhibition in the introduction to the review: he castigates the public for lagging behind developments in Czech art. The public, he asserts, has not yet understood that artists require more than admiration; their works must also sell. With the appeal to the public to support Czech art he introduces a tendentious strain into the review. Čapek directs his comments not only at a group of artists, but also at the general public. Before he begins to assess the individual artists at the exhibition, the reviewer thus treats two questions: the 'character' of the Czech nation, and strategies for national survival, since the state of Czech culture is equated with the 'health' of the nation. It is not surprising, then, that Čapek's review provokes a response in the press.

For the most part, Čapek praises the artists exhibiting; he is critical, however, of the works of three artists: Bilek, Stanislav Sucharda (1866-1916) and Jaroslav Panuška (1872-1958). He dismisses the latter with one sentence: 'J. Panuška vystavil nudnou, duchapráznou, bizarrerii Černokněžník.' The reviewer admires Bílek's technical virtuosity. His criticisms of 'Studie ke Kristu' centre on the sculptor's rendering of Christ's expression, which, in Čapek's opinion, is affected and ridiculous. Bílek, he suggests, has yet to overcome a self-

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5Ibid., pp. 9-10.

6Ibid., p. 46. This painting is reproduced in Volné směry, 3 (1899), p. 85.

7Compare with the reproduction in Volné směry, 3 (1899), p. 73.
conscious, humourless tendency to glorify the emotional states of the self:

Čapek's comment that Bílek's 'Orba' is more human and of greater worth than 'Studie ke Kristu' suggests that he disapproves of art which is obscure and self-consciously intellectual. He objects to the aesthetic which informs both works; that is, the desire to invoke an emotional response at the expense of a sense of harmony and beauty. He condemns Bílek's intention, manifest in particular in 'Studie ke Kristu', to stimulate 'hysterical bliss', bordering on religious ecstasy. Likewise he criticizes the tendentious character of Sucharda's 'Skizza dekorace domu hyperproducenta', although here he is also having a joke at the expense of the artist:

The reviewer does not argue with the subject matter of these works; he does not reject religion or the suffering of the poor as themes unfit for art. He objects to the manner in which these

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8Čapek satirizes this tendency in his portrayal of the inferior poet Antonín Vondrejc.

9Čapek, 'II. výstava spolku "Mánes"', p. 33.

10Ibid. 'Orba' is reproduced in Petr Wittlich, Česká secese, Prague, 1982, p. 29.

11Čapek's criticism of Bílek prefigures attacks on his own prose as grotesque. See, for example, his polemic with Šalda in 1921, discussed in the section, 'Hofka groteska a úmyslné pokřiveniny'.

12Čapek, 'II. výstava spolku "Mánes"', p. 33.
themes are treated: the earnest, apparently pompous, attitude of the artists.\textsuperscript{13}

The themes introduced in Karel Pelant's (1874-1925) response, 'Slovíčko o kritice', recur in later polemics: the role and proper activity of the critic; the state of Czech art and the ignorance of the general public; the relation between art and the nation.\textsuperscript{14} Pelant's article was published in the Social Democrat journal Akademie; his remarks thus may constitute an attack on the conservative political stance which Čapek represents.\textsuperscript{15}

Pelant begins the article with an expression of hope that art will become more democratic, or perhaps national: 'Sní se o tom, aby kře Umění pokrýly se květy celé, až ku kořenům svým, k lidu z kterého vzrostly; aby nejen vysocí procházeti se mohli okolo nich a dýchati jejich vůni, ale aby každý byl připuštěn do zahrad, ve kterých květou.'\textsuperscript{16} He comments on the undeveloped but promising state of the arts in the Bohemian Lands: 'Ještě není sad v květu, ale již zástupy sadařů připravují se na příští jaro úpravou půdy neb vsimněm práci u sousedů.'\textsuperscript{17} In this art-orchard, he states, a caterpillar (Čapek) has appeared who mistakenly believes that he is a critic/fruit-grower: 'Taková maličká bestie, vrhající se hlavně na mladé, křehké lístky,'

\textsuperscript{13}Procházka comments that the poverty of Czech artistic circles is demonstrated by Sucharda's piece. Unlike Čapek, Procházka praises Bílek's work. Procházka, 'Druhá výstava spolku "Mánes"', pp. 77-78.

\textsuperscript{14}Wittlich writes of the 'crisis of the hitherto valid notion of a "national art"' in the \textit{Fin de siècle}. Petr Wittlich, 'The Self: Destruction of Synthesis, Two Problems of Czech Art at the Turn of the Century', \textit{Decadence and Innovation}, Pynsent (ed.), p. 82. In the same collection, see also Jiří Kudrnáč, 'The Significance of Czech Fin-de-Siècle Criticism', pp. 88-101. He states that literary criticism, 'followed all aspects of national life'. Ibid., p. 91.

\textsuperscript{15}On \textit{Akademie}, see the note in: Bruce M. Garver, \textit{The Young Czech Party 1874-1901 and the Emergence of a Multi-party System}, New Haven and London, 1978, p. 513. At this time Čapek is working for the Old Czech Národní politika.

\textsuperscript{16}Karel Pelant, 'Slovíčko o kritice', \textit{Akademie}, 3 (1898-99), p. 135.

\textsuperscript{17}Ibid.
Pelant characterizes the state of the arts in the Bohemian Lands as young and fragile. The general public is ignorant: 'Kdyby se zde v Čechách objevil nějaký takový Rops, Toorop, Rodin, takové půhy jiných národů, zabezpečující své rače vždy nové půlstoletí v dějinách, co bychom jim za jejich "bláznivosti" udělali? Že bychom je nenechali umřít hlady neb souchotinami z námahy?'. Both critics are concerned with educating the public, exhorting the nation to value its artists; while Čapek harangues the public, Pelant expresses contempt for Czech philistinism.

The role of the critic, as Pelant understands it, is even more elevated than that of the artist: art represents the apex of contemporary culture and the critic must understand the forces propelling it. The critic must not be a dilettante, expressing his impressions and delight. He must have a command of all aspects of life in order to understand a work of art and interpret it for others; therefore he must grasp not only aesthetics, but also psychology, sociology and history. The critic serves the interests of humanity and promotes the reputation of the nation:

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18Ibid., p. 136.
19Ibid.
20Ibid., p. 154. Pelant addresses the question to Karel Hlaváček.
21Their engagé attitude contrasts with that of Procházka, who asserts that the masses have nothing in common with and cannot be taught to appreciate art. See: Arnošť Procházka, 'Umění a lid', Meditace, Prague, 1912, pp. 10-20.
22Pelant, 'Slovíčko o kritice', p. 154.
Čapek makes a similar assertion, in more straightforward language, in the Rodin polemic with Šalda: the role of the critic is not to express his feelings, but to interpret, to mediate between the artist and the public, and to publicize the merits of Czech art abroad. Čapek would probably scoff at the claims Pelant makes for the role of the critic; that he shares Pelant’s assumption of the critic’s importance, however, is indicated by his involvement in the dispute.

Pelant’s criticism of Čapek focuses, first, on his outlook: his sacrificial attitude; his scorn for those who are concerned with metaphysical questions; his ignorance of the struggles of an individual seeking to understand himself; his inability either to doubt or to believe. He attacks Čapek’s rigid and conservative approach to art. Sucharda’s love for the nation leads him to portray the conditions of the Czech worker; Pelant claims that Čapek, because of his ignorance of social phenomena, and his journalistic tendency to drag politics into art criticism, cannot comprehend the noble message of Sucharda’s work. Čapek thereby demonstrates, Pelant implies, a lack of patriotism and of empathy for the working class. Pelant concludes the article with the comment that for the sake of the Czech nation such critics should be discredited as obstacles to
cultural life.\textsuperscript{29}

Pelant’s article is accompanied by an announcement on behalf of Mânes’s exhibition committee, printed in Volné směry, Mânes’s journal. Signed by Arnošt Hofbauer (1869-1944), Jan Preisler (1872-1918), Antonín Slavíček (1870-1910), Josef Schusser (1864-1941) and Sucharda, the announcement condemns the ‘frivolous’ tone of Čapek’s review; it asserts that he has no understanding of Bîlek’s work.\textsuperscript{30} Again, Čapek is attacked for his irreverence, a criticism directed at him in the Rodin and Bém polemics. His attitude to Mânes also continues to be a source of contention. However, despite the ironic comments which he directs at artists or critics, Čapek shares their assumption of the importance of art for the nation; indeed, that this constitutes one of the main motives for his polemical remarks is evident from his response to Mânèse. While acknowledging Bîlek’s talent, Čapek does not retreat from his original position. He claims that he felt compelled to treat Bîlek’s work at length because Mânes had given it such prominence at the exhibition. He states that the Mânèse announcement confirms for him the correctness of his decision: ‘Nebot’ podpisy oněch pánů, z nichž každého uznávám za plnkrevného umělce [...] jsou mi svědectvím, jaké nebezpečí pro naše umění v sobě chová propaganda předstirané primitivnosti a falešného pathosu a nesnesitelného, chorého afektu.’\textsuperscript{31} The polemic concludes with this statement; however, later polemics, for example, those with Šalda and with Bém, make reference to the Bîlek dispute.\textsuperscript{32}

\textsuperscript{29}Ibid., pp. 154-55.

\textsuperscript{30}'Prohlášení!', Volné směry, 3 (1899), p. 115. It is dated: 7 December 1898.

\textsuperscript{31}K. M. Čapek, 'S mým posudkem', Světozor, 33 (1898-99), 7, p. 82. Čapek does not respond to Pelant’s article. To indicate that he is not alone in his rejection of Bîlek’s work, Čapek quotes extensively from a review by Renáta Tyršová (1854-1937) in a footnote; he also refers to the opinions of two artists whom he does not identify.

\textsuperscript{32}In a letter to Novák in 1922 Čapek writes that he always felt an extreme dislike for Bîlek’s work: 'Svatouškování, posa a komediantství zabránilo tu jednomu z největších talentů
2. The Emperor’s Gift

Čapek’s review of the sixty-second anniversary exhibition of the Krasoumná jednota (Kunstverein für Böhmen) begins with words of admiration for the decoration of the rooms in which the exhibition is set at the Rudolfinum. Čapek introduces his criticism with the remark: ‘Jedinou věc nenajdeme v tomto labyrințu velmi komplikovaném — ráj českého umění.’ He takes issue with the exhibition committee for providing space for collected exhibitions of Belgian and German, but not Czech, artists. He states that it would have been wise to display a coherent collection of art produced in the Bohemian Lands, rather than scattering the works in a haphazard fashion throughout the gallery rooms; such a treatment of Czech art would have been timely in view of the money which the Emperor has pledged for the creation of a new gallery. Čapek complains that whereas in other countries domestic art is given preference, at the Rudolfinum in Prague one has to search for the Czech paintings which are hidden in dark corners: ‘v saloně tomto kromě několika vzácných výjimek vyplňují čeští hosté — a tu mínime naše národní české umění — kouty, jako ti pozvaní, kteří jsou méně vítání něž nezvaní, a kteří stávají hezky z rány s nešt’astným vzezřením onoho přesvědčení, jež doufá, že by dostalo košem, kdyby se mělo k tancí.’ He asserts, furthermore, that many of the foremost representatives of Czech art have not been included in the exhibition and that the position of Czech graphic artists in this

sochařských, aby rozkvetl k utěšenosti a soutěžil o primát s Myslbekem, jejž Bílek nenáviděl.’ Papers: Arne Novák; letters from Čapek-Chod to Novák, 1909-1922; see letter dated 17 August 1922; PNP.


34Ibid. Wittlich also criticizes the manner of exhibition of the Krasoumná jednota. He writes that at its anniversary shows a vast number of paintings were displayed without regard for quality. The paintings were hung in rows, one on top of the other; appropriate lighting was not taken into consideration. Wittlich, Česká secese, p. 8.

year's exhibition is humiliating. He argues that, in questions of national concern, Czech artists should act as one body; until the Rudolfinum shows respect for Czech art, no Czech artists should exhibit there.

Čapek objects to the fact that, while most of the Czech works are scattered throughout the exhibition, Bílek has been given a room of his own. Bílek, Čapek states, is not representative of Czech art; indeed, his work is inaccessible. The reviewer comments ironically: 'Bílek náleží k umělcům, kteří definici tuto [of beauty] obrátili hnedle v nejkrajnější opak, nebot' co na jeho díle jest krásné, líbí se nejmenšímu počtu lidí. Ovšem', okolnost, že jeho umění náleží k umění, kteréž se málo komu líbí, sama už je přednost neposlední.'

Jan Opolský's (1875-1942) satirical poem, 'P. Čapek contra Bohemia', suggests that Čapek's review constitutes part of a polemic. This poem indicates that Čapek is assumed to be engaged in a polemic with the German press over an issue involving Czech artists:

Dva bataillon tásnu v boj, z nichž jeden Čapek vede,
a v druhém čele tvrdě čnì stín Bohemie bledé.
Ti tásnu - za štít paletu - od Mohanu a Šeldy,
že musí Čapka přelomit i s jeho Ottenfeldy.
Přes dvoje přišli pohoří a přes patery řeky,
že musí zhubit Amorty a strmé Myslbeky.
Však Čapek věří přespříliš své ničitelské praxi:
'Můj jeden krásný feuilleton vám zdisgustuje Maxy!
Jen jeden pasus řečnický, jimiž já přece slynu;
jen něco z mého slovníčku a - máte po Böcklinu!'

Like Pelant, Opolský regards Čapek's art criticism to be destructive.

It seems likely that Opolský is not referring specifically to Čapek's review in Zvon, but to a debate between Národní listy

36Ibid.

37Opolský expresses affection and admiration for Čapek in 'Drobná vzpomínka', p. 155.

38Jan Opolský, 'P. Čapek contra Bohemia', Rozhledy, 11 (1901), 5, p. 144. Bohemia is a Bohemian German newspaper. Mohan and Šelda are rivers. Opolský refers to: the German painter Rudolf Ottenfeld (died 1913); the sculptors Vilím Amort (1864-1913) and Josef Václav Myslbek (1848-1922); the painters Gabriel Max (1840-1915) and the Swiss Arnold Böcklin (1827-1901).
and the Prague German press conducted in April and May 1901. The
'Denní zprávy' articles in Národní listy are unsigned; one must,
however, consider, the possibility that Čapek is their author.
The 1901 articles under consideration treat the founding of a new
gallery in Prague, and the promotion of artists of Czech
nationality, both of which themes Čapek also considers in his
review. The author of the Národní listy articles attacks Prague
German painters, claiming that their technique involves daubing
paint on photographs; this technique is explicated and satirized
in Čapek's V třetím dvoře.39 The author refers to the silence
which the German newspapers have maintained regarding the
nationality of the major new graphic artists in the Bohemian
Lands: 'O převratu v ohledu národním zachovávaly "Tagblatt" i
"Bohemia", pokud se výtvarného umění týče, hluboké mlčení jako
kamenné polopanny na schodiští vedoucím ku dvoraně Rudolfina.'40
'Polopanna' is one of the epithets given to Tynda in Turbina.41
However, the author does not identify his name with the opinions
expressed; one must assume, therefore, that the standpoint taken
is not his own but that of the newspaper. Bearing all this in
mind, I shall consider the themes of the polemic, first, because
Opolský appears to attribute it to Čapek; and secondly, because
the themes shed light on later polemics.

The articles are all characterized by the strongly anti-
German tone typical of Národní listy. Hostility towards the
Germans at this time was fuelled by the triumph of the German
nationalists in the January 1901 elections to the Reichsrat;
twenty-one of the twenty-two seats gained by the German

39The author refers to the 'kolorované fotografické snímky
německých mistrů pražských za olejové obrazy vydávané'. 'Utopie
německého výtvarného umění v Čechách', Národní listy, 24 April

40 'Utopie německého výtvarného umění v Čechách'.

41See, for example, Turbina, p. 258. In the definition of the
term in the Slovník spisovného jazyka českého, Čapek-Chod is
cited twice. Šalda is also cited. Slovník spisovného jazyka
českého, IV, Prague, 1989, pp. 253-54. In the entry in Příruční
slovník jazyka českého, Čapek-Chod and Václav Hladík are cited.
Příruční slovník jazyka českého, vol. 4, no. 1, Prague, 1941-43,
p. 627.
nationalists were won in the Bohemian Lands. In the first article in Národní listy, 'Utopie německého výtvarného umění v Čechách', the author states that the Emperor’s gift for the funding of a new art gallery will have the positive result of finally unmasking the deception practised by German art critics. These have always hidden the humiliation of the German nationality which the new Czech graphic artists represent by treating the artists as ‘domestic’: 'S největším klidem referovala o "domácím" umění jako dříve, a německo-nacionální běte humaine krotla před výtvory českých mistrů, ale křečovitě zat’ala zuby, když měla doznat, že původcůvé tohoto moderního rozvoje "domácího" umění jsou Češi.' The Germans, however, now assume that half of the 80,000 crowns which the Emperor has contributed will be used to purchase the work of Bohemian German artists. The author of the article asserts that there are no German artists to whom this money could be given. Over the past fourteen days, he writes, the German press has been calling for a German art school, a German department at the Academy of Fine Arts, and a German curatorial committee at the new gallery, to foster the development of Bohemian German art. He challenges the German press to name the stars of the Bohemian German art world. Although it is not mentioned in the article, Premier Ernst Koerber (1850-1919) promised to create a new gallery in Prague in order to persuade the Young Czechs to move from an obstructionist to a constructive oppositional stance in the Reichsrat.

In ‘V zápase o české a německé umění v Čechách’, the author repeats that the Emperor’s intention to establish a new modern art gallery in Prague has revealed the poverty of German graphic

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43 'Utopie německého výtvarného umění v Čechách'.

44 The author also identifies Prague-German with Jewish culture.

45 Urban, Česká společnost 1848-1918, p. 512.
art in Bohemia. The issue of funding raises that of the nationality conflict, and in particular the insecurities of the Germans. The gallery is to display works by both nationalities; while the Germans insist that funding should be divided equally, the author of the article argues that purchases should be made strictly according to artistic merit. If this is the case, the author implies, Czech art will dominate in the gallery; in the sphere of culture, the German minority has no power.\(^46\) In demagogic terms, the author rejects the claims that German artists have suffered from a lack of German teachers, and that German artists have been driven out of the Bohemian Lands. The 'fact' that Czech artists withered away unnoticed while mediocre German talents dominated the Academy is cited as proof that no reconciliation between the nationalities is possible: 'ten hřbitov našich nadaných lidí náleží k těm foudroyantním křivdám na nás spáchaným, které se nikdy, nikdy nezapomínají a pro něž smiřování je věcí tak smrtelně těžkou'.\(^47\) He describes the German reaction to the Emperor's gift as 'niggardliness'. The article concludes with a statement which reveals the political importance of cultural issues: 'v umění, tomto oboru zápolení dle zásad zlaté svobody, jsme pány my Češi zde v Čechách podle legitimní souverenity našeho národa a tu nepomůže nižádné sebe delší a vytrvalejší - k žourání obou orgánů kasina!'.\(^48\)

In 'Otázka galerie umění', the author attacks the Deutscher Verein for advocating that the management of the gallery be divided into national sections.\(^49\) He insists that any self-respecting German artist would reject such a solution. The article is characterized by a note of humour; the Deutscher Verein, the author states, cites as a precedent the division of

\(^46\)'V zápase o české a německé umění v Čechách', Národní listy, 29 April 1901, p. 2.

\(^47\)Ibid.

\(^48\)Ibid. The use of a dash followed by an unexpected conclusion is characteristic of the polemical style of journalism of the period. Čapek employs the same device in his prose fiction.

\(^49\)'Otázka galerie umění', Národní listy, 5 May 1901, p. 3.
the Agricultural Council (zemědělské rady) into national sections. This example, however, does not constitute a model to be emulated: 'Nebot' zakupování uměleckých děl a - licentování býků jsou věci tak rozdílné, že by je znamenatí mohl muž tak bystrozraký, jakým se zdá býti p. dr. Lingg.\(^5^0\) The author lists various artists whom the Germans have heralded as 'fellow nationals': Schwaiger, Marold, Dvořák and Fibich.\(^5^1\) Like the preceding article, this piece appears to identify the Prague Germans with the Jews, whom it denigrates.\(^5^2\) This article indicates that the gallery polemic has moved from the sphere of the press to that of civic organizations.

3. The Rodin Exhibition: the Press\(^5^3\)

The Czechs attribute political significance to the Rodin exhibition: Rodin is perceived as a representative of the French nation; the Czechs hope to cultivate ties with France as a sign of their distinctness from German Austria. That the sculptor agrees to exhibit in Prague is interpreted as an indication that the city has matured as a cultural centre; likewise, Czech appreciation for Rodin is regarded as a measure of national cultural development. Thus interpretations of and reports on the

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\(^5^0\)Ibid.

\(^5^1\)Hanuš Schwaiger; Luděk Marold (1865-1898); either of the painters František Dvořák (1862-1927) and Bohuslav Dvořák (1867-1951), or the composer Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904); Zdeněk Fibich (1850-1900).

\(^5^2\)In referring to the 'poněkud přeřímštelé nosy' of the members of the 'Deutscher Verein', the author seems to echo a stereotypical antisemitic characterization of the Jews. Ibid. On the notion that the Czechs are inherently antisemitic, see the excerpts from L. K. Hofman's diary printed in Viktor Dyk, Vzpomínky a komentáře 1893-1918, vol. 1, Prague, 1927, especially p. 93.

\(^5^3\)Of Čapek's polemics, only the debate over the Rodin exhibition, and later exchanges between Šalda and Čapek, have received critical attention. See: Walter Annuss, 'Čapek-Chod and Šalda', Karel Matěj Čapek-Chod, Pynsent (ed.), pp. 128-49. This article provides a good summary of the polemics, but does not comment in depth on the themes raised. Annuss provides little analysis of Čapek's responses to Šalda.
response to Rodin’s work have a political and social subtext. The exhibition provokes discussion on the nature of art, including its ‘national’ character, and thus its social function, which, Wittlich observes, is the dominant question for artists and critics at the turn of the century.\(^4\) Almost all the themes addressed by Čapek and Šalda are raised first in accounts in the press of the exhibition or of Rodin’s visit.

One finds many of these themes in the *Národní listy* account of the opening of the exhibition. The writer eulogizes the affirmation of Czech-French relations which the event represents: ‘Dvě racy, cítící umělecky, vyslovující nejupřímněji svou duši v písni a poesii, sdružují se ve společných zájmech kulturních, jež jsou tu mohutnou a nádhernou podporou i společných zájmů politických a národních.’\(^5\) He praises Mánes’s arrangement of the exhibition as propaganda for art and as an act of political significance. He states that Czech society had fulfilled a duty by attending the opening in great numbers: ‘Pochopila, že jde o věc neobyčejnou, o svrchovaný čin noblesny kulturní.’\(^6\) He also notes that at the opening there are almost more representatives from political than from literary and artistic circles. The welcoming speech of the chairman of Mánes is reproduced in the article; Sucharda states that the organization has always aimed to display the works of foreign artists, largely as a means of measuring the growth of Czech art. He expresses the hope that the exhibition will revitalize Prague as a centre for the arts. Vladimír Srb (1856-1916), the mayor of Prague, concludes his speech with the hope that the exhibition heralds the triumphs of


\(^5\) Slavnostní otevření výstavy Aug. Rodina’, *Národní listy*, 11 May 1902, p. 2. In this article the unnamed author expresses admiration for Šalda’s introduction to the catalogue.

\(^6\) Ibid.
Czech art abroad. The political importance attributed to the event is evident in descriptions of Rodin's visit. Crowds chanting 'Sláva Rodinovi!' and 'At žije Francie!' greet Rodin upon his arrival at the railway station and at his hotel. The reporter for Národní listy interprets this display as an expression of the public's enthusiasm for ties with the French nation. The Young Czech deputy, Josef Herold (1850-1908), in his speech at the banquet for Rodin, attributes a specific meaning to the artist's visit: 'V politických zápasech národa českého jsou sympatie velkých kulturních národů jedním z nejzávažnějších a nejdůležitějších prostředků k dosažení vítězství.' The German minority's sensitivity to the political aspect of the exhibition is indicated by the coverage it receives in Die Information. Národní listy attacks Die Information for its criticism of Czech 'political immaturity', manifest in the response to Rodin.

The controversy over Máněs's invitations to the gala in honour of Rodin makes explicit the relation between the exhibition and Czech nationalism. To quell rumours, the chairman of the organization makes a public statement to the effect that Máněs did not send any invitations written in German, except to its associates in Germany. The 'Denní zprávy' column of Národní listy expresses indignation that Máněs could have posted any invitations written in German, even to Germany; such an act was contrary to Máněs's regulations, which specify that the

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57Ibid. The promotion of Czech art abroad is a theme which runs through twenty years of Čapek's polemics. See, for example, his polemic with Winter in 1926.

58'Příjezd Augusta Rodina do Prahy', Národní listy, 29 May 1902, p. 2.

59Ibid.

60'Rodin v Praze', Národní listy, 31 May 1902, p. 3. The article lists Čapek as among those present at the banquet.

61'Die Information' o návštěvě mistra Rodina v Praze', Národní listy, 5 June 1902, p. 2.

organization's language of business is Czech. The committee arranging the gala had decided that the invitations should be in Czech and French. Bohemia responds with the information that invitations written in German were sent to German individuals and corporations in Prague. The beleaguered Sucharda feels compelled to print another statement in which he explains that invitations in German may have been sent by accident and without his knowledge to German addressees in Prague.

The controversy over the invitations is related to discussions in the press of the nature of art, and in particular of the relation between nation and artist. Behind affirmations of the national character of Rodin's sculptures lie the assumptions that art is a reflection of the national spirit and that the function of the artist is to serve the nation. Herold touches on these themes in his speech:

"Jsou, kteří říkají, že umění jest mezinárodní. Myslím, že toto mínění není správné. Umění jest zrcadlem [...] ve kterém zračí se duch národní, umění jest zrcadlem národa samého. Umění jest národním, ano jest předním bojovníkem národa [...] Ve středu svém zříme muže, jehož umění znamená velký projev duševní síly Francie [...]"

If France can take pride in Rodin's successes, then the Czechs can feel uplifted by the triumphs of Czech artists.

The importance of these issues can be measured by the fact that a leading article in Národní listy on 4 June is devoted to the question of art and nationalism. The article focuses on the scandal of the German invitations; the author introduces the topic, however, with remarks on the national character of art. He asserts that national character is as important as originality in a work of art. Imitation of the art of another nation does

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63 Výklad k německým pozvánkám', Národní listy, 30 May 1902, p. 2.
64 See: 'Ke známému "zaslánu", jménem "Manesa"', Národní listy, 31 May 1902, p. 3.
65 Sucharda, 'Zasláno', Národní listy, 2 June 1902, p. 3.
66 'Rodin v Praze', p. 3.
67 'Umění a národnost ...', Národní listy, 4 June 1902, p. 1.
not contribute to one's own cultural stock.\(^6\) Certain statements in this article may constitute responses to Šalda's introduction, although he is not mentioned. The author states that language is not enough to guarantee the national quality of a work of art: 'K tomu zapotřebí jest takového srostitého přilnutí a přížehnutí národní obce umělců k lidové duši národní'.\(^6\) He claims that the genius of national art emerges from the union of great talent with an explosive patriotism.

In reply to the objections of Čas, another article on the subject is carried in the 'Denní zprávy' column. The author again notes the French character of Rodin's work: 'Právě proto, že je tak ryze francouzské, tak ryze národní, stálo za to, aby si je naší mladí do Prahy přivezli, jemu odkoukat, kterak se dělá ryze národní umění, ačkoli není o tom pochyby, že k tomu účelu mají na vlas postačitelný, bohužel, tak ztěžka dosažitelný vzor v Myslbekovi.'\(^7\)

In a short article prior to the exhibition, a commentator poses the question of whether Rodin in his works depicts the external world or his inner visions. The writer asserts that 'matter' or the representation of Nature is for Rodin only a tool: 'je mu pouhým, dokonale poslušným prostředkem, vyjádřit svoje ideu, to co v duši jeho vyrostlo a vykvetlo'.\(^7\) The article concludes with the statement that many do not understand the greatness of Rodin's art; the assertion is provocative in that it implies that only cretins can criticize Rodin.

Marie Veselíková (1880-1948), in her feuilleton 'U Rodina', attributes to the Czechs the sensitivity and maturity necessary

\(^{6}\)Ibid.

\(^{6}\)Ibid. This also strongly resembles the opening statement in Pelant's article. See: Pelant, 'Slovíčko o kritice'.

\(^{7}\)'Umění a národnost', Národní listy, 7 June 1902, p. 2. His comment that a Czech sculptor producing work of a 'French' character does not contribute to Czech art may refer to Bílek. In 1892 Bílek's sculptures 'Orba' and 'Golgota', presented to the grant committee in Prague, caused a scandal; the funding which he had received to study in Paris was withdrawn. See Wittlich, Česká secese, pp. 27-30.

\(^{7}\)'K Rodinově výstavě', Národní listy, 9 May 1902, p. 4.
to appreciate Rodin. She concludes her description of a visit to Rodin’s studio with the statement: ‘Prostoupilo nás upřímné přání, aby Rodin nalezl pochopení v našem malém, často zapomínaném národě, který však je schopný porozumět a ocenit.’

Karel B. Mádl’s (1859-1932) perspective is more sceptical. In his review of the exhibition he states that the press has so inflated the expectations of the public that most people who visit the exhibition are disappointed. His comment on the crowds may allude to Šalda’s introduction to the catalogue: ‘Mně je zamlklost a nejistota návštěvníků výstavy Rodinovy stokrát milejší, nežli hypokritní panegyrika opisujících per.’ The average inhabitant of Prague, ‘umělecky zanedbany, neteëný, okem lenivý’, will hardly be able to appreciate Rodin; after all, it had taken a quarter of a century for the artist to win recognition in his native France. He claims that as yet the Czechs do not have an appreciation for such independent spirits. The Rodin exhibition will fulfil its function if it helps to educate the public. He scorns the euphoric tone of studies of Rodin; again, his contentious remarks may refer to Šalda:

Škoda, že cestu k Rodinovi zatarasili, aneb aspoň ztížili spoustou nejklikatějších filosofických úvah a metafysických kombinací. Jejich závoj opřádá jeho zjev a znejasňuje jeho linie a v brzce budeme na této cestě výkladu výtvarných děl, kde byli před 70 lety, místo co by umělecký výtvor měl být brán za to, čím vskutku je, ovocem tvůrčí fantasie, oplodněné stykem s realitou [...].

4. The Rodin Polemic: Čapek and Šalda

Šalda insists that the polemic with Čapek concerns three issues:


73Wittlich describes Mádl as, ‘nejagilnějším českým výtvarným kritikem’. Wittlich, Česká secese, p. 26. He was the regular art critic for Národní listy for many years.


75Ibid.

76Ibid.
journalistic integrity; correct Czech style; and the character of Rodin's art. This is not an accurate account of the issues involved. The polemic treats: the national character of art; the maturity of the Czech 'nation', critics and artists; and the role of the critic, which includes the question of an appropriate critical approach. Šalda dodges the first issue: he wants to claim both that art is above nationalism and, like Čapek, that art has a national character. Where Čapek is more vocal in his praise of Czech artists, Šalda wishes to clear himself of the charge of denigrating Czech artists. In this polemic, Čapek and Šalda assume that one's patriotism 'guarantees' one's reliability as a critic of Czech art. Both Šalda and Čapek criticize the immaturity and pettiness of Czech critics. The polemic has a didactic function; both writers assume that the critic is obliged to root out the 'errors' of Czech criticism, and thus to contribute to the development of national culture, hence the nation. They both agree that the critic plays the role of an intermediary between artist and public.

They disagree in their understanding of the act of interpretation. Čapek's approach is more prosaic; he assumes that the critic acts as a neutral funnel through which the concrete, definable character of one entity, the work of art, is communicated to another, the public. Concomittant to this assumption is the notion that nation and artist share one nature, thus that the artist's work can be understood by the public. The critic's activity consists in observation, definition, evaluation and promotion.

Šalda's approach is metaphysical, as the title of his introduction, 'Geniova mateřština', may suggest. Šalda implies that Rodin's work is above national distinctions; Rodin's 'mother tongue' is the language of the soul, to which great men of all nations have access:

Význam každého velikého umělce-tvůrce a genia pro život je v tom, že on jediný mluví k nám psychickou mateřštinou a nutí nás, abychom mu v ní odpovídali - nebot' jiných odpovědí nepřijímá a jiným odpovědím nerozumí. [...] Psychická mateřština! Jak málo kdo z nás ji slyšel i jen jednou v životě, jak málo kdo z nás je ne mluvil - ale jen vykřikl jednou za život, z hlubin vnitřní úzkostí a tísně! Nebot' hovoříme
Šalda asserts that ordinary language is insufficient to express mysteries and truths. He implies that one's mother tongue is a poor replica of a primary, noumenal language of the psyche. One's language does not reveal the soul, still less the 'soul' of the nation: one must reject everyday language, and by implication all particularizing national characteristics, in order to produce art. He also points out the interaction between artist, the work of art and the viewer; the latter is not merely a passive recipient, but a co-creator of meaning.

Šalda claims, provocatively, that Rodin’s greatness far exceeds that of his contemporaries: ‘Rodinovi je plastika mateřštinou jako žádnému druhému sochaři od staletí. Postavte vedle něho i největší mistry, jež jste posud viděli, a zpatrní se vám celý rozdíl mezi nimi: plastika jest jim jen řečí naučenou’. In the popular press, praise for Rodin implies praise for the Czech nation, because it is capable of appreciating him. Šalda’s eulogy of Rodin is accompanied by a vague denigration of the Czechs. For example, he exhorts the gallery visitor: ‘Před Rodinem musíte se naučit odvaze obdivu a odvaze nenávisti, bez nichž nejste uměleckým lidem, ale beztvarym blátem.’ The tone of the article is ecstatic and the interpretation of Rodin’s works Romantic: ‘Vůně tvůrčího chaosu, vůně tmy a jejího mysteria ulpěla a spí ještě ve vlhké svaté atmosféře na sochách Rodinových jako na čerstvě zrozených

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78 Šalda, ‘Geniova mateřština’, p. [5].

79 Ibid., p. [8].
Čapek's article, 'Rodinova výstava', which sparks the polemic, constitutes not only a response to Šalda's introduction, but also to Sucharda's article, 'Sochař Rodin', printed in the catalogue, and, generally, to the public fervour over the exhibition. First, Čapek criticizes the Czech critics for their self-congratulatory, effusive welcome of Rodin: 'Tentokráte, v dobách příští díla Rodinova do Prahy, byl takový výlev kalamáře, lávou vroucího, oprávněn a porozuměn jakožto výkon a ukázka síly v umělecké apercepci u nás neoprávněnější.'\textsuperscript{81} He criticizes Šalda for putting himself forward as the one capable of understanding Rodin's genius; for his pompous style; for denigrating his compatriots, and in particular Czech graphic artists. The introduction, he states, is written, 'nikoli matematiskou geniu, nýbrž mluvou nejvykútalejšího snobismu'.\textsuperscript{82} He attacks Sucharda for implying that the training he has received is inadequate; Sucharda was a pupil of Josef Václav Myslbek.\textsuperscript{83} He also criticizes Sucharda for suggesting that Rodin's art does not have a national character.\textsuperscript{84} Čapek considers it his duty to combat

\textsuperscript{80}Ibid., p. [5].


\textsuperscript{82}Ibid., p. 941.

\textsuperscript{83}Ibid., p. 940. Čapek's criticism of Sucharda may be fuelled by the latter's conflict with Myslbek. Wittlich relates that Sucharda speaks for a generation in his criticism of Myslbek's late works. Wittlich, Česká secese, p. 50. Šalda also implies that Myslbek's powers have declined; the critic refers to an article in Volné směry devoted to the artist: 'Tam poklonily se vrcholkům díla Myslbekova vřele a upřímě, a musily-li po svém uměleckém svědomí konstatovat klesání, učinily to stejně věcně jako taktně.' F. X. Šalda, 'Odvaha - k pomluvě', Volné směry (1901-02), p. 267. Reproduced in Šalda, Kritické projevy 5 1901-1904, Emanuel Macek (ed.), Prague, 1951, pp. 95-100.

\textsuperscript{84}This seems to be an unfair reading of Sucharda's article. Sucharda writes that the names of Rodin's predecessors and contemporaries will be included in histories of the national art of France, whereas Rodin's name will be included in histories of art in general. Sucharda, 'Sochař Rodin', Katalog výstavy děl sochaře Aug. Rodina v Praze, p. [14].
certain contemporary trends which he perceives in the two articles: the 'cult of hatred' of Czech artists; the encouragement of the younger generation's scorn for its teachers; and the denial of the national character of art. He writes: 'To, co z důsledků Rodinovy expozice očekáváme především, jest poučení o umění v pravdě a ryze národním, nebot' Rodin jest velikým právě proto, poněvadž jest nacionálním v onom smyslu, v jakém to popírá závěrek druhého článku v katalogu výstavy.'

In 'Odvaha - k pomluvě', Šalda addresses the state of Czech criticism and the role of the critic. For Šalda, the critic supplants the artist as the bearer of culture. Although he praises the genius of Rodin, the figure of the artist becomes secondary in Šalda's account of critical activity. As he sees it, the work of art is like a thing-in-itself, the contours of which must remain amorphous to the public at large until the critic recreates them. By his act of interpretation, the critic gives meaning to this otherwise inaccessible object:

Thus Šalda defends a 'mystical' approach and despises sober, technical criticism which attempts to substantiate every statement with an example. His article, he states, is more objective than many a specialist study because it captures the 'zákon tvorby Rodinovy a poslední kořeny jeho genia [...] ani nejlepší "odborníci" nepověděli ve svých článcích v podstatě nic

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*Čapek, 'Rodinova výstava', p. 941.

*Šalda, 'Odvaha - k pomluvě', p. 266. Compare with the depiction of the relationship between Vondrejc and his translator Freund. Also, compare with the assertion in the manifesto of the Česká Moderna: 'Kritická činnost jest prací tvůrčí, umělecko-vědeckou, samostatným literárním genrem, rovnocenným všem ostatním.' Šalda, *Kritické projevy 2, 1894-1895*, p. 361.
The true critic has access to the nature of things; his insights cannot be expressed except in the ecstatic language of the visionary. He cites the French critic Gabriel Mourey (1865-1943) as having written about Rodin in terms similar to his own; ‘jak je psána! Jakým hymnickým, vášnivým, pathetickým a básnickým jazykem!’

Šalda asserts that a ‘přesná a rozhodná polarita duševní, rozhodnost obdivu jako rozhodnost nenávisti’ is fundamental to criticism.

Šalda criticizes the pettiness of the Czechs, who cannot imagine unambiguous opinions; in his view, Čapek embodies this mentality: ‘Nemůže pochopit takový charakterový luxus, v Čechách nevidaný a neslychaný, aby někdo mluvil nebojácně, vášnivě, hrdou, přímo, dobře a plně znácí větou!’ Čapek represents the type of critic who hides his lack of discernment behind cold, ‘reasonable’ criticisms; Čapek is mediocre, provincial, bourgeois, conservative, a critical ‘walrus’.

In responding to Čapek’s attack on his style, Šalda attempts to discredit his opponent’s ability to fulfill the tasks of a critic. He points out two grammatical errors in Čapek’s article and condemns his use of the ‘worst Viennese journalese’, the result of years of writing polemics in the daily press.

Šalda accuses Čapek of having written the article in order to toady to his ‘masters’.

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87 Šalda, ‘Odvaha – k pomluvě’, p. 266. However, by referring to his work as a ‘Článeček’, he also exhibits self-deprecation.

88 Ibid., p. 267.

89 Ibid.

90 Ibid., p. 266.

91 ‘On, K. M. Čapek, je hrdý na svou mroží přirozenost’. Ibid. He attacks Čapek for describing Rodin’s work with the trite term ‘duchaplný’. Ibid., p. 268. Čapek-Chod later objects when the term is applied to his own works in Arne Novák’s review of Vilém Rozkoč.

92 Ibid., p. 267. This theme of the impact of journalism on a writer’s style recurs in polemics with Dyk.
presumably at Národní listy. Šalda denies having disparaged Myslbek or Czech artists.

Finally, Šalda vacillates over the question of the national character of art. On the one hand, he asserts that Rodin is not typically French, although some of his sculptures are 'francouzské a národní'. On the other, he claims that no artist is without a nationality: often those artists who seem to reject the national 'type' are really harking back to an earlier national tradition; when this is realized by later critics, the works of art become absorbed into the national canon. Rodin is such a seemingly iconoclastic artist.

The styles of the polemical retorts answer to the different perspectives and critical methods of the authors. Thus, while Šalda is lavish with his insults, Čapek appears to be more reserved. For the sake of parody, Čapek assumes the style which Šalda attributes to him: 'Samá tříšt'ka, samý odskok, samá klausule, samá insinuace, samá klikatina! Samý schnörkl, samý šnek, samý čachřík se slovem i logikou [...] kličkuje, kroutí se, uhýbá se a provozuje vůbec nejrůznější cirkusové řemeslo.' Čapek ironizes himself to make his opponent appear utterly foolish. Thus he accepts the label of circus rodeo-rider, adding:

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93Ibid.

94Ibid., p. 269.

In 'Problém národnosti v umění', Šalda pursues a similar argument. Here he refers to Mách as a 'typical' national artist, unappreciated by his contemporaries. He writes: 'Národnost v umění [...] jest tak hluboký klad, že bývá vždy cítěn jako zápor průměrem vrstevníků'. F. X. Šalda, 'Problém národnosti v umění', Boje o zitřek, p. 183. In this essay, Šalda elaborates his mystical conception of the nation and of national art: 'Být národním znamená pracovatí na mystickém cíli a úkolu'; 'Národnost jest jen slovo pro uvědomění si života a kultury, daný a přijatý slib metafyzického díla'; 'být národním jest vůle k utrpení a k hrdinství a služba naděje a víry na poplëněných polích času'; 'Milovat národ a uctívat národnost znamená milovat a uctívat mysterium naděje a vykoupení, hrdinství a krásy'. Ibid., pp. 168-9, 178, 184.

95Šalda, 'Odvaha - k pomluvě', p. 269.

96Ibid., p. 267.
'připomínám si nedávných v Praze výkonů amerického krotitele jankovitých koní i doufám, že jsem předvedl obecnoství již tak mnohého zkroceného janka i snad že se mi to podaří — vyjma nevyléčitelnosti — i s p. Šaldou'. At the same time as he attacks his opponent, he asserts that he will not lower himself to Šalda's level of insult; regarding Šalda's claim that Čapek is a critical 'walrus', he writes: 'Nebudu s ním mluvit arkticky, aniž se budu ohlížet po říší živočišstva, abych se mu odvděčil, nebot' nazval-li bych jej "kritický oppossum" aneb "magotem", nic bych nedokázal, jako p. Šalda svými nadávkami nic nedokazuje'. Čapek, for all his protests, is as determined to vilify his opponent as Šalda; he labels Šalda's bi-polar soul, evincing admiration and hatred, as 'krobjanistní'; and he attacks Šalda's 'velkohubost'. Because of the amount of abuse the writers exchange, one might forget that serious questions are involved.

Čapek claims that he is vindicated by Šalda's retreat over the question of the greatness of Czech artists. He insists that he only wrote the article for Česká revue in order to express the indignation of Czech intellectuals over Šalda and Suchard'a's articles. He reveals the contradiction in Šalda's assertions about the national character of Rodin's art. While both Čapek and Šalda continue to address these questions in the polemic, their views more or less concur. Čapek, however, states that Šalda's citing of a French critic is proof that he has plagiarized his opinions and has nothing original to say. Čapek's attack on Šalda's originality, like Šalda's attack on Čapek's style, constitute attempts to discredit the opponent's qualifications as a critic.

These attacks serve an important function because the

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99 Ibid.

100 Ibid.

101 Wittlich writes that at the turn of the century a typical accusation directed by the older generation at younger artists was that of plagiarization of foreign models. Wittlich, Česká secese, p. 49.
notion of the role of the critic is crucial to the polemic. 

Čapek objects to the view that the critic recreates the work of art: he states that he is repelled by critics who regard their occupation: 'nikoli jako publicistické práci, provozované umělecky vytříbenou mluvou, ale jako osobnímu svému "umění" a zřejmě dýchícím po tom, ne aby zjednali uznání anebo poznání dílu, o něž běží, nýbrž především uznání sobě samým'.

Šalda, in his opinion, is the quintessential aesthete, one of those who, 'dráždí se k stylistickým výlevům, aniž by ovládali jich závěrečné konvulze a pyšní se touto "vášnívou" opilostí'.

Čapek relates that he has already encountered this type of ecstatic art critic in the Bílek affair; Pelant and Šalda’s critical perspectives have much in common.

In his response, 'Desaterý odborník', Šalda introduces new elements into the debate. He accuses Čapek of being a shallow jack-of-all-trades in the field of criticism, a label which is later applied to Čapek’s creative writing and becomes a source of contention in polemics which address the question of the role of information in a work of art:

Desaterý odborník K. M. Čapek, největší polyhistor od dob Leibnitzových, který píše stejně hluboce a věcně o kombinacích zahraniční politiky jako o problému, jak vyvážet smět z Prahy, dokázal mi obšírnými a šťavnatými exkursey ve svém svatováclavském klání v "Národních Listech", že rozumí opravdu do detailů metafyziky, koňařství, hořkářství, dřevěnkářství a šumaření - všemu pod sluncem - jenom právě ne těm zpropadeným lapalím, o něž vedeme spor: novinářské poctivosti, českému stylu a jazyku a charakteru Rodinova umění.

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102 Čapek, 'Neodolatelný mílek muz, p. F. X. Šalda'.

103 Ibid.

104 F. X. Šalda, 'Desaterý odborník K. M. Čapek', Čas, 5 October 1902, p. 6. Šalda chooses to publish his responses to Čapek in the Realist newspaper, while Čapek publishes his 'letters' in the newspaper for which he works, the organ of the Young Czech Party. The polemic thus acquires a secondary political dimension; this is referred to indirectly in Šalda’s comment that Čapek is toadying to his masters. Rivalry between parties forms the context for several polemics (for example, that with Bém, and with the editor-in-chief of Čas).
Salda perhaps attempts to elevate the tone of the polemic with this summary of the issues at stake. The debate, however, has little to do with Rodin’s art, except insofar as it provides a starting point for discussing whether or not art is ‘national’; Čapek devotes more attention than Salda to analysis of sculptures by Rodin. ‘Journalistic integrity’ is here an empty phrase; the ‘debate’ on style mainly provides an opportunity to discredit the opponent.

Thus Salda’s claim that Čapek’s style is replete with Germanisms constitutes an attempt to undermine Čapek’s trustworthiness. ¹⁰⁵ Salda insinuates that Čapek is not thoroughly ‘Czech’: if one’s language is not nationally ‘pure’, then one’s nationalism must be questionable. Salda’s assertion that Čapek’s critical terms hark back to the clichés of German criticism common twenty years previously constitutes a similar attack: ‘těto ubohé, nesmyslné fraze [i.e. ‘duchaplnost’], dnes, kdy ji Němci již dávno odložili, chytají se naší původní a pravlastenečtí Čapkově!’ ¹⁰⁶ Salda again denies having denigrated Myslbek or Czech artists in general; that is, his own patriotism and thus his authority as a critic of Czech art are above reproach. He asserts that Rodin’s work does manifest a ‘national’ spirit: ‘Napsal jsem ve Volnych Směrech, že Rodin, který se zdál nedávno ještě Francouzům nefrancouzským, bude se zdát francouzským budoucím svým krajanům, “až jeho novoty a obnovy budou sankcionovány a přijaty a přejdou v obecný národní statek”.’ ¹⁰⁷

The polemic becomes increasingly personal and vindictive. In his response, Čapek turns the phrase ‘desaterý odborník’ against Salda: ‘Tímto výrokem ocenil pan F. X. Šalda asi tak přibližně vzájemný náš poměr, který se dá vyjádřit rovnici: Šalda:Čapek = 1:10.’ ¹⁰⁸ He again criticizes Salda for borrowing

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 7.
¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 6.
¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 7.
¹⁰⁸ K. M. Čapek, ‘Desaterým odborníkem’ (Zasláno), Národní listy, 8 October 1902, p. 6.
his ideas from foreign sources. He implies that Šalda exults foreign models to hide his own deficiencies, thus providing a negative example for others:

Jeho epíštoly o umění jsou ukolébavkami, pří nichž umlká lítost nad vlastní neplodností a neschopností, vytvořit moderní typ národního umění, nalézti sama sebe a utéci se k nohám genia, jehož materština jest nynějším jeho dětem nesrozumitelnou a tajemstvím sedmerou pečetí zapečetěným, jméno jeho pak ještě dobrým spolkovému titulu.\[^{109}\]

Čapek claims that Šalda has a negative impact on young Czech artists; he expects that Šalda's theories will 'ruin' at least a few graduates of the Academy of Fine Arts, just as they have ruined advocates of Česká Moderna: 'Z police literární české moderny šklebí se několik nedonošených vypjatců, uložených ve spiritusu, vyluhovaném z páně Šaldovy erudice'.\[^{110}\] Čapek also identifies Šalda with the Realists who, he claims, are incapable of original and 'positive' thought in any sphere and despise all that is Czech.\[^{111}\] He also points out Šalda's use of Germanisms and satirizes his verse, stating that he has succumbed to the 'záchvěvom chorých pudů uropoetického systému'.\[^{112}\]

The polemic concludes with Šalda's 'Lokálkářský literát K. M. Čapek', which contributes nothing new to the debate. Šalda again attacks Čapek's credibility. He implies that Čapek is a 'turn-coat', as the Národní listy journalist used to work for Česká [Národní] politika; thus, Čapek is a hypocrite and his views are not to be trusted.\[^{113}\] Šalda derides Čapek for using a

\[^{109}\]Ibid. This remark refers to Mánes.

\[^{110}\]Ibid.

\[^{111}\]His comment recalls the 'positive' politics of the Young Czechs.

\[^{112}\]Ibid.

\[^{113}\]The question of a journalist's political loyalties is raised in later polemics (for example, that with Machar). The Czech National Party was founded in 1860. Divisions within the party led to the formation of a 'Young Czech' left wing of the National Party. The Young Czechs seceded from the National, or 'Old Czech', Party in December 1874. The Young Czech Party differed from the parent party more in terms of its tactics and supporters than its political principles. The Young Czechs,
method which, he writes, is popular among Czechs: heaping abuse on one’s opponent, especially for his lack of patriotism, to hide one’s own embarrassment and inadequacy. Šalda, however, has also employed this tactic and immediately resorts to it again, repeating that Čapek’s Czech has been spoiled by the influence of Viennese daily newspapers. He scoffs at Čapek for suggesting that Šalda has had a negative financial impact on Mânes; Čapek has made this attack, Šalda states, only because he knows that Czech readers will be unmoved by complaints about Šalda’s betrayal of ‘national’ artists. Šalda ridicules the claim that he has spoiled the young of the nation. He sarcastically remarks that the young have no interest in imitating the model of modern national art represented by Čapek’s works: Třetí dvůr (sic) and Nedělní povídky. To Čapek’s proposal that he compile a grammar of native geniuses, Šalda replies that he has only treated the grammar of two ‘geniuses’: Vilém Mrštík (1863-1912) and Čapek. Šalda adds rather pompously: ‘jinak pracoval jsem jen na estetice, psychologii a ethice našich mistrů a na uměleckém a kritickém obrození naší literatury v duchu a smyslu právě těchto mistrů’. Whereas Čapek concludes his last letter with an assessment of Šalda as a ‘“s uma sšedším” geniem’, Šalda refers to Čapek as a ‘podnormální zanedbanec’; both forswear further polemics with one another.

5. German Newspapers

identified with a more vehement nationalism, anticlericalism and support for extended suffrage and civil liberties, defeated the Old Czechs in the Reichsrat elections of March 1891. See: Garver, The Young Czech Party 1874–1901, pp. 1-2, 30, 61-2, 79.

F. X. Šalda, ‘Lokálkařský literát K. M. Čapek’, Čas, 14 October 1902, p. 5. Thus, criticism of Čapek’s ‘journalistic’ style constituted in part an attack on his patriotism; that is, he was subject to the influence of ‘inferior’ German models.

Ibid., p. 6.

Čapek was probably not averse to being lumped together with Mrštík. They were friends. Papers: Mrštíkové; 2 letters from V. Mrštík to Čapek-Chod, 1907-1910; PNP.

An exchange between Čapek and Čas gives evidence of the conflict between the Young Czechs and Masaryk’s Realist Party over the issue of reconciliation between the nationalities. At this time, German deputies were obstructing proceedings in the Bohemian Diet and Czech deputies were practising a policy of obstruction in the Moravian Diet and in the Reichsrat. Urban writes of the public’s boredom with the continuing rows in parliament: 'In the end, not even the occasional slaps and shouts provoked much attention.' The exchange between Čapek and Čas reveals an identification of the journalist with his newspaper’s party, thus a public figure who must declare his loyalties. In this case, Čapek voices the Young Czech position.

Čas rejects the view expressed in Národní listy that, for patriotic reasons, Czechs should not attend performances at the German theatre. Čas attacks Národní listy for advocating that Czechs forgo social contact with Germans. Such a policy is hypocritical: the Grégrs, owners of the newspaper, married German women. The Realist newspaper published an anonymous letter which attacks Mádl because he frequents the German theatre and yet continues to write for an anti-German newspaper. The letter also criticizes Čapek as a hypocrite because he used to contribute to German newspapers. In a letter printed in Národní listy, Čapek explains that from 1895 until 1902 he regularly wrote reports for the Munich journal Kunst für alle about developments in the representational arts; he defends this work as promotion of Czech art. He states that he ceased to

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118 Urban, Česká společnost 1848-1918, p. 514.
119 'Národní policajti', Čas, 11 November 1903, p. 3.
120 The article refers to Julius Grégr (1831-1896), founder of Národní listy and a deputy in the Bohemian Diet and the Reichsrat, and his eldest son Prokop Grégr.
121 X, 'Panu K. B. Mádlovi', (Zasláno), Čas, 11 November 1903, p. 6.
122 Vojtěch Hynais may have mediated the contact between Čapek and the Munich journal. In a letter dated 9 December 1895, Hynais writes to Čapek that he has a message for him from the publisher of Kunst für alle. Papers: Čapek-Chod; letters from Hynais to
contribute articles when he realized that the journal was succumbing to the resentful pressure of Prague German journalists.  

Čas relishes this response; it declares that Čapek is so confused by anti-German sentiment that he feels the need to apologize for writing for German journals, an activity which Čas commends. Čapek replies that he had wanted to make clear that he wrote for a Munich paper, not a Prague German paper; he thus implies that his contributions cannot be compared with the 'treachery' of attending performances at the German theatre. The exchange recalls the debate over Mánes's invitations to the gala for the Rodin exhibition. Promotion of Czech culture abroad justifies contacts with Germans; however, Národní listy, like Čapek, condemns friendly exchanges with Prague Germans as a betrayal of the national cause.

6. Edvard Bém and the Realist Press

The identification of the journalist or critic with the politics of the newspaper for which he writes, and the hostility between Realists and Young Czechs, are also manifest in the polemic between Čapek and Edvard Bém (1883-1945). The themes of earlier polemics recur: the state of the arts and the immaturity of the 'general public' in the Bohemian Lands; the relation between art and nation; and the role of the critic. In his articles, Bém expresses reverence for truth and criticism of Czech pettiness.

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Čapek-Chod, 1895-1923; PNP. See also: Papers: Čapek-Chod; documents: statement of fees from the publisher of Kunst für alle, Munich, 1896; PNP.

123K. M. Čapek, 'Moje psaní do německých listů' (Zasláno), Národní listy, 12 November 1903, p. 5. He also states that two years previously he had contributed several articles about politics to Pester Lloyd.

124 'Páté přes deváté', Čas, 13 November 1903, p. 5.

125K. M. Čapek, 'Ani mi nenapadlo' (Zasláno), Národní listy, 14 November 1903, p. 6.

126 Contrast with his portrayal of the Prague German audience in 'Beethovenův večer'.
Although he despises the 'vulgar' masses, Bém assumes that the artist has a responsibility to the nation and vice versa.

The polemic begins with Čapek's anonymous response to two articles by Bém, published in Masaryk's journal, Naše doba (founded in 1893): 'Subvence na umělecké výstavy' and 'Situace výtvarného umění v Čechách'. The first article, which bemoans the lack of appreciation for culture in the Bohemian Lands, also constitutes a political attack on the Agrarian Party. Bém criticizes the Agrarians (Agrární nadkulturní velikáni), first, for their proposal to cut subsidies for Czech and German theatres from the budget of the provincial diet. He claims that the Agrarians are concerned only for their political careers when they advocate that the money be used to meet the material needs of the poor. Secondly, he defends Mánes's application for a subsidy to cover its deficit; the Diet's promise to grant a sum is now threatened by the Agrarians' objections. Bém asserts that the predominance of the Agrarians, who are incapable of appreciating beauty, forebodes the death of culture, which, in his view, is essential to the nation. Bém's characterization of Czech pettiness, manifest in Agrarian politicians, recalls Šalda's attack on Czech bourgeois sobriety in the Rodin polemic. Bém writes: 'Není případněji vystíben obraz naší malosti, ubohé úzkostlivosti, střízlivosti a bezspontannosti - než v jednání o kulturních otázkách: největších nutnostech národa a generací.'

The second article constitutes an attack on the Young Czechs, as well as a defence of Mánes for accepting a subsidy from Vienna. Bém depicts the Bohemian Lands as languishing in a state of cultural backwardness; Czech artists offer the thankless nation spiritual regeneration. The artists are the leaders, and

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127 Masaryk was editor-in-chief from October 1894 until the outbreak of World War I.


129 Ibid., p. 440.

not merely members, of the nation. In Part I, Bém addresses the problems which artists face in the Bohemian Lands. Organizations for the promotion of art are ineffective: Umělecká Beseda has reduced art to a commodity which appeals to the bourgeoisie; the last exhibition of Jednota výtvarných umělců was a fiasco; the Academy of Fine Arts contributes a scandalously small amount to the funding of Dílo. Cultural organizations have not educated the Czech public. He criticizes in particular the exhibitions at the Rudolfinum; the haphazard display of a great quantity of works of varying worth has only confused visitors to the gallery. Such an arrangement has degraded art to the level of the mob: 'Je přirozeno, že divák v takovém uměleckém labyrintě spíše chápal prostřednost než výjimečnost - a tak demokratická nerozdílnost mezi uměleckým dílem a divákem nalezla jednu společnou cestu: všednost.' Those arranging exhibitions have an obligation to educate the public; this dictates strict criteria for selection, emphasizing harmony, the elevation of style, individuality and, in particular, the inner national character of the works. The Czechs lag behind other nations in terms of cultural maturity; while appreciation for impressionist works spread beyond France, Czechs continued to admire detailed, realistic 'malovánky'.

In this sterile Czech environment, a herd mentality dominates.

Bém depicts the artist, in Decadent terms, as a

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131 Compare Masaryk's representation of Palacký in Česká otázka. Masaryk quotes Palacký: 'naléhát i na spisovatele české, co duchovní budiče a vůdce národa svého, povinnost, nejen vynikati a svítiti pravou osvětou, pokroku, obětavosti a bezúhonnosti, ale i snažiti se, aby ctnostmi ducha, inteligencí a mravní statečnosti předčili a přemahali rozhodně všecky ty, kdo národnímu bytu našemu na odpor se staví'. T. G. Masaryk, Česká otázka, Prague, 1895, p. 150.


133 Ibid., p. 727.

134 Ibid.

135 Ibid.
visionary outsider scorned by the vulgar officials who rule the cultural world. Photographic precision in art is heralded as natural and divinely simple; the masses have grown fat on this kind of 'digestible' fare: 'Výjimečnost a paradox odsouzeny k tajemné mluvě, nesrozumitelné vulgárním a všedním, nastala vláda demokratismu v umění, nebot' bylo užitečné a všem srozumitelné a hlavně nebylo rozdílu mezi podávajícím a přijímacím.' Bém's view on the national character of art is similar to Šalda's; that is, those artists who are truly 'national' are not recognized as such by their contemporaries. Bém cites as typical the critical neglect of Jan Preisler (1872-1918), the best and the most 'Czech' of the young generation of painters. The painter Antonín Slavíček has won recognition abroad but is unappreciated in his own land. This is symptomatic of the cultural 'plague' devastating the nation: the Czech environment lacks authenticity ('opravdovost'), character, and respect for beauty; behind a façade of culture, truth is silenced; righteous anger is regarded as treasonable; 'democratic despots' have shackled freedom of speech:

Tak národ, který touží po volnosti a svobodě, neuctívá ve svém nitru pravdu, byť i krutou, jako první zákon vývoje a kultury, nepovznesl ji na nejsvětější oltář svého života, ale za to postavil chrámy vzájemného uctívání, lichocení, domýšlivosti a podezíravosti. V nich zmizel pojem národa jako jednoty: ta síla tajemná v dramatě lidstva: síla kladu a gravitace.  

Bém implicitly associates Mánes with the leaders of the National Revival who had reacted against Habsburg 'darkness': 'V té době temna, všednosti a obvyklosti: tajemný zákon paradoxu - dal vzniknouti v smutné české zemi nové malířské generaci, jež seskupila se ve spolku výtvarných umělců "Manes".' These artists have been enriched by their self-imposed exile. They embody the national spirit: 'v ní krystalisoval se pojem národa

135Ibid., p. 728.
137Ibid., p. 729.
138Ibid.
jako velké jednoty v kladu života, kultury a krásy'. Bém banally echoes Nietzsche when he asserts that isolation awakened in these artists a desire to re-evaluate existing values. According to Bém, this involves a change in focus in art from the outward to the inner world. The publication of the Mânes journal, Volné směry, constitutes a significant cultural event. Among Czechs, however, all that is exceptional meets with failure; the journal consistently operates with a deficit. Bém attacks the Young Czechs for not supporting culture. Mánes has been criticized for accepting money from Vienna to fund Volné směry; Bém, however, asserts that this most patriotic of associations is justified in accepting a subsidy from Vienna because Mánes has been neglected by its own nation.

In Part II Bém continues the attack on the Young Czechs he had begun in Part I; he also continues to defend Mánes's seemingly unpatriotic stance towards Vienna. He begins this section with a summary of the difficulties which Mánes has faced. Exhibitions of works by members met with bewilderment. When its exhibition space, Topičův salón, closed, Mánes, because of a lack of funds, chose to exhibit in the unsuitable rooms of 'U Štajgrů'. "Official literature" did nothing to raise the spiritual capacity of the nation; thus Mánes was all the more isolated in its struggle to introduce new currents into art. The representational arts were undervalued and artists were regarded as parasites. In attacking the lack of understanding of art in the Bohemian Lands, Bém singles out the organ of the Young Czechs: 'Vždyť' u nás pojem o umění je tak strašlivý. V těch surových výpadech, insinuacích, nájezdech, upjatosti, v nesoudnosti a neprozíravosti -- jež soustředily kolem sebe obmezenou chasu temna, od "Nár. Listů" až do klerikálních vrstev [...] bylo nutno bojovatí a zároveň vychovávatí duši za duší, den

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139Ibid.
140Ibid., p. 730.
141Ibid., p. 801.
142Ibid., p. 802.
Just as Volné směry had to turn to 'foreigners' for a subsidy, the development of exhibitions relied on foreigners for moral support. Because innovations were not appreciated in the Czech environment, Mánes turned to France for inspiration; by inviting Rodin to exhibit in Prague, Mánes realized one of its 'educational' (výchovný) dreams. Bém criticizes Czech politicians for making an empty display of their love of culture and for turning Rodin's visit into a political event. Neither officials nor ordinary people have any appreciation for artists: the jubilee exhibition of Mikolás Aleš (1852-1913) and the Josef Mánes (1820-71) exhibition attracted few visitors. A recent exhibition of artists of the Worpswede School was visited mainly by Prague Germans. Národní listy, because of this exhibition, criticized Mánes for being unpatriotic. Bém again attacks the Young Czechs for the influence they have had: 'vedoucí strana vykonala strašlivý vliv na mládež svou politikou kompromisů, etap, zbabělosti, přetvářky a bezcharakternosti. Vykonala strašlivé dílo, rozsela bezpátečnost, povrchnost a frasovitost, deprimovala odvahu a způsobila stagnaci síly'. He insists that this 'chasa temna' is responsible for the anaesthetized spiritual state of the Czech public.

The anonymous response, of which Čapek later admits authorship, concentrates on the political barbs in Bém's articles. The journal in which the articles are published, Naše doba, is mentioned; the author also wonders whether or not Bém is writing on his own initiative. The author insists that no

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143Ibid.
144Ibid., p. 803.
145Ibid., p. 805. The power of the Young Czechs had declined in this period. However, the reference to the politics of 'stages' (etapa) identifies the Young Czechs as the butt of his attack. The Young Czechs were associated with this 'step-by-step' or 'positive' approach to politics. Garver, The Young Czech Party 1874-1901, p. 62. Bém's article predates the electoral demise of the Young Czechs following the suffrage reforms in 1907.

146[K. M. Čapek], 'Situace výtvarného umění v Čechách', Národní listy, 20 August 1904, p. 2. He refers to Bém ironically as the 'světlého anděla chrámu nevšednosti - málem bychom řekli
other Czech newspaper has done as much as Národní listy to promote Mánes; as proof of this, he mentions the extensive coverage each Mánes exhibition receives in the weekend section of the newspaper. He denies Bém’s allegation that the newspaper ever attacked Mánes as unpatriotic; he recalls, however, that the organization was criticized for issuing invitations in German for the Rodin gala. He provides a definition of ‘national art’ as Národní listy conceives of it: ‘pro nás politické praktiky a nacionalisty v řadě první bude platit ono umění za nejnárodnější, kteréž přispěje k vychování národního karakteru nejen co do kulturní odlišnosti a individuality národa, ale i co do upevění národní vzdornosti proti všem odnárodněvovacím tendencím’. He states that in the context of the present struggle against the influences of Germanization, Czechs will not be hounded into visiting a gallery displaying the works of German artists, even if they are talented and popular. It is futile, he claims, to distinguish the political from the cultural ties between the two nations.

The vehemence of the opponents enhances the comic aspect of the polemic. Mistaking Václav Hladík for the author of the article in Národní listy, Bém publishes his essay as a pamphlet: ‘Situace výtvarného umění v Čechách. Dodatek osvětlení kulturní světlého chasníka’. Ibid. It is not surprising that Čapek presumes the articles to be tendentious. Drews comments that in the journal Masaryk, ‘exploited literary issues to illustrate and to explain the intellectual and moral problems of his time’. Peter Drews, ‘Masaryk and Machar’s Literary Criticism in Naše doba’, T. G. Masaryk (1850-1937), vol. 2, Thinker and Critic, Pynsent (ed.), p. 160.

147 [Čapek], ‘’Situace výtvarného umění v Čechách’.

148 The author approves of the fact that most of the visitors of the Worpswede exhibition are German: ‘tínnet’ svůj k svému nejradější’. Ibid. This is a reference to the ‘svůj k svému’ economic boycotts of German businesses. The public letter from Máj, an association of Czech writers, printed in Národní listy, urging Czechs to put national considerations first, even in the area of art appreciation, indicates that the ‘svůj k svému’ campaign continued well beyond the turn of the century. Jaroslav Vrchlický, František Sekanina and František Herites, ‘Nejširší české veřejnosti!’, Národní listy, 1 December 1908, pp. 2-3.
činnosti "Národních Listů" a odpověd' na kritiku pana V. Hladíka'. In his response, printed in Národní listy, Hladík describes the essay as, 'plnou pomatenosti, ignorantství a surovosti'. He refuses to enter into the debate, because, he states, 'nepolemisuji s lecjakým panem Bémem, jenž se mi připlete do cesty'. He also reveals that he is not the author of the 'offending' article.

The political subtext of the polemic is underlined in Bém's reply to Hladík; this and further replies by Bém were published in the Realist newspaper Čas. Bém states that he did not write a study of the graphic arts; that is, the state of the arts provided him with a pretext to attack another target: 'situace výt. umění byla mi obrazem k studii našeho vniterného a kulturního života. Žádné umění, nýbrž náš život'. He insists that he responded to Hladík initially because he wanted to dispel the suspicion that his article was inspired by someone else; that is, he interprets the article in Národní listy as aimed at Realist politicians. Bém repeats that the 'sins' of the editors of Národní listy have had a fatal impact on culture.

On the following day, Čapek explains that he is the author of the original article directed at Bém: 'Jen velmi nerad vystupuji v této jinak svou záměnou švandovní Comedii del [sic] Arte, abych nastavil dodatečně svá žáda ranám hrachem naplněné měchuřiny Bémovy.' He reveals that he responded to Bém's article because he perceived it as an expression of the opinion of Masaryk's journal. Čapek's description of Bém, however, suggests that differences of style and perspectives on art and criticism contribute to the rancour of the polemic: 'jeho jektavá

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149Published in Prague in 1904.
150Václav Hladík, 'Celou brožurku' (Zasláno), Národní listy, 18 November 1904, p. 10.
151Ibid.
152Edvard Bém, 'Pan V. Hladík' (Zasláno), Čas, 19 November 1904, p. 6.
Apart from this remark, Čapek’s response concentrates on the relation between nation and art. Čapek again denies that Národní listy ever accused Mánes of lacking patriotism; he does, however, acknowledge that, ‘politicko-nacionální boj národa [...] naším výtvarným uměním velikého slohu úplně jest opuštěn’. He states that Národní listy has not challenged Volné směry to engage in this battle, and that the journal, funded by Vienna, would hardly descend to such a level anyway. He cites Luděk Marold’s illustrations of the 1897 demonstrations, which publicized the predicament of the Czechs to the rest of Europe, as an example of the national role that art can play. Čapek describes Bém’s article as a howl of pain over the separation of the Czech people from the representational arts; it is a symptom, not an understanding of, or a means of removing, that pain. He expresses regret over this gulf between art and ordinary people, and, perhaps, doubt that contemporary art is ‘national’:

Já, mluvě tedy za sebe, myslím si, že kdyby se duše národa sama od sebe neozvala a nevzplála pro umění skutečně z jeho duše čerpané, by ani žádnou duší národa nebyla, a za velkou nehodu ano neštěstí pokládám, že náš demokratický národ český, který ze všech národů nejvíce má zapotřebí umění k národu obráceného, má dnes výtvarné umění ze všech národů takřka nejexklusivnější a nejaristokratičtější. Tot’ tajemstvím jeho obdivu venku a žalné lhostejnosti k...

154Ibid.
155Ibid.
156Ibid. Čapek is answering statements made by Bém in the pamphlet.
157Čapek’s comment on the relation between the representational arts and literature suggests that Pynsent may be right in assuming that the demonstration scene in Antonín Vondřejc is based on Marold’s drawing. Pynsent, ‘Čapek-Chod and the Grotesque’, p. 203. The collapse of Badeni’s government in November 1897 over the issue of the language ordinances was followed by demonstrations and riots in Vienna and Prague.
The editors of Čas enter the polemic anonymously, treating it as another opportunity to defame a rival newspaper and political party; under the heading 'Hlasy novin', Lidové noviny’s commentary on Běm’s article is cited. The writer for Lidové noviny describes the article as foolish, but praiseworthy in its intention to support Mánes. Čas asserts that Běm has shown that the Young Czech Party is not an ‘enlightening element’ in the nation and that Národní listy has consistently harassed Mánes. Čas describes Čapek’s recent letter as ‘vtěleným štvaním proti Mánesu opět’; Čapek is said to be, ‘člověka neodpovědného a v listě odpovědném za kulturní záležitosti’. That is, ‘Matěj Čapek’ determines the relations between Mánes and Národní listy. By referring to Čapek as ‘Matěj’, the author attempts to disparage him as a boor. The author claims that Čapek wishes to take revenge on the organization which had tried to discredit him once and for all as an art critic.

Čapek’s response is directed at the founder and owner of Čas, Jan Herben. Čapek assumes that Čas was referring to his conflict with Mánes over Bílek; Čapek states that he ‘forgave’ the artists for their outburst. As proof of his support for Mánes, he mentions the articles which he wrote for the Munich art journal: ‘opravdové to hymny na spolek "Mánes" a jeho vynikající členy, tak nadšené, že pro ně měla mnichovská redakce půtky s pražskými německými kruhy’. Čapek is probably accurate when he assures Herben: ‘pokud zná Matěj Čapek poměry, ujišťuje Jana Herbenu, že v české veřejnosti nemůže "Mánesa" žádné štvaní

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158 Čapek, ‘K brožurce Ed. Béma’. This quotation suggests the mixture of emotions underlying Čapek’s art reviews. While urging the public to show greater support for Czech artists, he is adamant in dismissing works which he believes do not address the public; that is, works which are, in his opinion, expressions of an artist’s pretension or self-indulgence.

159 ‘Hlasy novin’, Čas, 22 November 1904, p. 4.

160 Ibid.

161 K. M. Čapek, ‘V úterý utrousil "Čas“’ (Zasláno), Národní listy, 24 November 1904, p. 10. See: Čapek’s polemic with Čas over his contributions to Kunst für alle.
poškoditi tak, jako Herbenova chvála'.

In his reply to Čapek, Bém repeats certain claims and heaps more insults on his opponent. He states that his pamphlet is concerned with culture and the Young Czech Party. He also insists that he is engaged in the polemic strictly on his own initiative. He criticizes Čapek for his attack on Volné směry. He offers evidence of Národní listy's slurs on Mánes, quoting from an article printed in October 1903 which appears to accuse Mánes of lacking a conscience in questions of nationality. Bém drags up against Čapek the conventional accusation, in polemics, of inconsistency, although his arguments are weak.

Čapek responds with a conventional disclaimer: 'Záležitost s p. E. Bémem těmito řádky končím, nebot' nemám času na největší a nejzoufalší sport české současnosti, zaslanou "kopanou".' He reiterates that he was only interested in Bém's article as an expression of the opinion of Naše doba. He repeats his criticism of Volné směry for accepting money from Vienna (ministerstvo kultu). Čapek claims that Bém has misrepresented the views expressed in the article on Mánes from which he quotes. The 'article' is actually a letter sent by a student, Jaroslav Novotný, who complains of the prohibitive cost of exhibitions, as well as of Mánes's indifference to manifestations of German chauvinism. Čapek concludes his letter with a parody of Bém's

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162Ibid. Čapek appears to anticipate the embezzlement charges, later dropped, against Herben in 1905.

163Edvard Bém, 'K mé brožuře' (Zasláno), Čas, 25 November 1904, p. 6. The letter published on the same page gives an indication of how common this quibbling in the press was.

164'śmieň své názory a přesvědčení, jako kaleidoskop'. Ibid.


166Novotný writes in response to an article about the poor attendance of students at Mánes exhibitions. He complains that exhibitions and theatre performances are too expensive for most students. The 'attack' on Mánes's patriotism refers to Novotný's criticism of Mánes and the arts community generally for not responding to the 'vilification' of Czechs in German journals, including the journal of German artists, Jugend. 'Čeští studenti a umělecké výstavy v Praze', Národní listy, 18 October 1903, p.
Bém replies that by publishing Novotný’s letter, Národní listy identifies itself with the contents of the letter. He states that Čapek is right to abandon the polemic: ‘Lidé, kteří byli usvědčeni z nepravdy, fixlovaní, necharakternosti, v měnění názorů a přesvědčení – nemají práva mluviti k soudu veřejnosti, nebot’ jsou mezi slušnými lidmi odsouzeni.’ In response, Čapek, accompanied by his colleague, Ladislav Tůma, visits Bém at his flat and demands that he retract the accusations. When Bém refuses, Čapek attempts to slap him; the slap is deflected by Bém. The exchange ends with the entry of Bém’s pregnant sister, whose health is said to be threatened by Čapek’s coarse behaviour. Bém charges him with defamation of character and assault (urážka na cti dle 496. tr. z., spáchanou zlým nakládáním). Přehled comments on the affair, bemoaning the fact that polemics between Czech writers are resolved in court: ‘Smutné je to zejména proto, že se tím ukazuje, jak bezmocné a mravně nevyvinuté je u nás veřejné mínění. Nebot’ kdyby veřejné mínění mělo dosti mravní síly, samo by dávno vymýtilo přední právo jako poslední důvod literární diskuse.’ In its account of the court case, the Social Democrats’ newspaper Právo lidu asserts that, although the case is dismissed, Čapek has suffered

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167Čapek, ‘Záležitost s p. E. Bémem’.


170‘Podivným způsobem’, Přehled, 3 (1904), 10, p. 179.
a moral defeat. The incident earns him a reputation; Právo lidu refers to him as "břítkého" polemika', and the 'národní polemik'. The newspaper account also suggests that some contemporaries regard Bém's humiliation as justified; the witness Tůma, when asked by the judge if Čapek had intended to slap Bém, replies: 'Já myslím, že to snad měl být takový morální políček ...

The vituperative remarks exchanged by Bém and Čapek and the conclusion to the polemic in court might suggest that the conflict between the two men derives from a difference of personalities. There is, however, a real clash of opinions between Čapek and Bém. Both seem to agree that art should be 'national' in character and that artist and nation should be in a relation of mutual responsibility. For Bém, however, the artist fulfils his or her responsibility through innovative work; the artist elevates the nation, raising the level of culture by creative work inspired by inner vision. This view, which accords with the manifesto of the Česká Moderna, transcends the nationality conflict. Čapek insists that the artist and his activity cannot be disentangled from politics. The question of funding provides a concrete example: because Volné směry receives a subsidy from the national 'enemy', Vienna, it has compromised itself morally and is thus incapable of encouraging the Czechs in their political battle. According to this view, the Mánes artists have betrayed their nation. Their work does not emanate from the 'national soul'; that is, it is not tied to an 'organic' nation. This is manifest in the indifferent popular response to

\[\text{Soudní sň. Páně Čapkova výprava polemická', Právo lidu, 25 January 1905, pp. 6-7. The case is dismissed because, according to the article of the law under which Čapek is charged, the assault must be committed in a public place, or before a number of people. This incident had, however, occurred in a private residence, before a single witness, Tůma. The testimonies of the two court witnesses, Tůma and Bém's sister, differ.}\]

\[\text{Ibid.}\]

\[\text{Ibid.}\]
contemporary art.  

7. F. V. Krejčí: Informace pro cizinu

In the autumn of 1905, František Václav Krejčí's (1867-1941) article about Czech literature, published in the Vienna Österreichische Rundschau, initiated a polemic among several writers and journals. The debate drew together a number of questions: it continues the discussion on the 'meaning of Czech history'; that is, whether a nation is endowed with a specific purpose or mission. Those who contribute to the polemic consider the 'national character' of the Czechs: their political inclination; their nostalgic, historicist tendencies; and, in particular, their relation to the German nation. Krejčí justly maintains that the debate has flared up because his article had been published in a German journal. Thus, the debate involves the relation between art and politics; that is, the question of how the portrayal of the nation in literary criticism affects the political position of the Czechs in Austria; the stances which the journals and newspapers adopt underline this aspect of the debate. No writer questions the assumption that a survey of literature is premised on a conception of the character of the nation. These arguments constitute a debate over the role and activity of the critic. While attempting to follow the debate chronologically, I shall also consider the identification of a journal or newspaper with a particular stance.

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174 This polemic helps to explain why Čapek was so outraged by Vodák's claim that Vilém Rozkoč did not portray contemporary life in Prague.

175 Most of the articles are published anonymously. Čapek confirms his involvement in the debate in an open letter. K. M. Čapek, 'V článku svém' (Zasláno), Národní listy, 11 February 1906, p. 5.

Krejčí, a reviewer for Právo lidu, the organ of the Social Democrats, publishes his 'defence' in that newspaper, and in the Realist Přehled. Other writers identify his views with the politics of the Social Democrats and the Realists. Ironically, Emanuel Chalupný (1879-1958), a writer for and editor-in-chief of Přehled, initiates the polemic when he criticizes recent attempts to provide non-Czechs with information about Czech literature. He states that such articles, which intend to present the best and most characteristic works of Czech literature, should follow certain guidelines: they should be selective, ignoring inferior works but not omitting anything 'significant'; they should indicate the merits of the works: 'cizinu interesuje pouze to, co ji podáme cenného - co není cenným, s tím před cizinu vůbec nechodíme'.

Chalupný thus assumes that literature reveals the character of the nation; the critic who addresses foreigners has an obligation to promote the nation and thus should treat only that literature which represents the nation in a complimentary light. Krejčí, according to Chalupný, fails to satisfy the second demand. That Přehled subsequently supports Krejčí by printing his articles, indicates that the polemic has assumed a polarized political character.

The first vehement reaction against Krejčí's article is published anonymously in Samostatnost, the organ of the Radical Progressive Party (Strana radikálně [státoprávně] pokroková). The use of exclamation marks in parentheses might lead one to suppose that Čapek is the author; however, he is not alone in making dramatic use of punctuation marks. To my knowledge, he did not publish in Samostatnost, at least, not under his own name. The author's quarrels with Krejčí's article are, however, identical to those which Čapek raises in his public letter. They focus on Krejčí's allegedly unflattering portrait of the Czechs, thus his failure to serve the national cause. The author objects to Krejčí's use of the word tschechisch instead of böhmisch; this

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177 Ch. [Emanuel Chalupný], 'Informace pro cizinu', Přehled, 4 (1905-06), 49, p. 852.

178 Ibid., p. 853.
indicates a link between the Krejčí polemic and the 1906 böhmisch-tschechisch debate. Tschechisch is interpreted as a derogatory designation. The author cites as proof that Krejčí does not understand politics his statement that in the Bohemian Lands politicians have little connection with cultural development. He rejects Krejčí's contrast of the Czechs with the Viennese, which he summarizes thus: the Czechs are more closely bound with and similar to the Germans, through centuries of interacting, than any other nation, and the Czech nation has been steeped in German culture; relations between Vienna and Prague have raised mountains of 'misunderstandings'; Vienna is an old city with a fine culture which is tied to the idea of the state and the Monarchy; Prague is a provincial city; contemporary life in Prague seems desolate in contrast with its 'romantic' architectural backdrop reminding one of the past. The historical role of the Czechs, according to Krejčí, has been accomplished and the newly awakened nation must seek a new purpose for its existence. The nation wavers between the dreams of historicism and ideas of the future, which might find a solid base for cultivation among democratic, radically minded Czechs. Until recently, Krejčí asserts, patriotic Czechs had conceived of active political involvement as a struggle against the State. Social democracy, fortunately, has made progress in changing the attitude of the public. The author objects to Krejčí's characterization of the artists of the 1890s as anti-nationalist. He expresses irritation with Krejčí's reference to the Czechs as a malý národ (small nation); Krejčí's national self-deprecation manifests subservience to German Austria. As long as literary spokesmen adopt this approach, foreigners will regard the Czechs as a malý národ. Most of the objections which will be raised against Krejčí in the course of the polemic are presented in this first article in Samostatnost.

They are reiterated in a short article in Zvon, in which one sees again the use of exclamation marks in parentheses and the use of hyperbole. The author interprets Krejčí's article as

179'Pan F. V. Krejčí', Samostatnost, 2 September 1905, p. 353.
stating that Czech spiritual life and Czech literature are worthless: 'Český národ není než houba napitá německou kulturou, a pan Krejčí vymáčkl tuto houbu do zkušebné sklenice.' The German reader will come to the conclusion that if Czechs are identical to Germans, the article on *tschechische Literatur* is redundant. The writer for *Zvon* also objects to the use of the term *tschechisch* instead of *böhmisch*. He employs a conventional metaphor to describe Krejčí's attitude: his pen is 'namočeného do německého kalamáře'. He regrets that a Czech critic writing about Czech culture and publishing in a Viennese journal is obliged to assume a tone of apologetic indulgence.

*Právo lidu* responds, first, with an article asserting that the writer for *Samostatnost* is mad or uneducated or both; the title of the article, 'Radikálně pokrokové bláznovství či nevzdělanost?', indicates a perception of the debate as party politicking. The newspaper responds, secondly, by printing an article by Krejčí which also constitutes a reply to an article in *Národní listy*. Krejčí introduces his article with the disclaimer: the tone of the fanatical attack in *Samostatnost* rids him of the obligation to respond. He reproduces a section of his original article, translated into Czech, in order to demonstrate to the reader, 'jak málo stačí, aby se člověk stal v očích vlastenecké policie vlastizrádcem'. The offending assertions are included in this article. Krejčí denies writing with affected humility for the sake of the Viennese public. His conclusion to the article, however, tends to belie his claim:

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180 'O tom, kterak český duševní život', *Zvon*, 5 (1905), 52, p. 799. Čapek must have written the articles for *Zvon* and/or *Národní listy*. He was writing regularly for *Zvon* at this time.

181 Ibid.

182 'Radikálně pokrokové bláznovství či nevzdělanost?', *Právo lidu*, 6 September 1905, p. [5].

183 F. V. Krejčí, '"Die tschechische Literatur"', *Právo lidu*, 8 September 1905, pp. [1-2].

184 Ibid., p. [1].
'Kultura jest u nás spíše ještě prací než požitkem.'

Samostatnost replies by reprinting large sections of the Zvon article. The concluding comment indicates the further identification of Krejčí's views with those of the Realists: 'Jedně prof. Masaryk může být potěšen, když vidí, jak p. Krejčí za něho a v jeho duchu řeší jeho trdný "problém mrňavého národa".'

In its reply to Krejčí, Národní listy attacks the critic, referred to as comrade (that is, an ironic reference to terms of address in the Social Democratic Party), for not reprinting his characterization of the Czechs as a small nation which must be sensitive to its powerful neighbours to avoid annihilation. The Národní listy writer implies that according to Krejčí this 'sensitivity' corresponds to the nation's new purpose. It is not true, the author asserts, that the nation does not have a purpose. Nevertheless, he adds that even if the nation were searching for such a purpose, men like Krejčí, 'nostalgové, churaví perversí po Vídni', could not offer help. The author expresses the political goal of the Young Czechs, and, indeed, of most Czech parties, when he interprets the polemic in terms of the Czech battle for greater political autonomy within Austria: 'smyslem existence národa českého ode vždy byl, jest a bude boj proti vídeňské nekultuře [...] Co studii F. V. Krejčího českému čtenáři činí odpornou, to jest nit', na niž duchaplné její perly jsou navlečeny, česká poklona vídeňské kultuře, stoudné pokárání českého boje proti "staatsideji"'.

The by now traditionalist journal Lumír likewise criticizes Krejčí for his 'worship' of Vienna, described as, 'podlízavé

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185 Ibid., p. [2].
186 'Panu F. V. Krejčímu za jeho literární tlachání', Samostatnost, 9 September 1905, p. 363.
187 'Die tschechische Literatur''', Národní listy, 10 September 1905, p. 3.
188 Ibid.
189 Ibid.
zkroušenosti Čecháčka před velkopanstvím Vídně'. Lumír regards this attitude as characteristic of certain cultural circles which it identifies with 'modern' trends in art. The journal states of Krejčí's article: 'Plochost a ledabylost stylu a strannická předpojatost kritiky tohoto druhu může snad ještě imponovat lidem, které přesvědčí etiketa modernosti, že nalévaná jim syrovátka je delikátním likérem.' Zvon reacts to the publication of the second part of Krejčí's article, rejecting his claim that the study is brief on account of a lack of adequate material. Zvon implies criticism of Krejčí's selection of leading authors; Krejčí names Karásek, Sezima, Matějka, Šrámek, Nosková and Nováková. The writer for Zvon criticizes Krejčí for not supporting his statement about the influence of German on Czech culture with examples; that is, he does not perform the basic tasks of the critic. This assertion, which is repeated in Čapek's open letter, suggests his authorship of the Zvon article. In his playful conclusion, the author emphasizes the political circumstances of the Czechs, rather than the failings in the 'national' character or the immaturity of Czech society, both frequent laments in fin-de-siècle polemics: 'Studie celá jest důkazem nězměněného dosud kulturního poměru našeho k Vídni; dosud ani prostý krejčířský tovaryš neudělal ve Vídni štěstí, nehanobili své krajany.'

The heading under which Krejčí's reply is published in Přehled, 'Z pathologie naší společnosti', introduces the main theme of the article: that Czech nationalism, in its hatred of the Germans, denies Czech history, and thus retards its development. The article begins and ends with conventional disclaimers; most writers claim to engage in polemics only reluctantly. Krejčí states that he will no longer explain his

191 Ibid.
192 'Die tschechische Literatur', Zvon, 6 (1905), 2, p. 32.
193 'Die tschechische Literatur', Zvon, 6. The adjective 'krejčířský' (sartorial) in this instance constitutes a sarcastic pun on Krejčí's (tailor) name.
opinions to journalists and writers who decline to understand him, nor will he polemicize with individual journals: 'Škoda času a práce'. Nevertheless, what follows constitutes a defence of his original article. He concludes with the statement, 'tot' mé poslední slovo v této věci', a promise rarely kept in polemics. Krejčí justifies his reply by observing that the polemic has riled the 'general public'; he may feel that he is damaging the reputation of the Social Democrats: 'je slyšel už ozvěnu této štvanice v massách, a na tábozech lidu hromuje se proti beznárodním literátům a profesorům, kteří za tučný honorár píšou do vídeňských listů vlastizrádné články'.

Krejčí asserts that the polemic testifies to the principal failing of 'official' Czech patriotism: 'nedůklivý strach před pravdou'. This constitutes a recurrent theme in polemics of the period: one accuses one's opponent of a chauvinism or conservatism that cannot tolerate freedom of speech. Krejčí insists that most Czechs consider the statements in his original article to be obvious and accurate; none the less, they do not wish to publicize these truths to the Germans. The same approach, he asserts, was advocated during the battle of the Forged Manuscripts: 'snad je to pravda, ale nač to říkat před světem?'.

Krejčí states that the cultural similarity between Czechs and Germans indicates their equality. As a demonstration of their cultural and historical kinship, he refers to: the relation

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194F. V. Krejčí, 'Vlastenectví, které nesnese pravdy', Přehled, 3 (1905), 52, p. 881.
195Ibid., p. 884.
196Ibid., p. 881.
197Ibid.
198Krejčí states that he wishes to demonstrate, 'jakým nebezpečím a jakou překážkou pro volné myšlení o věcech národních a kulturních je toto vlastenectví, které se štítí pravdy jako sova denního světla'. Ibid.
199Ibid., p. 884.
200Ibid., p. 882.
of the Czech state to the Holy Roman Empire; the Reformation; the National Revival; and the history of music. He rejects the view that the Germans have been enemies throughout the ages. In support of his position he states: 'Kdyby hodnota češství u někoho byla měřena jen dle toho, jak silně nenávidí Němectví, a jak je vzdálen německé kultuře, pak by byli nejhoršími Čechy naší buditelé, od Dobrovského až k Nerudoví, nebot' v německém duševním světě cítili se jako doma a z dojmů německé kultury živili své snahy.' That the two nations have a common history and similar 'spirit', is attested to by the fact that, despite their mutual antagonism, a war of extermination never arose between them. At the Battle of the White Mountain (1620), the Czechs were defeated, not by Germandom, but by the Spanish-Catholic spirit of Habsburg Vienna. Krejčí denies a preference for the culture of Vienna, insisting that he is a Czech patriot.

Krejčí also returns to the theme of the purpose of the nation's existence, which he regards as an urgent question, confounded by the gulf Czechs experience between the nation's past and present. Krejčí accepts the notion that the nation must have a higher purpose, which he sees in the development of culture: 'označují-li smysl starého českého života slova český stát a reformace, vyjadřuje slovo kultura touhy a naděje, s nimiž kráčíme vstříc rozřešení dnešního českého problému.' According to Krejčí, the search for the meaning of the nation's existence motivates Masaryk's Česká otázka (1895), Karásek's Gothická duše, (1900) Dyk's Konec Hackenschmidův (1904), and Machar's invectives. Both Masaryk and Machar publish in Realist Party periodicals. Karásek is an editor of the self-proclaimed avant-garde Moderní revue. The polemic predates Dyk's editorial work for Lumír and Samostatnost. Krejčí thus seems to speak for 'progressive' or unconventional political and artistic circles whose views coincide. Krejčí echoes Masaryk's ideology when he states that the nature of the national character is for the

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201 Ibid.
202 Ibid.
203 Ibid., p. 884.
younger generation a, 'těžkým životným problémem, jejž rozřešiti lze jen pravdou, prací a čistou snahou'.

In his defence of the term tschechisch, Krejčí aligns himself not only with the Social Democrats, but also with the Realists. He states that the word is commonly used by Germans and no longer has a derogatory connotation; also, Moravians are Tschechen but not Böhmen; the French refer to the Tchèques; the Czechs use the same term to designate themselves. Although he does not make this clear, Krejčí’s argument addresses the question of state rights: the nation is no longer identified with a particular land; 'territorial' patriotism is outdated. This view is advocated by the Social Democrats and the Realists, and censured by most other Czech parties. Thus, the title of the original article asserts a political position.

A copy of Krejčí’s article, with notes in the margins, is preserved among Čapek’s papers. Most of Čapek’s comments consist in exclamations of dismay. He expresses disbelief that Krejčí could have written the article. Where Krejčí claims to have provided proofs of the cultural and historical ties linking the Czechs and the Germans, Čapek writes, 'Není to pravda!'. He rejects the notion that the Czechs and Germans have a similar spirit; and he disagrees with Krejčí’s interpretation of the Battle of the White Mountain.

Krejčí may refer to Čapek when he states: 'nyní jsem s úžasem shledal, že i v redakci předního našeho denníku mohou být lidé, kteří třebaš napsali řadu knih a dvakráte denně potírají plamenným mechem vnitřní i vnější škůdce národa, nedospělí ve svém národním citu k tomu, co jsem vyslovil oněmi slovy, a co dle mého přesvědčení tvoří základní notu moderního češství.' The

204Ibid.

205Papers: Čapek-Chod; Čapek-Chod’s notes on F. V. Krejčí’s article, see p. 881; PNP.

206Ibid., p. 882.

207Ibid.

208Krejčí, 'Vlastenectví, které nesnese pravdy', p. 884.
Národní listy writer assumes that Krejčí's comment is directed at him: 'Osobní útok na pisatele těchto řádků budiž mu při tom prominut a za zlo dobrem splaceno, poučením.'²⁰⁹ He addresses, first, the political implications of the use of tschechisch in the title of Krejčí's original article and the question of the nation's 'meaning':

By using the term tschechisch, Austrian Germans demonstrate an intention to interrupt, by dividing up the hereditary lands, the development of the Czechs; this development should culminate with the alignment of national and territorial borders. The writer jokes that, although Krejčí may sweat through all his pores, the same pores that had absorbed German culture, he will not disprove the assertion that his article presents Czech literature as a, 'výpotkem německé a zvláště staré jemné kultury vídeňské [...] že literatura česká existuje jenom v kausálním vztahu k německé'.²¹¹ The writer dismisses the claim that the Czechs are kin to the Germans. The meaning of the nation's existence consists in its ability to survive and resist German influence.

Arne Novák contributes to the polemic when he publishes 'Hranice kulturních vztahů našeho života k německví' in Přehled. In his introduction, Novák describes Krejčí as an 'objective analyst' combatting 'peevish chauvinism'.²¹² Novák states that the undeniable influence of German on Czech culture has been the subject of scholarly study for ten years, but the main point of

²⁰⁹'Die tschechische Literatur', Národní listy, 26 September 1905, p. 2.
²¹⁰Ibid.
²¹¹Ibid.
Novák’s article is that the Czech nation is not similar to the German. He argues, first, that German influences on the Czechs have alternated with French and English, citing Wycliffe’s impact on Hus, Byron’s influence on Mácha, and Vrchlický’s models among French poets. He states that, ‘příklady uvedené ukázaly, že německý duševní vliv není pro nás veličinou stálou a pevnou a že vždy po silném jeho proniknutí dostavuje se mocná reakce’. Secondly, he states that Czechs have never accepted those artists considered to be typically German. The abstruse ‘German’ features of Luther’s temperament, for example, repelled the Czechs. He concludes: ‘o zvláštní nějaké vnímavosti českého ducha pro prvky speciálně německé nelze nikterak mluvit; naopak zdá se, že kulturní instinkt český přímo odmítá živly výlučně a typicky německé, ježto by je tvůrčí síla národní stěží dovedla zpracovat a vstřebat’. The Czechs have not preferred German culture to that of the rest of Western Europe; and if in certain periods the Germans did have a greater impact, this was the result of social and political conditions, not an inner affinity between the Czech and German nations. These conditions, as well as geographical proximity, meant that the Germans often mediated foreign trends and ideas to the Czechs. Novák comments, however, that this mediation is not a sign of dependence: ‘kulturně rovnocenné národy vždy si zprostředkovaly a budou zprostředkovat vzájemnou výměnou a postupným odevzdáváním svoje duchovní statky’. Novák harks back to Romantic Slavism when he suggests that because of their geographical position, the Czechs have served the West as a bastion against Oriental barbarism and fanaticism.

Krejčí’s article ‘Politikové a literáti’ probably constitutes a response to an article in Samostatnost, addressed to Novák, which concludes with the statement: ‘Bude zle z českou

213Ibid., p. 52.
214Ibid., p. 53.
215Ibid.
216Ibid.
217Ibid.
věci, až o politickém programu českého národa budou rozhodovat - Novákové a Krejčí. Krejčí expands on the themes of his original article when he addresses the role that the critic may play in Czech political life. He introduces his article with the assertion that Czech politicians look with contempt on the political ideas of the littérature. The programmes of Czech political parties have been devised by people who have nothing to do with literature; not one Czech writer represents the nation in the Reichsrat. This contempt is characteristic of patriotic parties whose representatives continue to claim that political activity is an art. When he condemns these same politicians for negotiating with the government and chasing ministerial seats, Krejčí is no doubt referring to the Young Czechs. By contrast, those who practise 'modern' politics, that is, those who rely on the strength of mass movements (the Social Democrats), regard each person who knows how to protect his interests as capable of understanding politics. Those who view the intellectual as a sceptic, a man of words and chimeras, have difficulty comprehending that a writer can have greater insight into the meaning of life and human truth than a politician can. The latter bases his actions on a limited view of human truths. The morality of the artist is different; he sees the complexity and relativity of human affairs and the limits of each truth. His morality demands that he cultivate his individuality and speak

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218 'Panu Arne Novákoví', Samostatnost, 7 October 1905, p. 403. This article concerns the political role of the journalist and addresses Novák's writings in Přehled.

219 F. V. Krejčí, 'Politikové a literáti', Přehled, 4 (1905), 4, p. 69. Jaroslav Vrchlický became a member of the Upper House in 1901.

220 Ibid. The following Young Czech deputies served as ministers: Josef Kaizl was Minister of Finance for 1898-1899; Antonín Rezek, Minister without Portfolio for Czech Affairs, 1900-1903; Josef Foršt, Minister of Trade, 1906-1907; František Fiedler, Minister of Public Works, 1907-1908; Bedřich Pacák, Minister without Portfolio for Czech Affairs, 1906-1907. Garver, The Young Czech Party 1874-1901, p. 492.

221 Krejčí, 'Politikové a literáti', p. 70. Krejčí criticizes here the state rights programme.
with his own voice. He should have a political outlook and act on it in the interests of society. However, he can never become a follower of political leaders, nor allow his opinions to merge with those of the masses. Littérateurs have much to contribute to political life because they understand the inner workings of society's fluctuations, the character and strengths of the nation. Among the littérateurs, the literary historian perhaps has the most to contribute, as one who must daily scrutinize the voices of the national psyche and understand the 'mysterious relation' between the past and the present. The literary critic can enrich the intellectual basis of Czech political life. He can offer politicians a deeper insight into their opponents, that is, the Germans:

Jak může na příklad řešit otázku našeho poměru k Němcům ten, kdo nezná duše a rázu jejich kultury? Mezi nejzúřivějšími státoprávníky naleznete lidi, kteří ve svém životě jistě že nepřečetli ni jediné Goethovy písně - nedivme se pak fantasmagorickým, všecky reality politické, citové a kulturní ignorujícím předpokladům, na nichž buduji svůj program českého státu.

Cultural and literary historians can teach politicians to consider their work in a truly 'political' manner, that is, as creative work, constructing new forms from the complex structure of social forces and circumstances.

A poem published in Zvon, probably written by Čapek, returns to the debate over Krejčí's original article. The poem, 'Některým dopisovatelům o české literatuře do německých listů', presents the polemic in a comic light:

Velký Manitú pernatý svět
v rajském kdys častoval parku i sálu.
Všichni tam zapěli, jásali hned,
dudek jen pod větve natrousil kalu.

V listy psát německé - ó, jaká čest,
necht' z toho vzejde i nejedna půtka.
Našim však 'estetům' nad ráj to jest,

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222Ibid.
223Ibid.
224Compare poems Čapek addresses to Viktor Dyk.
Saida's article in *Volné směry*, addressing a new development in the polemic, lacks humour. He is responding to a debate over Krejčí's article which took place in Jungmann, a progressive student organization; Chalupný was instrumental in determining the outcome of the debate. The students decided that the article was a manifestation of an unhealthy tendency in the Czech literary world: 'hyperkriticismus - kriticismus upřílišený a proto škodlivý’. Saida argues that the concept of hypercriticism, like the notion of being too healthy, is absurd. He attacks the students and their supporters in *Národní listy* as shallow and intellectually timid. Saida returns to a theme of the Rodin polemic: the role of the critic. With his comment that in the Bohemian Lands today, more is written, and with greater truth, enthusiasm and knowledge, about waste disposal than about art, Saida repeats an attack that he made on Čapek in the Rodin polemic.

Czechs, according to Saida, regard criticism as a destructive element which must be restrained. In fact, criticism stimulates new forms of literature, as is evident from the history of Romanticism and Realism. The greatest writers of the nineteenth century, such as Poe, Baudelaire, Flaubert and Dostoevsky, were also critics and their critical spirit influenced their fiction. Saida believes that in rejecting 'hypercriticism', the students dismiss perspectives which are extreme. Saida regards extremes, emotional and intellectual, as positive values; the students, he writes, 'Nemají tusení o celosti života, o duchu, který vlá a posvěcuje, o žáru, který nese a rytmuje, o vzdání se proudu velikého utrpení, veliké lásky, velikého hněvu, který vykupuje.' As in the Rodin

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225 'Některým dopisovatelům o české literatuře do německých listů', *Zvon*, 6 (1905), 7, p. 112.
226 *Quidam* [F. X. Šalda], 'Nová fraze byla nedávno ražena', *Volné směry*, 10 (1906), 1, p. 38.
228 [Šalda], 'Nová fraze byla nedávno ražena', p. 38.
229 Ibid., p. 39.
polemic, he suggests that a critic resembles a mystic. It is absurd, he writes, that hypercriticism is attacked at a time when true critics are so rare in the Bohemian Lands. What is needed is an attack on inferior criticism. In explaining why sound criticism is always hypercritical, Šalda defines the activity of the critic, which completes the work of art:

vyhraňuje literární myšlenku v nejtvrdsí a nejčistší tvar, odvrhuje všecko náhodné, vnější a kompromissní a propaluje se k vlastnímu bytostnému jádru a středu, jest zároveň charakterná i subtilná - váží dílo na vahách étherných a slyší disharmonie, kterých přeslýchá obyčejné ucho. A tato dobrá kritika ( v Čechách vzácnější nad zlato) jest vždycky kladná: ukazuje nejen, kde a v čem dílo kritizované zradilo zákon jednoty a svobody, aie naznačuje i, třeba jen ve skizze, jak jej mělo naplnit, v kterém směru leželo umělecké vykoupení.230

Národní listy defends Jungmann, and its spokesman Chalupný (author of the first article in Přehled criticizing Krejčí), for judging Krejčí's article as a, 'nešt'astným pokusem informování ciziny, z nedostatku mužnosti a sebevědomí klesající až k flagelantství, před cizinou odpor vzbuzujícím'.231 The newspaper reports that Chalupný identifies Krejčí's 'hypercriticism' with a fawning appreciation of foreign cultures and with the influence of Masaryk's writings. The Národní listy writer states that the 'tedious affair' is an indication not only of the danger of hypercriticism, but also of a mental sickness in Realist aesthetic circles. Such people are incapable of finding a 'new meaning' for the existence of the nation.232

Čapek responds with an open letter to Krejčí's accusations that he delighted in Jungmann's condemnation of hypercriticism.233 Čapek states that he does not regard Krejčí's

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230Ibid., p. 40.

231'Ještě jednou "Die tschechische Literatur"', Národní listy, 8 February 1906, p. 2.

232Ibid.

233The article by Krejčí to which Čapek refers appeared in Právo lidu, 9 February 1906. This issue, however, was confiscated; I have not been able to find a copy of it.
work as hypercriticism, but as the epitome of uncritical thinking.\textsuperscript{234} Krejčí, he states, fails to carry out the most essential and characteristic work of the critic, which is to prove the validity of his assertions; this failure is all the more culpable because Krejčí's assertions offend the Czech nation and debase it in the eyes of foreigners. Čapek thus approves of a sober criticism. His attack on Krejčí is fuelled by an anti-German nationalism. All the assertions that Čapek condemns in Krejčí's article concern the relations between Czechs and Germans; thus, he objects to the claims: that the Czech and German nations are similar in spirit; that the Czechs must be more attentive to the cultural great powers; that the Czech nation must find a new meaning for its existence; that the Realist, anti-nationalist generation is the one force that can ensure future Czech development; and that the little Czech nation has absorbed German culture through all its pores. From this list of objections one may conclude either that Čapek is responsible for many of the articles in this polemic, or that he expresses a nationalism common to most of his contemporaries. If, however, Čapek is the author of the satirical poem published in Žvon, or the occasionally humorous articles in Národní listy, one must assume that he can also ironize the issues involved in the polemic. This assumption is further supported by the fact that he does not acknowledge authorship of any of the articles until he is named by Krejčí; that is, by publishing anonymously, he reserves the right to treat the polemic with some flippancy. This ironic treatment of nationalism finds an echo in his fiction.

8. The Krejčí Epilogue
The polemic peters out in squabbles between Krejčí and Národní listy about the celebration of Svatopluk Čech's (1846-1908) sixtieth birthday. The newspaper suggests that the anti-

\textsuperscript{234}Čapek, 'V článku svém'.

\textsuperscript{235}For example, the street demonstration scenes in 'Dar svatého Floriána' or in Antonín Vondrejc.
nationalist Krejčí does not appreciate the poet, an accusation which he denies. *Národní listy* implies that the telegrams which the general public has sent to the newspaper to honour Svatopluk Čech represent the nationalist enthusiasm of ordinary people.\(^2\/^6\)

The 1906 ‘böhmisches-tschechisch’ polemic also returns to the themes of the Krejčí polemic, explicating the political implications of the terms.\(^2\/^7\) One might expect that Čapek is engaged in the ‘böhmisches-tschechisch’ polemic, not only because it continues the Krejčí polemic, but also because it concerns the possibility of the division of the Bohemian Lands. In his 1926 speech to the Syndicate of Journalists, Čapek asserts that he had been fighting for twenty-five years against the administrative division of the Bohemian Lands into Czech and German districts.\(^2\/^8\) A letter from Václav Flajšhans (1866-1950), preserved among Čapek’s papers, confirms his involvement in the polemic. Flajšhans provides a quotation from *Athenaeum* which Čapek had requested.\(^2\/^9\) Reference is made to the quotation in an article treating the ‘böhmisches-tschechisch’ dispute in *Národní listy* on 18 November 1906.\(^2\/^0\)

The title of a new journal, concerned with Czech cultural life and written in German, *Čechische Revue*, initiates the polemic between *Národní listy* and *Samostatnost* on the one hand,

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\(^2\/^8\)Čapek-Chod, ‘Veterán, nikoli však invalida’, p. 467.

\(^2\/^9\)Papers: Čapek-Chod; letter from Václav Flajšhans to Čapek-Chod, 23 October 1906; PNP.

\(^2\/^0\)Prof. Vondrák jim není autoritou’, *Národní listy*, 18 November 1906, p. 3.
and *Čas* on the other.241 That German newspapers in the Bohemian Lands also side with *Čas*, is seen as evidence of the unpatriotic stance of the Realists.242 The term *tschechisch*, *Národní listy* states, has become a symbol for the division of the Bohemian Lands.243 *Národní listy* agrees with the view that the term *tschechisch* is a brand, 'vpálený německo-židovským tiskem ve všeobecném užívání všemu českému'.244 A statement in *Národní listy* outlines the core of its position: 'Jméno národa, odvozené od země jím obývané, znamená národ té země přední, pána té země. [...] Všecko to záště, jež vše proti nám v srdcích tak mnohých Němců, vyjadřuje se nejstručněji tímto jménem, jímž jsme poznámeni jako nějací vetřelci do země německé.'245 *Národní listy* supports its case with an historical argument: in the Bohemian Diet in 1861 the deputies agreed that the term *Čeche* was derogatory and decided to use only *Böhme* and *böhmisch* in the proceedings of the Diet.246 *Samostatnost* prints a letter from a Czech living in Vienna who asserts that *tschechisch* is a derisive appellation and accuses the Realists of anti-Czech activities.247 *Čas* replies that Germans in Berlin assume that *Böhme* designates a German from the Bohemian Lands.248 To avoid the stigma of tepid patriotism, *Čas* prints the comments of a Viennese Czech to the

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241See: '"Čechische Revue"?', *Národní listy*, 20 September 1906, p. 3.


243Ibid.

244This view is expressed in a letter sent to *Národní listy* and printed without commentary. '"Böhmisch" aneb "Čechisch"?', *Národní listy*, 23 September 1906, p. 3.


246,Sněm král. českého o "böhmisch" a "čechisch"', *Národní listy*, 16 October 1906, p. 2.


effect that the Viennese use Böhmé to indicate a Čecháček, one who denies his nationality, whereas by Čeche, they denote the 'new' type of Czech who is proud of his nationality. Political circumstances fuel the polemic; at the same time that it engages in the polemic, Národní listy reports on German promotion of the administrative division of the Bohemian Lands.

9. Japanese Millions
In a dispute concerning reports on events in Russia, Právo lidu vilifies 'Matšj Čapek' as the mouthpiece of the Young Czech newspaper. This conflict does not constitute a polemic, for Čapek never responds personally to the objections of the Social Democrats. The dispute does, however, indicate that at this time Čapek is identified by his contemporaries with the polemical, political column 'Denní zprávy'.

The article which riles Právo lidu reports that the Japanese have a secret fund on which they draw to encourage social unrest in Russia. The anonymous article in Národní listy bases its information on a report in the Paris newspaper La France extérieure. This newspaper carries an interview with an unnamed official who asserts that forty-eight million yen in the Japanese war budget are devoted to secret-service work in Russia. In the French parliament, Théophile Delcassé (1852–1923), the minister for foreign affairs, points out the 'suspicious coincidence' that strikes break out at the arsenal which arms ships in Liepāja and Sebastopol, at the same time that strikes occur in St Petersburg and in the mines of Westphalia, which provide coal for the Russian ships in the Baltic.

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249 'Čechisch nebo bōhmisch?', Čas, 26 October 1906, p. 5.


252 Ibid.
listy comments that it is odd that the French press does not carry the entire speech by Delcassé; this probably results from the influence of the ‘rusofobského zednářstva, všemocné "Alliance Israélite’’ on the French press. The Russian newspaper Svět announces that there is proof of a conspiracy; the Holy Synod has proclaimed that the workers have been deceived by the intrigues of foreigners. The Národní listy article claims merely to cite other sources, yet it appears to endorse these reports.

In its response, Právo lidu attacks Národní listy for attempting to discredit the workers’ movement in Russia, of which it is ignorant. It is ridiculous to suppose that in a country as large as Russia a few million could fund widespread social protest. The Social Democrat newspaper concentrates its criticism on Národní listy and its owner Prokop Grégr for printing such an article. Indeed, it states that Grégr deserves to have every honest worker spit on the ground before him. Právo lidu also implies that Národní listy is under the influence of the Russian police and the Tsar’s spies.

The argument subsequently moves into the polemics columns. Národní listy’s response, which Právo lidu attributes to Čapek, does not address the arguments of the Právo lidu article. It attacks the style and tone of the article so hyperbolically that one wonders if the writer does not intend irony:

Článek napsán jest tónem pomyslně nejsurovějším, v žurnalistice české dosud neslýchaným; z větší části sestává z odpadků nejvulgárnější mluvy, z obratů, jakých neužije žádné péřo, pokuď vězí v ruce čestného člověka, třeba jakž takž civilisovaného, natož piše-li jím publicista, pokládající se za spolupracovníka evropské kultury.

The Národní listy writer insists that in citing the French newspaper it did not express any bias and was merely fulfilling

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253 Ibid.

254 '48 japonských milionů na ruskou revoluci’, Právo lidu, 14 February 1905, p. [1].

255 '48 japonských milionů na ruskou revoluci’, Národní listy, 15 February 1905, p. 3.
its obligation to inform the public. If *Právo lidu* disputes the truth of the reports, it should address its criticisms to the newspapers cited, not to *Národní listy*. The 'baseness' of the *Právo lidu* attack is such that the Young Czech newspaper does not feel offended; it has no intention of competing with *Právo lidu* in coarseness: 'Způsob, který jí zajišťuje vůbec hors concours championát sprostoty v královstvích a zemích na říšské radě zastoupených, vyráží zbraň z každé ruky.' *Národní listy* expresses regret that such coarseness is possible in the Czech press, 'pokud k ní list sociálně-demokratický náleží'. These are typical of the daily accusations made against rival organs; one reads them in the political column of every major contemporary newspaper.

*Právo lidu* responds with a personal attack on 'Matěj Čapek', accusing him of lacking principles. That Čapek formerly worked for *Národní politika* and now works for *Národní listy* is mentioned as an indication that he cares only for money, not for convictions. *Právo lidu* criticizes the Young Czech newspaper not only for its recent articles about Japanese espionage in Russia, but its coverage of Russian affairs in general; *Národní listy* articles read like the reports of the Russian secret police. *Národní listy* journalists write about every workers' strike as if it were secretly funded by Jews or Germans. *Právo lidu* addresses its denial of the corruption of the workers' movement to the *Národní listy* editors who 'manufacture the public opinion of the Czech nation'.

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256 Compare with the newspaper’s denial of responsibility for the opinions expressed in the Novotný letter in the Bém polemic.

257 '48 japonských milionů na ruskou revoluci’, *Národní listy*.

258 Ibid.

259 '48 japonských milionů na ruskou revoluci’, *Právo lidu*, 16 February 1905, p. [5].

260 Ibid. *Právo lidu* justly draws attention to the antisemitic and anti-German bias of the Young Czech newspaper.

261 Ibid.
reiterates its criticism of Národní listy in 'Podplacená česká žurnalistika'; it attacks Čapek for his comments in the 'Denní zprávy' column, referring to him sarcastically as the 'jemnocařsky a nadmíru distinguovaný pan Matěj Čapek'.

Neither Čapek nor Národní listy responds to these attacks publicly; Právo lidu, however, carries the report of a Viennese newspaper that Národní listy intends to sue Právo lidu for libel.

10. Electoral Reform

Právo lidu assumes that Čapek writes the articles in an exchange between the Social Democrat and Young Czech newspapers over the 1905 electoral reform to the curia system in the Bohemian Diet; indeed, Právo lidu attempts to provoke a reaction from him. Čapek does not respond to their accusations. One must assume either that he did not write the articles, or that he feels no need to defend them; that is, once more, he regards the articles as expressions of the opinion of the newspaper. While the journalist assumes the mask of the Party, his opponents continue to attack his personal role in the formation of public opinion. The influence the journalist has over the public is further suggested by the comparison, unfavourable for Čapek, between him and Gustav Eim (1849-1897), former Young Czech deputy and Národní listy correspondent in Vienna, a man who had great power within his party.

The debate concerns the attitude Czech deputies intend to take towards the Gautsch government's proposed reform, which would add a fifth curia, with eighteen mandates, to the existing system of representation in the Diet. Dissatisfied with this conservative proposal, the Social Democrats agitated for reform on the basis of universal manhood suffrage. At first the Young Czechs appeared to support restricted reform as an inadequate but realistic solution. Karel Kramář, after witnessing the political

262'Podplacená česká žurnalistika', Právo lidu, 17 February 1905, pp. [4-5]. The newspaper also mentions caricatures of Čapek in Šípky, in which he is represented with a bear skin and a club.

263'Ještě 48 japonských milionů na ruskou revoluci', Právo lidu, 19 February 1905, p. [5].
turmoil in Russia, argued that the Young Czechs should take a more radical stance.\textsuperscript{264} When the Diet was convened on 10 October, the Young Czechs and the majority of Czech deputies propose extensive electoral reform; that proposal, and the government’s proposal for curial reform, were passed on to a committee, and the question of electoral reform to the Diet was delayed indefinitely.\textsuperscript{265}

This particular debate between \textit{Právo lidu} and \textit{Národní listy} begins when the Social Democratic newspaper published a letter from Karel Kramář to socialists demonstrating in favour of reform. Kramář expressed approval of their goal, but, because the German deputies would probably block extensive reform, he would support curial reform. \textit{Právo lidu} stated that Kramář should promote support for universal manhood suffrage within his party.\textsuperscript{266} \textit{Národní listy} replied that with his letter Kramář had informed the Social Democrats first of the tactics to be followed by the Czech deputies in the Diet.\textsuperscript{267} \textit{Právo lidu} was not impressed with this honour and stated that the Young Czechs had done nothing to realize the goal of universal manhood suffrage.\textsuperscript{268} \textit{Národní listy} reproached Kramář for communicating his stance first to the Social Democrats; \textit{Právo lidu} replied that the deputy had voiced merely his personal opinion.\textsuperscript{269} \textit{Právo lidu} implicitly criticized Young Czech political regression and indecision by publishing a speech made by Gustav Eim in the


\textsuperscript{265} The proposal for universal manhood suffrage for the Reichsrat became law in January 1907. Electoral reform of the Bohemian Diet was not effected before World War I.

\textsuperscript{266} 'Dr. Kramář', \textit{Právo lidu}, 30 August 1905, p. [3].

\textsuperscript{267} 'Posl. dr. Kramář o všeobecném volebním právu', \textit{Národní listy}, 31 August 1905, p. 2.

\textsuperscript{268} "Národní Listy", \textit{Právo lidu}, 1 September 1905, p. [2].

\textsuperscript{269} "Národní listy", \textit{Právo lidu}, 2 September 1905, p. [5].
Reichsrat in March 1895 in favour of universal manhood suffrage. The organ of the Social Democrats published statements in favour of extensive reform by two Young Czech deputies, Servác Heller (1845-1922) and Jindřich VladimírHora (died 1917). Národní listy responded to this article and to Social Democrat agitation directed at the Prague town council. Právo lidu attributed this article to Čapek; judging by the terse, ironical style, the author may be either Čapek or Hladík. The Národní listy writer criticized the Social Democrats for directing their energies at the Prague town council: 'Celkem vzato, sociálně-demokratické střely v boji za všeobecné volební právo našly si falešný terč - radnici pražskou, z falešné aneb předstírané důminky, že tam lze dosíci všeobecného volebního práva pro sněm zemský.' The writer states that the tactics of the Social Democratic leadership suggest that the party is interested: 'jen o lermo, at jí platí komukoli, o vypjaté postavení demagoga, který terrorem massy, a co horšího, nízkosti tištěného i mluveného slova domýšlí se vnutriti na Praze podpis pro svou resoluci'. To discredit the Social Democrats, the writer accuses them of following the direction of the Party’s Vienna leadership. He makes fun of ‘comrade’ Antonín Němec (1858-1926), who intends to ‘abandon the barricades’ and deal a blow to the state by calling a general strike in the Bohemian Lands. The writer recalls the recent humiliation of the Czech Social Democrats at the conference of the Socialist International in Amsterdam in 1905; at the conference the Vienna leadership 

270 'Mladočeši o rovném právu hlasovacím před desíti lety', Právo lidu, 3 September 1905, p. [1].

271 'Z poslaneckých projevů', Právo lidu, 6 September 1905, p. [1].

272 'Českoslovanská sociální demokracie a všeobecné rovné hlasovací právo', Národní listy, 7 September 1905, p. 2.

273 Ibid.

274 Antonín Němec was the editor-in-chief of Právo lidu, and a deputy in the Reichsrat from 1907-1918.
represented all Austria. The writer thus attacks the 'hypocrisy' of the socialists, who prove as unwilling to endorse 'human rights' (that is, the right of the Czechs to independent representation) as the Austrian government. He comments that it is unrealistic to expect the Diet to support manhood suffrage when the large landowners, the Agrarians and the German deputies oppose such change.

Právo lidu asserts that it will continue to pressure public figures and institutions to clarify their stance regarding suffrage reform. The newspaper declares that considering the Young Czechs' lack of political successes, they have no right to lecture other parties on political tactics. Responding to the accusation of demagoguery, Právo lidu refers to Eim's passionate speech of 1895: 'Myslíme, že se p. Čapek při veškeré své troufalosti přece jen neodváží nazývati G. Eima demagogem, vždyť by se mu všichni soudní lidé vysmáli. G. Eim a M. Čapek!'. The newspaper regards the journalist as its enemy, swearing that the longer the rights of the people are denied, 'tím bouřlivěji budeme pak také na svou obranu vystupovat proti každému at' si nám již přímo bude právo naše upírat anebo úskočně "moudrými radami" podlomovat naší bojovou energii anebo nám vpadat do zad'. However, Právo lidu also declares that it is indifferent to Národní listy's empathy or antipathy, in particular regarding the humiliation of the Czech Social Democrats in Amsterdam.

The Národní listy writer responds to this inconsistency: 'Sdělení ústředního orgánu, že jest mu náš úsudek "úplně bezvýznamný," stoicky sneseme. Prozatím máme v rukou důkaz této bezvýznamnosti, třiadvadesát řádek bezvýznamné odvety ústředního orgánu na náš úsudek'. The intention of the writer is to discredit the Social Democrats, and he does so by satirizing them

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275 Urban, Česká společnost, p. 555.

276 'Boj náš za všeobecné a rovné právo hlasovací', Právo lidu, 8 September 1905, p. [4].

277 Ibid.

278 'Sociálně-demokratický útok na radnici', Národní listy, 9 September 1905, p. 2.
as buffoons; both the Social Democrats and the Young Czechs, after all, share the same goal of universal manhood suffrage. He describes the last Právo lidu article as full of the usual, 'chudozubých kousavostí'. He repeats that the Social Democrats, by encouraging the crowds to storm the town hall, have chosen the wrong direction, 'falsche Direction'. He suspects that with this tactic, the Party hopes to distract attention from the 'fiasco' of the Amsterdam conference. The Národní listy writer appears more concerned to disparage his opponent wittily than to attack a political programme.

In responding, Právo lidu again identifies Čapek as its opponent and holds him responsible for the views expressed in Národní listy: 'Jak ukazuje skutečnost, vyvolil si p. Čapek nejnepříhodnější dobu pro své usilování podlomití boj českého dělnictva za svou národní rovnoprávnost a občanskou rovnocennost.' It accuses Čapek of attempting to effect a conservative backlash with his, 'zlomyslným popichováním'. Because of his incessant repetition of the accusation that Viktor Adler (1852-1918) gives the Czech Social Democrats their commands, readers will start to doubt the seriousness of his polemics. The newspaper states that one can hardly expect a bourgeois journalist to understand the inner workings of the Social Democratic Party, but one can ask that he refrain from writing about matters of which he is ignorant. However, Právo lidu then admits that Čapek is correct when he writes about the actions of the German Social Democrats in Brno, who had attempted

279Ibid.
280Ibid.
281He repeats this point in 'K vydobytí všeobecného rovného práva', Národní listy, 11 September 1905, p. 2.
282'Již druhý týden opakuje orgán Mariánské ulice', Právo lidu, 13 September 1905, p. [4].
283Ibid.
284Ibid. Adler, a deputy in the Reichsrat from 1905-1918, was the leading figure of the Austrian Social Democratic Party.
to undermine the autonomy of the Czech section of the Party.\textsuperscript{265} Právo lidu, like contemporaneous literary critics, attributes a malicious humour to Čapek: 'Mylí se tedy velice, myslí-li, že svou strojenou starostlivostí o osud českoslovanské sociální demokracie, za níž se špatně skrývá nemotorné pošklebování, nám nějak uškodí.'\textsuperscript{266} Thus even if Čapek’s polemics and literary works differed in terms of content, contemporaries identified them with one outlook, which they named alternatively ‘ironic’, ‘mocking’, ‘cynical’ or ‘grotesque’.

The Social Democrat newspaper did not confront Čapek again over the issue of reform. It was too preoccupied with changing political circumstances to concern itself with him. Národní listy also changed its stance with regard to reform; thus there was no reason to carry the debate further. Právo lidu continued to criticize Young Czech deputies for their hypocrisy in supporting a compromise reform: ‘pod maskou svobodomyslnosti a pokrokovosti dělali politiku zpátečnickou’.\textsuperscript{267} The Social Democrat newspaper, however, reported that the Young Czech newspaper was now diverging from its Party, arguing in favour of more extensive electoral reform for the sake of Czech national representation in the Bohemian Diet.\textsuperscript{268} Subsequently, Národní listy for the most part reported with approval the Social Democrat demands for electoral reform.\textsuperscript{269} The Young Czech newspaper did, however, express some concern about whether the Social Democrats were not damaging the cause with their agitation. Právo lidu referred to Národní listy’s alternating enthusiasm and reserve as its two inkpots: ‘Jeden den namáčí péro v kalamář svobodomyslný a druhý

\textsuperscript{265}Ibid. See: ‘K vydobytí všeobecného rovného práva’.

\textsuperscript{266}‘Již druhý týden opakuje orgán Mariánské ulice’, p. [4].

\textsuperscript{267}‘Český lid proti mladočeským "státníkům”’, Právo lidu, 18 September 1905, p. [1].


\textsuperscript{269}‘Za všeobecné rovné právo hlasovací’, Národní listy, 25 September 1905, p. 1.
11. Čas
Čapek's polemic with Čas continued the debate over the 'national' character of art. In this polemic the conflict over the character of art dovetails with political disputes. The polemic also manifests a generation conflict between Mánes and Jednota umělců výtvarných, a conflict between Realists and Young Czechs, and Czechs and Germans. The court case into which the polemic escalates combines three controversies: a dispute over art; Realist support for a Pan-German proposal in the Reichsrat; and the award of a contract for mains pipes for the Prague waterworks.

The conflict over art begins with a damning review of Mánes's twenty-sixth exhibition, published in Dílo. This conflict treats the social role of the artist, his or her responsibility to the nation. The review implicitly rejects stylistic innovation. The reviewer accuses Mánes of arrogance, of uncritically aping foreign models and reviling domestic artistic trends. He singles out particular artists for criticism: Max Švabinský's (1873-1962) works are inferior; he cannot master the medium of oil paint; there is no thought behind his work. The pose of the nude figure in his 'Modrá rajka' reduces the woman to a soulless object. The artist is interested only in still-life; he manifests no responsibility for the

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290 'Namocily péro své zase do druhého kalamáře', Právo lidu, 30 September 1905, p. [4].

291 Čapek does not claim responsibility for the article in Dílo. His correspondence with Alois Kalvoda, however, suggests that he was on friendly terms with the editors of the journal. In 1910, the journal offered Čapek the position of text editor. A letter from Kalvoda indicates that Čapek accepted the position. I have not found any other evidence that Čapek worked for the journal. Papers: Čapek-Chod; three letters from Kalvoda to Čapek-Chod, 1908-1910; PNP.

292 'Zprávy umělecké a literární. XXVI. Výstava spolku "Manes"', Dílo, 6 (1908-09), pp. 113-14.
created work. The reviewer is offended by Švabinský’s works. Jan Štursa’s (1880-1925) little sculptures are only ‘subjective improvisations’ imperfectly articulated. Antonín Slavíček has not improved on his earlier material; Stanislav Sucharda is exhibiting his ‘Hus’ yet again; Josef Mařatka (1874-1937) imitates Rodin; Tavík František Šimon’s (1877-1942) works also derive from French models. Bílek’s religious mysticism spoils his sculptures. The reviewer concludes: ‘Celá výstava jest zkrátka snůškou všech směrů od střízlivé reality až k neoimpressionismu, od nezdárených pokusů nevykvašeného mládí až k propukávajícímu uměleckému "starešinství".’

The anonymous response, printed in the Realist Besedy Času, indicates the wider context of the review. The author replies not to the reviewer’s remarks, but to the intentions of the journal in which they are published. He states that Dílo was created as an alternative to Volné směry; it was to be distinguished by its ‘Czech spirit’ but became a haven for weak artists and writers because, ‘od časů Havlíčkových už je vypozorováno v Čechách, že špatní spisovatelé a slabí umělci bývají – nejčestšťejší a nejvlastenečtější’. The author addresses the politics of the Dílo reviewer and appears to criticize his support for ‘historical state rights’: ‘Kdo má smysl pro evropské mravy aspoň, musí protestovat proti této průkopnické práci české, ryze české a ryze vlastenecké, která patrně má nám vybudovat nový český královsko-zemský styl v umělecké kritice.’

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294 Ibid., p. 115.
295 Ibid., p. 116.
296 Ibid., p. 116.
297 F. Slabý, ‘Musí se veřejně protestovat!’, Besedy Času, 13 (1908), 25, p. 198. The reference is to Havlíček’s review of Tyl’s Poslední Čech.
Reviewing an exhibition of Aleš’s drawings and watercolours, Čapek addresses both the Besedy Času commentary and an article by Krejčí about ‘modern’ art. As Šalda had with Rodin, Čapek elevates Aleš above all other contemporaneous Czech artists: his name is, ‘onomapoeitikon pro pojem českého malíře’; ‘Aleš je sám a samo jediný v českém umění malířském [...] následovníků a napodobitelů nemá’. Through praise of Aleš, Čapek attacks ‘modern’ Czech art: ‘Alšův obraz vždycky tak odrůzní se od svého výstavního sousedství, tak dokonale nápadně vynikne z nivellujícího nivellujícího niveau českého modernismu, na němž tak málo českého, že nenajdeme v žádném jiném umění národním takové inkoherence jednotlivcovy oproti ostatnímu celku’. Aleš is not ‘modern’, as Krejčí defines the term. For Čapek, Aleš’s work manifests all that is positive in culture, while Czech Modernism represents all that is negative:

Tato ‘síla českého života,’ tato modernost jest aristokratickou, Aleš jest demokratem; moderna jest exklusivní, Aleš popularisujícím a populárním; moderna komplikovanou, až záhadnou, Aleš jasným a srozumitelným; moderna hledanou a nepřirozenou, Aleš bezprostředním a naivním; moderna kosmopolitickou, Aleš národním od kosti [...].

Aleš’s art, he states, thus disproves the assertion printed in Besedy Času that patriotic national artists tend to be inferior artists. Čapek objects both to the style and subject matter of modern art; modern painting technique consists of a counterpoint of coloured spots; colours practically drip over the frames. Czech Modernism, like Modernism everywhere, is pessimistic and lacks the humour of Aleš’s art. It is distant from ordinary people and the ‘nation’: ‘česká moderna ani jediným rysem, ani jediným tvarem netvoří umění a kulturu ze současných útvarů českého žití, z českých názorů o lidech a věcech, a z českého

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299 KMČ [Karel Matěj Čapek], ‘Mikuláš Aleš’, Zvon, 8, 1907-08, 49, p. 747.

300 Ibid.

301 Ibid., p. 748. The phrase ‘síla českého života’ is a quotation from the Krejčí article.
In Křejčí's article, Čapek objects most strongly to the conception of modern art as rejecting old styles and conventions which are empty, and creating from 'contemporary configurations of existence'. However, it is possible that Čapek did not finish reading the article. In the first seven pages, up to the passage which Čapek quotes, Křejčí presents a Romantic conception of the artist as messianic outsider, burdened by a heightened awareness and by dreams. According to Křejčí, the artist transforms the new forces and values of life into art; to do this, he must live in isolation, blaspheme against all that is sacred to society and drink 'power from the cup of evil and hatred'. Talent is not a gift, but a curse; beauty is created through the suffering of the artist. The 'energy' sucked into the work of art, returns to the world through contact with the spectator; thus art serves life, but not truth, morality or social interests. The artist's role consists in easing the burden which others bear.

In the remainder of the article, however, Křejčí states that Modernism has become conventional, a term used to excuse inferior works. He criticizes writers who produce 'celé archy dušemalebnými traktáty nebo náladovými popisy přírody', instead of economical short stories. Pessimism has become a pose, a sign of spiritual stagnation. He argues that social pessimism is no longer justifiable; it is clear that culture will not fall with the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie, but that democracy and socialism guarantee its development. Czech culture has matured; the young no longer regard it as a wasteland, and feel

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302 Ibid.
303 F. V. Křejčí, 'Moderní umění jako síla života', Volné směry, 12, 1908, pp. 165-180.
304 Ibid., p. 167.
305 Ibid., p. 168.
306 Ibid., p. 169.
307 Ibid., p. 170.
308 Ibid.
no need to seek out European models: ‘máme své životní a kulturní hodnoty, jimiž se vyrovnamo i nejpysnějším kulturním národům’. While in the first part of the article, Krejčí appears to argue that art is independent of society, in the conclusion he asserts that art has an ethical function: ‘Být v pravdě moderním znamená tolik, jako mít oči otevřeny pro reálné hodnoty přítomného života.’ In other words, Krejčí conceives of art as *engagé*, deriving from and addressing the forces which drive humanity. In his account of the decline of Modernism, Krejčí approaches Čapek’s point of view.

The *Čas* polemic also touches on the controversy provoked by Masaryk and Drtina’s support for a Pan-German resolution in the Reichsrat. Karel Hermann Wolf (1862-1941), a German nationalist second in notoriety only to Georg von Schönerer (1842-1921), proposed that the state fund a new German academy of fine arts in Prague, because Czechs were oppressing Germans in the existing institution. Of all the Czech deputies in the Reichsrat, only the Realists supported the resolution, which was passed; not even the Czech Social Democrats endorsed it. The *Neue Freie Presse* reports it as a victory of the German bloc over the Slavs. Národní listy describes the Realist decision as traitorous: ‘Lze si pomyslit, jak uderil tento mrzky čin v prsa všech upřímých Čechů a Slovanů.’ When *Čas* attempts to justify the action of

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310 Ibid.
312 The Czech Social Democrats had a reputation for being lukewarm on nationality issues. See: Garver, *The Young Czech Party 1874-1901*, pp. 242, 247.
313 ‘Trojlistek: Wolf - Masaryk a Drtina’.
314 Ibid. Masaryk’s support, in 1908, for the German teacher Ludwig Wahrmund in the Tyrol, likewise did not meet with the understanding of his fellow Czechs. The dismissal of Wahrmund, a Catholic Modernist, was initiated by conservative clerics. See Bruce Garver, *Masaryk and Czech Politics, 1906-1914*, pp. 245-46.
the deputies, Národní listy responds:

Tážeme se jen té části veřejnosti, která celý spor sleduje: je nějaká naděje, že orgán realistů vyšine se jednou aspoň na takový stupeň novověké vzdělanosti, aby v jeho sloupícich nebylo místa pro mrzké individuum, které svou povahou a svou mravní úrovni nepatří do žádné společnosti, která činí nárok aspoň na jméno společnosti slušné? At' píše a vykládá orgán realistů, co chce, tolik je jisto, že hlasování prof. Masaryka a Drtiny přineslo dávno žádoucí vyjasnění o tom, jak vypadají velkopubl., theoretičtí filosofové při praktické politické práci a jak by se vedlo národu, kdyby jeho zájmy těmto lidem byly svěřeny.  

Čapek’s polemic with čas also involves the controversy over the Prague waterworks contract for mains pipes. The two main bids came from a French company, Pont à Mousson, and the Austrian Pražskoželezárská společnost. The latter was unpopular among the Czechs as an iron cartel which profits from high customs duties on imported iron; the company is also accused of Germanizing activities in communities dependent on iron works, such as Kladno, Vítkovice and Ostrava. It appears to have been a public secret that the French company would gain the contract. When Wilhelm Kestranek (1862-1925), director of the Pražskoželezárská společnost, accused the board of directors of the waterworks and the Prague town council of corruption, the Czech public interpreted his statements as an attack on Czech nationalism, which had apparently informed the award of the contract. Kestranek accused an unnamed individual, later identified as the alderman and Young Czech Reichsrat deputy Karel Černohorský, of offering to intervene on his behalf with the board of directors in return for a commission. After Kestranek revealed this in a letter printed in the Prager Tagblatt, the board of directors announced that the contract would be awarded to Pont à Mousson. Černohorský, the Prague waterworks board of...
directors and many town councillors sued Kestranek and Gustav Horn, the editor of the Prager Tagblatt, for libel. Národní listy reported on the scandal as yet another example of appalling German behaviour towards the Czechs. In a curious decision which perhaps reflects popular opinion, Kestranek's accusations against Černohorský were accepted as well-founded, but the director was nevertheless found guilty of libel against the board of directors and the town councillors.\footnote{Rozsudek v procesu Viléma Kestranka', Národní listy, 9 February 1909, pp. 3-4; 'Kestrankův rourový proces', Národní listy, 10 February 1909, p. 3.}

Čapek's involvement in the affair consists of a response to an article in Čas.

Čas carried an interview with Kestranek by an unidentified Czech living in Vienna, a person 'well-informed in economic matters'.\footnote{Interview s řed. Kestrankem', Čas, 3 September 1908, p. 1.} The interviewer presents the director in a favourable light; he describes Kestranek as a brilliant, tolerant man who has often been vilified by his Austrian German compatriots for not defending the interests of Germans. Kestranek, according to the interviewer, is motivated solely by the interests of his investors, and not by nationality concerns. In fact, he respects the honesty of the Czechs and is an admirer of Czech art. Kestranek denies that he or his company has had a germanizing influence in Kladno. The interviewer provides a physical description of the director: 'je muž v nejlepším věku, elegantní a imponující postavy, živých a pružných pohybů, krásných pátravých, otevřené do světa hledících očí'.\footnote{Ibid.}

The profile of the director belies the article's conclusion: 'Není účelem těchto řádků oprávněné námětky proti železářům seslabovat. Jen podat několik čistě osobních rysů povahy pana Kestranka jsem chtěl, nic více.'\footnote{Ibid., p. 2.}

In a leading article, Národní listy summarizes the week's developments in the 'Kestranek Affair'. The author does not give
prominence to his attack on the Realist interview; the Čas article is mentioned only in the third column. The author criticizes Čas for portraying Kestranek as the Monte Christo of the twentieth century; he quotes extensively from the interview to give evidence of its toadying tone. What provokes contention, however, is the author’s reference to the interviewer; he describes the Čas article as a portrait, ‘malovanou umělcem, jehož jméno tlačí se na rty při každé řádce "interviewu". "Interviewer", ve Vidní žijící Čech, je okouzlen nitrem i vnějškem centrálního čaroděje pražsko-železářského’. The author does not name the interviewer; nor does the ensuing court case reveal his identity.

Čas, however, assumes that Čapek is referring to the poet and essayist Josef Svatopluk Machar; the journal implies that Čapek is mistaken, but does not reject his claim explicitly. The author dismisses the suggestion that Čas has any connection with the company: ‘Novinářský otrapa, který náš list pojmenoval listem kartelu blízkým (nebot’ my jsme první vynesli na světlo jméno dra Černohorského), to jest od kartelu podplaceným, je nám docela lhostejný. Za mizernost tu odpovídá celá redakce Ná. Listě.’ Čas regards Černohorský, rather than Kestranek, as the central figure in the scandal, and construes the affair as a matter of Young Czech corruption. One might suspect that in its concentration on trivial questions, Národní listy is attempting to downplay this aspect; however, polemics in the ‘Denní zprávy’ and comparable columns tend to be petty; thus one must be wary of attributing intentions. Národní listy sarcastically welcomes the ‘coarseness’ and curses of the Čas column, ‘jakožto nový doklad o nebetyčné úrovni, nedozírné vysoké inteligenci i neobsáhlé kultuře, jakou jeho sloupce přetékají’. The author,


323 ‘Národní listy’, Čas, 5 September 1908, p. 4.

324 Ibid.

325 [K. M. Čapek], ‘Po přečtení našeho pátečního článku’, Národní listy, 6 September 1908, p. 3.
Čapek, denies having accused Čas of accepting bribes; indeed, neither the interviewer nor the journal is named in the 'Týdenní přehled kestrankoviny': 'Nemůžeme za to, že nezřízené fantasii realistickeho denníku nelze si žurnalisticky představit pod slovem "blízký" nic jiného než "podplacený". Nazvati "Čas" kartelu "blízkým", to jest "příznivým" - což jsme my výslovně neučinili - má každý právo od jeho čtvrtéčního interviewu s řed. Kestrankem.'

The Čas-Národní listy polemic merges with the Besedy Času-Zvon dispute, indicating that a personal attack on Čapek lies behind the conflict. Čapek at least had the satisfaction of knowing that his opponents read his fiction; 'Zavři hubu, Matýsku!', the title of the response to Čapek's review of Aleš, refers to Čapek's autobiographical short story, 'Jak panenka na podpatku'. Besedy Času claims that Čapek quoted the passage about Havlíček and inferior patriotic writers in order to suggest that the Realist journal would condemn the works of Aleš: 'jehož umění i Českost jsou nad všecku pochybnost právě v našem listě uznávány'. All critics accept that art has a 'national character'. In its attack on Čapek, Besedy Času cites a phrase from the Masaryk-Drtina-Wolf polemic: 'Okolnosti, za kterých Havlíček podobný výrok učinil a okolnosti, za kterých my se Havlíčka dovolávali, jsou v literárních kruzích nepochybně tak dobře známy, že zneužití tohoto názoru mohlo se dopustit jen "mrzké individuum", které je živo z překrucování jasných pojmů.' At the same time, in response to Národní listy, Čas states that it distinguishes between Kestranek and the iron cartel and has always been hostile to the latter. Čas asserts that Národní listy abuses Kestranek in order to hide its support of the cartel. Čas also accuses the Young Czech newspaper of lacking integrity, because it misquotes passages from Realist

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326 Ibid.


328 Ibid.

329 Ibid.
Čapek’s response in Zvon also constitutes an attack on Mânes. He denies having distorted the meaning of the Havlíček quotation: ‘Větou, ode mne citovanou, vyslovil časův besedník axiom, který není ničím jiným než horrendním nesmyslem, na kvadrát povýšeným, když jej "Volné Směry", orgán sp. výtv. umělců "Manes", přijaly za svůj. Myslím, že je to vůbec největší nesmysl ve XX. věku v jazyce našem až dosud pronesený.’ Čapek again asserts that Aleš, as the most ‘Czech’, most patriotic and as the best of Czech painters, reveals the falsehood of Havlíček’s assertion, paraphrased in Besedy Času. In describing his intentions in writing the review, he indicates his perception of the role of the critic: ‘Já žádné zdání nevzbuzoval, žádnou pravdu nepřekrucoval, já naopak zdání a nepravdu konstatoval a vyvrátil, zkroucené pojmy napravil a vlastenecké i silné umění české čestně obhájil.’ He concludes the letter with the statement that he has commissioned Antonín Schauer, the same lawyer who had presented the case against Kestranek, to initiate legal proceedings against Besedy Času.

After the matter is taken to court, Cyrill Dušek (1881-1924), editor responsible in Čas, printed a retraction in Národní listy and in Čas:


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330 "Kestrankovina" and 'Co je to?', Čas, 7 September 1908, p. 2.

331 K. M. Čapek, "Besedy Času" (Zasláno), Zvon, 8 (1908), 50, p. 764.

332 Ibid.

An explanation and defence of all the remarks in the Realist press preceeds the retraction in Čas; the author reveals that Čas had been convinced that Čapek had been involved in the Masaryk-Drtina-Wolf polemic and the Kestranek polemic. In fact, Čapek denies having written the remark 'mrzké individuum' which Čas attributes to him.

Čapek insists that the retraction is inadequate; according to the record of the court proceedings, not Dušek but the editorial board of Čas is obliged to sign the statement. Čapek's open letter constitutes a restatement of his arguments and criticism of the Realist press. He somewhat vacuously adds that the numerous performances of Tyl's dramas at the National Theatre invalidate Havlíček's judgment on the writer (as novelist). The conflict between Dušek and Čapek continues for several days, but contributes little to the polemic; Čas, however, does indicate that it identifies criticism of Mánes with jingoism.

12. Machar and the Sale of 'Národní listy'
The sale of Národní listy in January 1910 provoked a polemic among several newspapers (Čas, Samostatnost, České slovo and Národní listy) which escalated into two court cases. Repeatedly, Čapek is identified with the newspaper for which he works; he is held responsible for Národní listy's polemics with other newspapers, its political opponents. The change of opinions expressed by the newspaper in editorials and polemics after the sale is attributed to Čapek's fickleness; the fact that he had sold his principles is regretted as an indication of the lowering of standards of Czech journalism. The polemic concerns the influence of political leaders on the press, the impact of the press on public opinion and the ethics of journalism. It asks to what extent the journalist is responsible for the views he

334 K. M. Čapek, 'Pan Cyrill Dušek' (Zasláno), Národní listy, 13 December 1908, p. 5.

335 'Zbytečnou korespondenci', Čas, 14 December 1908, p. 3.
Čapek replies the following day: K. M. Čapek, 'Na mé prohlášení' (Zasláno), Národní listy, 15 December 1908, p. 5.
expresses anonymously.\footnote{In a letter to Ignát Herrmann, who is angry with Čapek for articles which he has written about the National Theatre in a polemic with Slovo, Čapek explains that only those articles which he signs with his name represent his private views. See: Papers: Čapek-Chod; fragment of a copy of a letter to Ignát Herrmann, 1902; PNP.} Čapek falls victim to the earnestness of his opponents and their good fortune to find themselves in a situation in which they can 'call the kettle black'. The Národní listy polemicist concentrates his attacks on his opponents' style of writing. This may derive from the lack of substance in the polemic; it may, however, constitute a diversionary tactic; or it may indicate the Národní listy writer's distance from the issues involved. Čapek may not have written all the articles which are attributed to him, but he probably wrote some of them; I shall consider the style of polemic with which he is identified.

The Czech press regards the purchase of the newspaper by Karel Kramář as a political move intended to silence his opponents. For three years prior to the purchase, Národní listy had battled with Kramář, who had founded his own newspaper, Den, as a mouthpiece for his opinions.\footnote{For background information, see: 'Kup Národních Listů', Čas, 20 July 1911, p. 1.} Národní listy had denounced Kramář's positive politics during the second reconstruction of the Beck cabinet at the end of 1907, when the Young Czech deputy František Fiedler (1858-1925) became Minister of Trade, and the Agrarian deputy Karel Prášek (1868-1932) became Minister without Portfolio for Czech Affairs;\footnote{Urban, Česká společnost 1848-1918, p. 541.} from that time until the transaction in 1910, Národní listy had been outside the Party. In December 1907, Národní listy had expressed disapproval of the Young Czech leadership for joining the Agrarians and Czech clerical deputies in supporting the ruling majority.\footnote{'Na obhajení našeho stanoviska - I.', Národní listy, 8 December 1907, p. 1.} It had criticized Czech deputies for supporting the re-negotiation of the Ausgleich. Czech deputies should have remained in opposition,
it argued, until the government had offered guarantees that Czech demands would be met (that is, greater autonomy, electoral reform in the Bohemian Lands, and a language reform providing for the use of Czech in the administration and the courts). Národní listy had claimed that it remained faithful to the programme of the Young Czech Party, which Kramář had abandoned. The newspaper had labelled Kramář the bane of Czech politics.

Národní listy’s rivals praise the former glory of the newspaper, that is, its position prior to 1910, in order to denigrate its present state. České slovo, the organ of the National Socials, proclaims: ‘Z hrdého orgánu svobodomyslníků, stal se bankovní list, šířící uhasínající slávu neuznaného velikána’. Čas prints two articles, one of which welcomes the sale because it will end the factionalism within the Young Czech Party, the other condemns it as a capitalist manoeuvre on Kramář’s part which degrades Czech journalism. Národní listy replies that, with the sale of the newspaper, Julius Grégr’s heirs come into their inheritance. The journalists gain nothing from the transaction; their relationship to the management of the newspaper remains unchanged. Furthermore, all journalists must conform to the demands of management: ‘V žádném listě na světě neotiskuje se ani řádek mimo souhlas vedení jeho; tak bylo za starého vedení "Nâr. Listů", tak bude i za nového’. Národní listy serves the Young Czech Party, not individuals; all changes

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340 Ibid.


342-by- [J. S. Machar], ‘Okresní soud - souboj - a milosrdná rada’, Čas, 30 July 1911, pp. 2-5.

343 ‘Národní Listy majetkem konsorcia’, České slovo, 6 January 1910, p. 3.

344 See the summary in: ‘"Čas" přijal změnu’, Národní listy, 8 January 1910, p. 3.

345 Ibid.

346 Ibid.
of opinion expressed in the newspaper regarding political tactics represent a voluntary submission to discipline in the interests of the Party. Čas responds that it welcomes the order which the purchase has brought to the leadership of the Party, but disapproves of the 'mechanical, capitalist manner' in which this order had been brought about. Národní listy hails the move as effecting harmony between the Party leadership and its press, thus heralding a hopeful future for the Party, which continues to proclaim itself the leader of Czech political representation. Národní listy informs Čas that the major newspapers in the contemporary world are closely linked with big capital and that thus the management of a daily must be 'capitalistic'. The oldest members of the Národní listy editorial board welcomed the transaction as a resolution of conflicts within the Party; the change of ownership had taken place congenially and all members of the editorial board had been retained.

Adolf Dušek, writing in Samostatnost, condemns the sale as the 'silencing and sidelining' of political rebels within the Young Czech Party. He states that the new owners expect to use the newspaper as an instrument of agitation for their own political purposes, as if almost all newspapers at this time did not function in the same manner. He notes that the sale took place just prior to local elections in the Prague New Town, in which the Young Czechs were running a candidate (Alois Rašín). Dušek's conclusion suggests a fall in Národní listy's ideals and prestige: 'Kainovo znamení výsmešně a d'ábelsky přímo ožehlo svobodomyslný dříve orgán Grégrův a stkví se honosně v čele

347Ibid.
349''Národní Listy'', Národní listy, 9 January 1910, p. 3.
350''Národní Listy'', Národní listy, 10 January 1910, p. 2.
351''Čas'', Národní listy, 13 January 1910, p. 2.
The response to this article in *Národní listy* suggests that, for the writer, nothing has changed and that 'outrage' over the sale has manufactured a false issue. The writer criticizes Dušek’s charges by an attack on his style. Dušek reaches a zenith of stylistic waywardness with his article: ‘Taková rčení náležejí věru už ke druhům exotickým ve květně nesmyslů, dařícím se jenom v přetopených - sklenících. Jsou fráse, při jichž čtení zdá se, že autoru musily zlomit vaz, leč ejhle! - měl ještě dosti síly a odvahy, podepsat svůj výkon.’ The writer identifies the stylistic inferiority of the article with its lack of substance: ‘radikální pustota idejová má své příslušné roucho’.

A contribution to *Samostatnost* returns the polemic to a more mundane level. The author, J. Karhan, is disgusted by the thought that this unscrupulous action of *Národní listy* could have such a strong impact on the convictions of the general public. The article reveals that the political opponents of the Young Czechs fear lest the reorganized Party make electoral gains. The writer also perceptively comments, however, that the declining Young Czech Party no longer warrants two newspapers; *Den* becomes redundant with Kramář’s purchase of *Národní listy*. In his reply, the *Národní listy* writer first addresses the style of Karhan’s article, stating that at least it is not as crass as Dušek’s ‘slohové cvičení s těžkými závažími’. The *Národní listy* writer does not have many options in this polemic; the sale of the newspaper is a fait accompli. Considering that the transaction represents the unification of factions within a political party,

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333Ibid.

334‘Pokrokový a radikální šramot’, *Národní listy*, 18 January 1910, p. 3.

335Ibid.


it hardly warranted the scandal which the rival newspapers manufactured. The \textit{Národní listy} writer can only repeat that the sale in fact accords with the will of Julius Grégr and does not concern the honour of the editorial board. The writer is primarily concerned with making his point in a clever manner. This motivates the elaborate refutation of Karhan’s charges; the writer treats Karhan’s attack on the sale as an attack on Grégr’s provisions for his heirs: ‘Kritika tohoto opatření, k němuž měl božské i lidské právo, ano povinnost, a jeho výkonu, kritika tak nezřízená a nestoudná, jak ji provozuje hlavně tisk tak zvaně pokrokově-státoprávní, jest vlastně urážkou mámů Grégrových – a tu je příležitost vrátit v míře neobmezené panu Janu či Josefu Karhanovi "hnus", o němž včera mluví.’[^358]

This is exactly the kind of complex sentence with which Čapek, as polemicist and fiction writer, is associated by his contemporaries; thus, it is not surprising that \textit{Samostatnost} directs its response at him. The \textit{Samostatnost} writer describes the purchase of \textit{Národní listy} as the purchase of souls: ‘Ne Gogolovských mrtvých duší, nýbrž koupě žijícího přesvědčení vnitřního, kulturních představitelů české žurnalistiky. Redakce Nâr. Listù byla hromadně, a takřka přes noc znásilněna hmotnou silou držitele moci, zaměstnavatele, chlebodárce, at’ už je jeho jméno takové nebo jiné.’[^359] He argues that matter has triumphed over spirit, or financial concerns over convictions; \textit{Národní listy} journalists, who formerly attacked Kramář’s positive politics, will now violate their convictions by supporting Kramář. \textit{Samostatnost} places Čapek’s reputation at the centre of the polemic:

[^358]Ibid., p. 4.


The Samostatnost writer, however, is wrong to suppose that Čapek's attacks on Kramář's politics had been motivated by conviction. Čapek wrote for newspapers of different political orientations; he regarded journalism as his source of income. That he was not particularly interested in squabbles between political parties is suggested by the fact that parties are rarely treated in his creative writing. The work he undertook in his free time, that is, his fiction and theatre and art reviews, engaged his passion. The rest was necessary drudgery which could provide some amusement at best. This is suggested by the description in 'Úvodník' of the journalist forced to write a leading article in one night; Čapek describes not the contents of the article, but the process of writing. This same interest in the writing process and in style is manifest in the polemics attributed to him.

České slovo identified Čapek, and his distinctive style, as Národní listy's main weapon in polemics. Referring to the corruptness of the Young Czech Party, the writer for České slovo states: 'Domnívají-li se "Národní Listy", že takové zjevy možno odbytí Čapkovými kudrlinkami, nemáme příčin vyváděti je z toho klamu. Die naseho názoru v tak důležité věci bylo by lépe nechat mluvit srdce a přesvědčení člověka, nežli odbýti to nějakými krkolomnými přemety slovního akrobata, vypočtenými na gaudium nemyslících čtenářů.' Čapek did not respond to the

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Ibid.

Exceptions to this are 'Dar svatého Floriána', 'Snivá Kateřina' and Antonín Vondrejc.

provocations of Samostatnost or České slovo. However, the organ of the National Socials continued to attack him in its polemics column.

The debate between České slovo and Národní listy continued along two lines. First, Václav Klofáč (1868-1942), leader of the National Socials, printed a three-part article entitled ‘Hrr na národně sociální hnutí’ in his newspaper, České slovo. The article proportioned to constitute a critique of Kramář and the Young Czech Party.363 Národní listy’s response in the ‘Denní zprávy’ column concentrates on the ridiculousness of Klofáč’s description of Kramář as a ‘zbohatlý plebejčík’.364 The writer dismisses the content of the article through an attack on the manner of expression:

Užívá-li slova plebejčík - nechceme říci proletář - ale demokrat, zní to cynicky i komicky. Plebs a demos jsou přece synonyma a co se týče bohatství, měla by se tato výtka vystěhovatí už jednou aspoň z veřejné diskuse, národa, který vidí, že jednou ze záruk jeho budoucnosti jest jeho hospodářský vývoj.365 České slovo attributes this article to Capek and accuses him of trying to evade the issues with ‘slovíčkářstvím’.366 Národní listy’s response to the second part of ‘Hrr na národně sociální hnutí’ again concentrates on style; the second part is not as coarse: ‘Vypustiv nadávky, přišel autor o všecko jádro, nebot takovým bylo těměř výhradně a ježto hlubka jeho rozkladů stojí k šířce v poměru obráceném, stávají se i jeho úvahy s rostoucí šíří ještě méně hlubšími, než byly z počátku.’367 The writer adds that Klofáč had formerly been a member of the Young Czech Party and on the editorial board of Národní listy; thus his political ‘achievements’ had not begun with the founding of the National

365Ibid.
Socials.

The polemic continues with Národní listy’s attack on Klofáč’s financial affairs. When taken to court for not paying his debts to the former owner of Zlatá husa, Klofáč, current owner of the hotel, accepts credit from the Länderbank. Národní listy construes this as evidence that the National Socials and České slovo are under German control. The ironic tone behind the hysterical chauvinism of the article becomes manifest when the writer states that every unbiased person must wonder what could have motivated German capital to give credit to National Socials, ‘lidem notoricky ne-li nezámožným, tedy daleko nevládnoucím takovými majetky, jaké by se nacházely v nějakém solidním poměru k milionovému objektu "Zlaté husy"’. The article intends to discredit Klofáč as a judge of the morality of the Národní listy editors. České slovo attributes this ‘Mrzká denunciace’ to ‘Matěj Čapek’. The National Social newspaper denies that it has anything to do with the Länderbank; it does admit, however, that Klofáč was compelled to turn to the German institution when Czech banks refused credit, because of the politicking of Národní listy. České slovo repeats its accusation that the Národní listy editors sold their conscience to Kramář. The newspaper lists Čapek’s work for the clerical Našinec and for Old and Young Czech newspapers as proof that he has no scruples and thus no right to attack the honour of others. The frustration of the Národní listy writer is evident in his condemnation of the National Social charges as ‘prolanhou blbost’. České slovo labels this the ‘květomlvy Kašpara Léna’. It repeats its attacks on the unscrupulousness of Čapek and of Josef Anýž (1852-1912), deputy in the Bohemian Diet and editor responsible in Národní listy. Čapek is accused of having written the most scathing articles

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369 'Polemiky "Národních Listů", České slovo, 16 March 1910, p. 3.
370 'Včerejší odpověď', Národní listy, 16 March 1910, p. 2.
371 'Došel jim vtip', České slovo, 17 March 1910, p. 3.
condemning Kramář prior to the change of ownership. Čapek should at least have had the good taste to ask for another column when Kramář took over the newspaper. The Národní listy writer denies that either of the men mentioned had sold his conscience. He does not reveal whether or not České slovo is correct in attributing the 'Denní zprávy' polemics to Čapek; he describes the attacks of the National Social newspaper as 'terorem osobním', intended to replace objective arguments. České slovo replies by concentrating its attack almost entirely on Čapek. The newspaper warns that thus far it has shown restraint in criticizing the private affairs of Young Czech politicians, but it will not back down if Národní listy provokes a slander competition: 'Pak ovšem pan Čapek - na něhož také nezapomeneme, musí být připraven, že zatím, nežli se sebe vysoká jednu jako Rokycany dlouhou, afektovanou, vyumělkovanou a kudrlinkovou větu, dostane tolik pádných ran, že se hned tak brzo nevzpamatuje.' The 'Zlatá husa' controversy drags on for several more days; however, the basic charges remain the same on both sides.

In the midst of these debates, České slovo printed a review of Čapek's Nové patero. As one might have expected, the review continued the polemic; it condemns Čapek's work, while at the same time recognizing his talent. The review suggests that contemporary criticism of Čapek's fiction must be seen in the context of political and personal disputes. The reviewer states that this collection awakens in the reader: 'Udiv nad podivinštem rázu zcela neobvyklého, jež zračí se ve všech

372 Ibid.
373 'České slovo', Národní listy, 17 March 1910, p. 3.
374 'Sebe prudcí paroxysmus', Národní listy, 18 March 1910, p. 3.
375 'Národní Listy' troubí k ústupu', České slovo, 18 March 1910, p. 2.
pracech tohoto belletristy odpor vůči jeho způsobu, vyjadřovatí se a na konec (ale nejsilnější) pocit upřímné lítosti, že talent tak rozhodný ocitl se nenávratně na scestí'. 

The reviewer's comment that even Čapek's staunchest enemy would not deny his gift of observation or his originality, indicates the polemical background of the review. The reviewer states that this originality manifests itself in the bizarre choice of subject; Čapek's treatment of his material is affected. He criticizes Čapek for trying to flaunt his knowledge to the reader. Perceptions of Čapek as a polemicist appear to inform the reviewer's assessments: 'Čapek je či spíše považuje se za naturalistu, ale ve skutečnosti jím není. Není jím, protože přes to, že jeho pozorovací talent je opravdu neobyčejný, nedovede skutečnost líčit tak, jakou opravdu je, nýbrž zkarikovanou a přebarvenou, zachycenou pod zorným úhlem velmi zúženým. [...] Máte stále dojem, jakoby si spisovatel z vás troplil šašky a jakoby jen předstíral soucit, jenž tu a tam se ozve'. 

He attacks Čapek's work for lacking intellectual substance, a criticism frequently levelled against polemics, which concentrate on discrediting an opponent rather than on addressing issues. The criticism of the extraneous details may likewise echo charges made against Čapek as polemicist. The reviewer's attack on Čapek the author explicitly constitutes an attack on Čapek the polemicist: 'Čapkův sloh i v novellistických pracech zdaleka prozrazuje známého autora polemických lokálek v "Národních Listech" strojeností a krouceností svých přetížených vět, jež se plází a zdlouhavě vinou jako přecpaní hadi.' 

A year later, the debates over the sale of Národní listy result in two court cases, the first involving Josef Anýž and Antonín Uhlíř (1882–1957), the second Machar and Cyrill Žďárský (born 1872). The debates are revived because of the elections to the Reichsrat in June 1911; in an election meeting on 11 May

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378Ibid.

379Ibid.
1911, Uhlíř accuses Kramář of having bought the conscience of the Národní listy editorial board. Kramář advises Anýž to press charges of libel and the case is heard in a Prague district court on 21 July. Uhlíř insists that his comment had been directed at Kramář, but he does not deny that his claim also implicates the journalists of Národní listy. In court, Anýž attacks Čas’s coverage of the sale, which he defends against the slurs of the press. Uhlíř’s lawyer argues that his client had done no more than repeat accusations which had been made in the press for over a year. Uhlíř was cleared of the charges; at the court of appeal, however, Anýž won his case.

The Anýž/Uhlíř court case inspired Machar’s ‘Mrtvé duše’, printed in Čas. In this article, he compares the Národní listy editors and Kramář to two battling galleons: ‘kanonýří její [that is, Národní listy] zamířili na neblahého plavce a bouchali mu do lodičky všickni – M. K. [sic] Čapek své granáty, jiní bomby, jiní smolné věnce – až si milý doktor vzpomněl na Lehrjahre mladosti své – – – a šel a koupil houfnici i s kanonýry’. He compares Kramář to Gogol’s Chichikov, because he ‘buys’ the dead souls of the Young Czech newspaper. Machar implies that the transaction demonstrates the corruption of the nation: ‘dr. Karel Čičikov šel a koupil, co se koupit dalo: marianskou houfnici, vědu, umění, slávu svoji, veřejné mínění, národní morálku, smysl našich dějin’. Machar claimed that in denouncing Kramář and the Young Czech newspaper he had fulfilled his responsibility as a Czech writer; however, his vanity was also at stake. He is irritated in particular that these ‘dead souls’ are the creators of public

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380 Čas printed a biased summary of the proceedings. ‘Proces Národních Listů’, Čas, 21 July 1911, pp. 7-9.

381 Ibid., p. 7.

382 See: J. S. [Jaroslav Stránský], ‘Ke sporu Národních Listů s Macharem’, Přítomnost, 1, 1924, 16, p. 256. In the First Republic, Uhlíř was deputy for the Czechoslovak Socialist Party.


384 Ibid., p. 3. The offices of Národní listy were located on Mariánská ulice.
opinion: 'vědci provozují v Mariánské ulici politiku, krásní literáti diplomacii a šmok-lokálkár vynáší literární soudy ...
Machar specifies his personal grievances: in answer to Machar's claim that the Národní listy editors lied about Kramář's attempts at a pre-election reconciliation with the Social Democrats, 'M. K. Čapek, osvědčený kanonýr mariánské houfnice, vydal zdrcující odsudek mé literární činnosti'.
Machar vilifies Hladík, as well as Kramář and Čapek, for writing a feuilleton against him. As in Machar's satire on Czech liberal politics (Magdalena, 1894), personal differences fuel a conflict between parties, in this case the Realists and the Young Czechs.

The article provokes Cyrill Žďářský, member of the Národní listy editorial board and reserve lieutenant, to challenge Machar to a duel. Machar relates, in 'Okresní soud - souboj - a milosrdná rada', that Žďářský's seconds had arrived at his door at midnight on 25 July to deliver the challenge. Machar's self-mythologizing as the conscience of the nation is evident in his dismissal of the challenge as ridiculous:


Machar reports Lidové noviny's claim that Rašín had encouraged Žďářský to make the challenge. He encourages Žďářský to leave his job if he feels offended: 'Já sám - a jsem starší člověk a lečcem u nás už zvyklý - bych v společnosti Čapka, Anýže a Hladíka nebyl ani minutu.' Žďářský sues Machar for

35Ibid.
36Ibid., p. 4.
37Ibid., p. 5.
38Ibid., p. 4.
libel and the case was tried in November 1911.

The trial was politicized by the press. Národní listy asserted that in its coverage of the trial, Čas had manifested spite at Realist losses in the summer elections to the Reichsrat. The Young Czech newspaper similarly interprets the claims made by the Realist Uhlíř as pre-election provocation, and Machar’s feuilletons as a continuation of the party conflict. Both the Young Czechs and the Realists address Machar’s character as a writer. In his report on the trial, the Národní listy writer includes an attack on the style of Machar’s feuilletons: 'Výrazy naprosto nebásnickými a slohem nevázaným, přesvědčen, že nadávky v jeho ústech mají půvab duchaplnosti, v několika feuilletonech zle řádil proti redakci "Národních Listů".' He implies that such a coarse poet must be a dishonourable man. The portrait of the poet in the Realist press, and its concentration on the national role of the poet and the journalist, indicate a conception of the political role of culture. The Realist newspaper represents the trial as a conflict between Young Czech, capitalist corruption, and the voice of the nation, embodied in the ‘honest’ poet. Thus, while Národní listy refers to the case as, ‘Proces red. C. Žd’árského proti J. S. Macharovi’, Čas refers to it as, ‘Národní Listy proti J. S. Macharovi’, that is, the conglomerate of power versus the individual. In his concluding speech in defence of Machar, the lawyer Václav Bouček (born 1869) reads several poems by Machar as examples of the poet’s patriotism, the alleged motivation for his denunciation of Národní listy. Bouček remarks to the jury: ‘Básník té velikosti a té vroucí lásky k národu máte uvrhnouti do vězení.’ The writer for Čas states: ‘Pravý básník je bojovník a Machar vždycky byl bojovníkem.’ Čas claims that the poet had expressed the

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391 Ibid., p. 2.
392 'Národní Listy proti J. S. Macharovi’, Čas, 28 November 1911, p. 10.
393 Ibid., p. 6.
nation's condemnation of Kramář's purchase of the Young Czech newspaper; thousands of Czechs believed, 'že slovo básníkovo osvobozuje od mravní bolesti, nebot' je ortelem vyšším a trvalým a je bleskem, který očišt'uje vzduch'.

Žďárský claims that as an editor of Národní listy, his honour is implicated by Machar's descriptions of the Young Czech journalists as 'Koupé mrtvé duše', 'koupení otroci', men who can be paid to spit in each other's eyes. Žďárský's lawyer tried to focus the trial on the question of whether or not his client was justified in seeking satisfaction for the insulting of his honour. That Žďárský was in charge of articles on foreign affairs and thus has never written anything about Kramář, weakened his case. Bouček, Machar's lawyer, reiterated that Machar's comments were addressed to Čapek, as the editor of the political section of the 'Denní zprávy' column, and to Hladík. Bouček suggests that Žďárský has been directed by his employers to pursue the case. The lawyer attempts to prove that the senior journalists working for Národní listy did 'sell' their political convictions to Kramář and that thus Machar had been stating only an obvious truth, and fulfilling his duty to the nation. The jury unanimously cleared Machar of the charges; Čas reports that the hundreds of people waiting outside the courthouse had greeted Machar as a hero.

The writer for Čas implies that the outcome of the trial represented a 'moral' victory for the Realists and humiliation for the Young Czechs; however, he also predicts the literary significance of the trial: 'Řeč dra. Boučka bude opět a opět čtena a zasluhovala by, aby se vším materiálem uložena byla v Museu království českého ve fasciklu pro příští literární historii.' Národní listy attempted to minimize the cultural-historical significance of the trial by denigrating Machar. It

394 Ibid.
395 'Proces red. C. Žďárského proti J. S. Macharovi', p. 2. These remarks appear in Machar's 'Mrtvé duše'.
396 'Národní Listy proti J. S. Macharovi', p. 9.
397 Ibid., p. 11.
stated that the jury had acquitted the popular poet, while denying satisfaction to the young, little known journalist; that is, the trial had represented the triumph of the undiscriminating opinion of the masses.\textsuperscript{398} Regarding the Realist portrayal of the trial as a conflict between \textit{Národní listy} and Machar, and the poet’s claim that the newspaper needed his conviction, \textit{Národní listy} replies: ‘V obojím je falešný tón, marně laděný ku potlesku lačné massy. "Národní Listy" nic neměly a nemají s panem Macharem. Jejich cíti se nemůže dotknout cynik a fanaticky maniak, i kdyby byl sebe více zbožňován krátkozrakým davem.’\textsuperscript{399} Viktor Dyk, in ‘Konec chytráctví’, published in \textit{Samostatnost}, asserts that the jury had condemned Czech journalism in general.\textsuperscript{400} His reference to Čapek’s literary works in the feuilleton, even if included for the sake of a joke, suggests that Čapek’s reputation as a writer might have been damaged. Dyk relates a conversation that he has ‘overheard’ between an unnamed journalist and a certain lawyer; the journalist addresses the second man:

\begin{quotation}
Doktore, živiteli, chlebodárče zlatoušť a zlatokapesný!
Ujištěoval jste mne naopak, že naše důvěrná známost zůstane bez následků. Jaká šalba! Chápám špatně. Tolik však přece chápu, že se stala nějaká ostuda. [...]
Stane-li se vám nějaká ostuda, můžete odjít na Krym. Co se mnou? Mohu pouze s přítelcom Vondrejcem k paní Šádě. A paní Šáda mi nestačí. Mám sáhnouti k Begovu samokresu?
Pryč, chmurné myšlenky! Doktore, jste hrd na své čisté ruce, pro něž tolik cizích rukou musí se špinouti; dovolte, abych vám představil své ruce, které
\end{quotation}

\textsuperscript{398}Všemi hlasy osvobozen’, \textit{Národní listy}, 28 November 1911, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{399}Ibid.

The fear that the Národní listy/Machar trial might harm his reputation as a writer drove Čapek to respond personally. In a letter to the editor Čapek explains why he had not sued Machar for libel: 'Neučinil jsem tak proto, že předně neuznávám nikoho na světě za soudce své cti'. He admits that he has adopted this attitude only recently, and that previously he had settled questions of honour with two slaps, 'z nichž druhý byl někdy proto říznější, že se můj protivník hned po prvním nepostavil na hlavu'. In the last affair of this sort, he states, 'zažil jsem okamžiky nevýslovných útrap duševních'; the affair took place in circumstances which might have ended sadly for someone close to Čapek's opponent. Čapek may be referring here to Bém's pregnant sister; Bém claimed that his sister's health had been threatened by Čapek's behaviour. At that time, Čapek states, he swore that he would refrain from taking such a course again, except under specific circumstances which he prefers not to disclose. He explains that he has sued for libel only twice; the first case concerned a German journal; however, the identity of the culprit could not be determined and Čapek agreed to accept an out-of-court settlement, which he subsequently donated to the Central School Foundation and the Union of Czech Journalists. The second case involved Čas and took place in circumstances...

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401Ibid. Dyk refers to the pub frequented by artists and littérateurs in Antonín Vondrejc and to Čapek’s play Bežův samokres.


403Ibid.

404Ibid.

405Ibid. Čapek’s papers give evidence of two cases in which he defends his honour. ‘Protokol sporu s Viktorem Olivou’ provides details of a verbal exchange in the Slavie café with the painter Viktor Oliva (1861-1928). It is dated 22 June 1892. Papers: Čapek-Chod; documents: Report of the law suit against Viktor Oliva; PNP. He sues the journalist Oskar Kuh (born 1858) for defamation of character in 1906. Papers: Čapek-Chod; documents: Criminal court in Prague, the judicial case of K. M. Čapek-Chod versus Oskar Kuh; PNP.
which were ‘grotesque’ rather than offensive, because he had been mistaken for someone else. He recalls that the case concluded with the publication of Dušek’s retraction, in which he undertook to refrain from attacks on Čapek in the press in the future. Čapek claims that he would win the case if he chose to sue Machar, who had published his accusations in Čas. However, Čapek insists that his honour cannot be tainted by the contributors or editors of Čas. He then explains why Machar has no right to accuse him of hypocrisy, recalling the scandal involving Herben, former editor and owner of Čas. Herben had remained on the editorial board, even though Masaryk had expelled him from the Realist Party on suspicion of fraud. Machar had been responsible for asking Herben to cease working for the newspaper. Čapek quotes Machar’s assessment of the scandal thus: ‘svinstvem, které bude sotva překonáno v celém dvacátém století’. Čapek comments: ‘Mezi chefem mé strany, drem. Kramářem, a mnou nepřihodilo se ani stín stínu všeho toho, co se přihodilo mezi Herbenem, Macharem, Masarykem, němluvě arci ani o tom, že výkonný výbor strany Herbenovy pohrozil mu trestním udáním pro zločin, a že Herben na výkonný výbor své strany podal žalobu pro utrhnání, později odvolanou.’ Yet both Machar and Herben continue to work on the same editorial board, because, Čapek comments, ‘domluvili se a smířili se’. This is exactly what has taken place between him and Kramář; he recalls the day when Kramář entered the Národní listy offices, ‘a podával mi ruku s jediným, ale pro mne do smrti nezapomenutelným slovem “Ničevo!” v němž bylo smíření všech vin’. Čapek’s critics are probably correct to assume that financial concerns led him to decide to remain at the newspaper. That hardly seems hypocritical given that Čapek

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408 Ibid.

409 Ibid.
had loyalties to the newspaper for which he had worked for ten years, rather than to any faction within the Young Czech Party. In the conclusion to the letter, Čapek expresses bitterness that he has been reproached for dedication to a newspaper that has exploited his talents:

Dnes jsem chud, krejcaru, kterého nevypíšu, nemám, a vedle redakčních hodin píšu denně ještě pět doma, síly mé před prodejem ‘Nár. Listů’ bylo vykořišt’ováno do úpadu, a přece jsem průběhem těchto let odmítl nabídku, rovnou téměř sinekuře. To je o mně v kruzích žurnalistů známo. Za to jsem nařknut z prodejnosti. A kým? Člověkem, jenž za 50 zl., neohrožujících jeho existenci, byl hotov pracovat pod chefem, i kdyby se mu dokázalo, že je defraudantem! A mluví se mi o naplívání do tváře lidmi, kteří by to musili považovat za vyznamenání, kdybych já to udělal — jím! 410

Čas recommends Dyk’s article in Samostatnost to its readers; the Realist newspaper also promises to reply to Čapek’s letter.411

The pathos of Čapek’s first letter to the editor is absent in the second. In the first, he openly reveals his personal feelings to the public. In the second, he resumes the mask of the ironist. As in other polemics, he engages here in a vigorous, but also comic, dismissal of his opponents, primarily Machar and Dyk, disguised as an attack on their literary work. He explains his reasons for demanding the attention of the public yet again in this affair:

obhájce páně Macharův ujišt’oval porotu, že o jeho případu bude se v Čechách mluvit ještě za padesát let, a ježto já, at’ zaslouženou at’ nezaslouženou měrou jsem byl ozdobou řeči pana dra. Boučka na místě prvním, bude se tedy i o mně za padesát let mluvit. Záleží mi tedy na tom velmi, abych pro přítomnost i pro budoucnost byl také já slyšen. 412

410Ibid. Čapek may here refer to the attempt by Česká spořitelna to bribe him. See: Tůma, ‘Ježatec’, p. 83. Čapek’s 1923 letter to a Národní listy editor suggests the devastating impact which this polemic had on him. He states that he would never return to the ‘polemické vřavy’ which destroyed his health, ruined his career as a journalist and brought him great humiliation. Papers: Capek-Chod; letter to the editor of Národní listy from Capek-Chod, 1923; PNP.

411‘Národní Listy’, Čas, 30 November 1911, pp. 6-7.

K. M. Čapek, ‘Uctivě prosím za odpuštění’ (Zasláno), Národní listy, 1 December 1911, p. 6.
čapek asserts that čas can never refute his charges; the newspaper cannot deny that it was forced to print Dušek’s statement, in which he retracts ‘výslovně nadávky, nejryzejší masarykovskou kulturou nesené’, and promises never to attack čapek again in the press. In printing Machar’s articles, čas has violated the court agreement. čapek returns to the Herben scandal and challenges čas:

Jak mi dokáže, že to, co já kdy v "Národních Listech" napsal proti dru. Kramářovi i jen zdaleka snese porovnání se "svinstvem" Macharovým, Herbenovým a Masarykovým i Boučkovým? Kde berou tito lidé odvahu i se svým drem. Boučkem mně hnátí k žalobě prokoproláické výroky bývalého básníka, když mají nikoli másto, ale macharovské svinstvo na hlavě [...]?

čapek caricatures Machar:
slyším anakreontský ton kdysi básníka Machara, tohoto všeslitovníka nad "Časem", Dalajlamu, bílým slonem, Majstrem atd. a neúprosného mstitele na všechny jiné strany! On s drem. Boučkem udílí absoluce všem hříšníkům pod společnou s ním příkrývkou a snad uslyšíme co nevidět zase mlaskavé hubičky jeho, vyměnované s Tomášem anebo Herbenem, jako je vyměnil s drem. Boučkem po šťastném vyváznutí.

The whole affair, čapek relates, reminds him of an incident which occurred long ago: ‘Jednou jsem šel pozdě v noci a slašel jsem do louže, vyplynulé z práce mužů jen v noci pracujících a při práci pod dlažbu ponořených. Zpozorovali, jak ošklivě to nesu a hlasitě se mi smáli. Když jsem se nezdřel a pokázal na to, že oni jsou v tom po krk, slyšel jsem odpověď: "My smíme, to je náš živel!".’ čapek compares Machar and Dyk to the sewage workers. He asserts that after reading Machar’s ‘Mrtvé duše’, he attempted to outdo Machar: ‘když jsem byl se svou prací hotov, všichni, kdo jí v rukopis ětli, uznavi, že jsem dokázal věc zdánlivě nemožnou, to jest něco ještě sprostšího než Machar’. He tore

413 Ibid.
414 Ibid.
415 Ibid. ‘Tomáš’ refers to T. G. Masaryk.
416 Ibid.
417 Ibid.
In the letter’s conclusion, Čapek responds to Dyk: ‘Ano, "Samostatnost" skutečně zdvihla své "čertovské kopyto" a mávla jím stranou po "Národních Listech" a zvláště po mne. [...] Jak pak by mohla ušlechtilá fysiognomie p. V. Dyka scházet mezi mstíti, dnes mne obkličujícími!’ Čapek interprets Dyk’s comments as deriving from wounded pride:

Všechny ráně, které jsem kdy rozdal, se otevřely, a znovu prýstí, nadtož tak svěží jako páně Dykovy! S ním budu ostatně stručněji hotov. Tento rhytmik a český rekapitulant nejen Bourgetův má různé sladké sebeklamy, nejznámější z nich jest, že se domnívá, že je dramatikem. Pokusil jsem se poctivě vyvěstí jej z tohoto bludu, ale odplácí tak, jak vůbec odplácí svět. Čapek is here referring to his critical reviews of Dyk’s plays. He insists that if Dyk were a decent journalist, he would print what he knows to be true, that is, that the Národní listy journalists had not sold their honour to the present owner. This second letter constituted the 'last word' in the polemic. Machar’s articles and the anonymous response in Čas were too feeble to refute Čapek’s attacks.

In its reply to Čapek’s letters, Čas claims: ‘Nebudeme situaci pana K. M. Čapka zhoršovat, protože (dle ruského

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418 Ibid.

419 Ibid. He alludes to Dyk’s ‘Epizoda Tacitova’ (1903), Konec Hackenschmidův (1904) and Prošinec (1906).

420 Čapek, ‘Uctivě prosím za odpuštění’. He refers to Bourget’s Le Disciple (1889), which was said to be the model for Konec Hackenschmidův.

The defensive tone of the article, however, suggests that the Čas writer is wary of offending Čapek. He recapitulates the course of Čapek’s polemic with Cyrill Dušek, and misrepresents the outcome of the polemic when he claims that Čas willingly published the retraction on learning that Čapek had not written the offending article containing the phrase ‘mrzké individuum’. At that time, Dušek had asserted that he had signed the retraction only to get Čapek off his back. In 1911, however, Čas claims: ‘Pan Čapek nebyl také tak bojovný, jak vypadá nyní ve svém zaslání’. The Čas writer also addresses the Herben scandal, pointing out that all those who had accused Herben of fraud later retracted their assertions. The conclusion indicates a disinclination to continue the polemic: ‘Doufáme ve vši skromnosti, že tímto jsou řádně zapovězeny obě hlavní otázky páně Čapkova. [...] Ostatek řekneme, až my budeme chtít.’

Machar publishes a statement on the outcome of the trial, in which his self-satisfaction verges on self-parody. He describes the trial as a purging of the nation’s ills:

Šlo o víc, než o mou osobu a o uraženou čest p. Cyrilla Žďářského ....
A dnes je jisto, že v národě rozeřízaném mladočesťtvím, radnicemi, lokajstvím a štěrbovstvím, žije přec zdravé jádro. Víra v ně byla vždy mou posilou, a víra ta mě v pražské porotní síní nezklamala.
A věru byl již nevyšší čas. Dusno bylo u nás k zalknutí.

He repeats his accusations against the editors of Národní listy, naming Čapek, Hladík, Tůma and Anýž. Machar’s satirical attack on the Czech public is mundane: he thanks his lawyer, ‘za tu úžasnou námahu, která byla nutna, aby se veřejně dokázalo, že dvakrát dvě není pět’. Machar thanks the jury for being worthy

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422 Je pravda, že odpovíme ...’, Čas, 8 December 1911, p. 5.
423 Ibid., p. 6.
424 Ibid.
426 Ibid.
of his trust: 'V té síni, kde jsem před Vámi seděl jako obžalovaný, neměl jsem obav o své soudy, o svou osobu – ne, jenom o Vás, jen o tu víru v nás lid, jehož jste byli zástupci, jen o tu jsem se chvěl.' He attests that Žďárský is indeed an honourable man, commenting that he, too, will have a keepsake from the trial: 'setkal se s člověkem generosním, totiž se mnou, zabral místo v mé omnibusu, jímž se jede do říše nesmrtelnosti – a já mu je rád ponechám'. Machar’s thanks to his supporters is consistent with his self-mythologizing throughout the trial: 'Dobře se žije a lehči je bojuje, když člověk ví, že jeho dechem dýchají tisíce a k jeho práci hledí s láskou sta a sta pohledů!' Machar also publishes a short play in which he satirizes Young Czech politicians and those critics who have judged his works harshly, including Arne Novák and Miloš Marten (1883–1917). These 'villains' burn the poet and his works on a pyre in Old Town Square in honour of St John Nepomucene. They intend to sacrifice Masaryk and Herben in future years. This clumsy satire demonstrates Machar’s vindictiveness.

In Moderní revue Arnošt Procházka predictably regards the trial as an indication of the low level of culture and public life in the Bohemian Lands: 'Je to hrozné, pomyslí-li se, co je dovoleno psátí a co je dovoleno činiti; obě strany stály na stejně úrovni. I nepříčetně lající spisovatel, i žurnalisté, kteří se skryli zbaběle za osobu nevýznamnou.' Procházka regards the defence lawyer’s speech as the most appalling moment of this pathetic spectacle: 'Něco takového, jako byla jeho

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427 Ibid.
428 Ibid.
429 Ibid.
430 By J. S. Machar, 'Svatojanský ohňostroj', Čas, 19 May 1912, pp. 2–4. Reprinted in J. S. Machar, Satiricon, 2nd edn, Prague, 1919, pp. 222–230. Capek is one of the figures frequently attacked in the second part of this work. Poems which refer to Capek, in the first part, are found on the following pages: ibid., pp. 31, 33, 34, 45, 85–87, 97, 113, 118–19.
431 [Arnošt Procházka], 'Jaké kalné, špinavé vody', Moderní revue, 24 (1912), p. 152.
obhajovací řeč, pronéstí by se styděl i poslední řečník na táboře řvavých: bylo v ní tolik duševní nejemnosti, kulturní neokřesenosti, literární nevědomosti'. Only the crude language of Machar or Čapek could adequately characterize the lawyer's speech.

Čapek responds privately to this provocation, as Procházká reveals in his journal: 'P. K. M. Čapek poslal mi přípis, ve kterém žádá, abych mu dokázal citáty, kdy užíval ve svých polemikách hrubých výrazů. […] Tož lituji i jeho nespokojenosti, i toho, že nemohu "Moderní Revui" potiskovat jeho výrovy.' Procházká advises Čapek to reread the articles he wrote after the trial, adding, 'nerozpozná-li toho, snad v redakci "Národní Listů" nalezne někoho, kdo si zachoval aspoň špetku citu pro urbanní formy polemické'.

Čapek replies in a letter to the editor printed in Národní listy: he reproaches Procházká for not providing examples of the coarse language which he attributes to him and for not revealing the true contents of Čapek's letter. He asserts that he has no need to turn to anyone else for an understanding of the polite form of polemics; he will rely on Procházká's authority. He quotes from Procházká's polemics with Novina, in which he writes of Šalda: 'Mimo to ví, že naší blahovolné, výchovné pozornosti nikam neujde. Zvláště nyní, když se vrací do dětských kalhotek. Tu metla je vždy dobrým lékem.' Čapek concludes with the comment that he is not disturbed to have been condemned by Procházká: 'nebot' nyní znám představy svého karatele o polemické urbannitě zevrubně. A jsem spokojen'.

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432 Ibid.


434 Ibid.


436 Ibid.

437 Ibid.
The response to Jaroslav Stránský's 1924 article, 'Tisk a poroty', which mentions the Machar-Žďárský case, reveals Čapek's lasting bitterness over the polemic, and his disrespect for Machar. Stránský prints the letter in his response to Čapek. In the letter, Čapek insists that the case was a private matter between Žďárský and Machar. As a reserve officer, Žďárský was compelled to defend his honour in court when Machar refused the challenge to a duel. Čapek implies that Machar behaved in a dishonourable manner: 'Myslim, že Machar už tehdá nebyl záložním důstojníkem, sic jinak by bylo nevysvětlitelně, že by jeho odmítnutí bylo se minulo bez jedině možných následků pro jeho důstojnickou hodnost.' Čapek's praise of Žďárský implies criticism of Machar: 'Byl' to voják duší, tělem, právě jak to legenda vypravuje o J. S. Macharovi. Měl však větší štěstí než dnešní pan generální inspektor čsl. armády.' Žďárský fought as a Russian and French legionary in World War I; Čapek describes in impassioned terms how Žďárský, as captain, marched at the head of the Czech division in the triumphal procession through Paris, adding: 'Naši hoši byli bombardováni kyticemi za volání: Pour la Sibérie! To jen mimochodem, poněvadž to dosud nikde nebylo zaznamenáno.' Čapek states that Machar's offensive comments about the editors of Národní listy did not concern Žďárský. Čapek comments on his letters to the editor: 'Důvody mé byly tak zdrůující, že mi "čas" velmi rozpačitě odpověděl, že jsem příliš rozčilen, a že mi věcně odpoví, až prý se uklidním. Napsal jsem ihned v odvetu, že se nikdy nedožíji

439 Stránský, 'Ke sporu Národních Listů s Macharem', pp. 255-56. A copy of the letter Čapek sends to Stránský is preserved among the former's papers; Papers: Čapek-Chod; journal fragments, 1 April - 14 May 1924; PNP. The letter, dated 11 April 1924, is included among his journal entries.
441 Ibid., p. 256.
442 Ibid.
této odpovědi, poněvadž fakta, mnou uvedená a doložená, jsou ze světa neodstranitelná. Při tom také zůstalo.\textsuperscript{43} Čapek refers to these events as 'příšery minulosti'.\textsuperscript{44}

\textsuperscript{43}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{44}Ibid.
Polemics II: Čapek-Chod's Fiction and Drama

1. Polemical Fiction

Čapek responded to those who had criticized him as a writer not only in open letters, but also in his fiction. In *Dar svatého Floriána a Zvířátka a Petrovští*, the author addresses reviews of his earlier works. The narrator of 'Dar svatého Floriána' comments in a footnote on the character of the schoolmaster Hňupka: 'Myslím, že každý bez velkého namáhání mohl seznáti, že pan prof. Hňupka jest jedinou ideální figurou tuto vystupující, i prosím, aby takto od pánů kritiků v případných referátech byl posuzován, aby nebyla autoru pokázena radost' z jediné ideální figury, kterou se mu podařilo za jeho dosavadní literární tvorby slepiti.'¹ The narrator of 'Berane burc!' states: 'Autor této historické povídky, s důstatek poučen některými vynikajícími našimi kritiky o své vškutku fenomenální nedostatečnosti v psychologii a psychologickém léčení, ostychem přechází psychologické stavy, v nichž té chvíle vězela psycha obecního kozla v Myslovech.'² The reviews of Čapek's first collection generally praise his characterization.³ Arnost Procházka, however, comments that Čapek has no understanding of psychology.⁴ Jindřich Vodák (1867-1940) makes the same criticism of *Nejzápadnější Slovan*: 'To neni psychologicky genre, - to je kuriosní historié. Psychologické žonglériství.'⁵ He criticizes Čapek's tendency to mystify the reader, and the lack of ethical purpose in the work. Prokop Šup, however, writing for *Hlíďka*


²Čapek-Chod, 'Berane burc!', p. 207.

³Šup is impressed by the characterization in 'Němák': Šup, 'K. M. Čapek: Povídky', pp. 73-6. Another critic regards the collection as a promising beginning: Leander Čech, 'Výpravna prosa', p. 86. The reviewer for *Národní listy* is also enthusiastic: 'K. M. Čapek, Povídky', *Národní listy*, 17 December 1892, p. 4.

⁴Ar. Pr. [Arnošt Procházka], 'K. M. Čapek: Povídky', pp. 190-1.

⁵jv. [Jindřich Vodák], 'Nejzápadnější Slovan', *Literární listy*, 14 (1893), 17-18, p. 305.
literarní, recognizes Čapek’s interest in psychology. While Vykoukal and Staněk write positive reviews of Nedělní povídky, Procházka again criticizes Čapek’s inability to portray characters in any depth. Reviewers for Zlatá Praha and Světozor praise V třetím dvoře; however, Procházka, F. V. Krejčí and Vodák all condemn the work and attack, in particular, Čapek’s superficial grasp of psychology.

In his next collection, Patero novel, Čapek does not address his critics directly. However, he caricatures the all-powerful arbiter of taste in ‘Mendelssohnův koncert’. The career of the protagonist Vojtěch Kopicius is destroyed by his patron, the music critic F. X. Kadečka (kadečka: a little tub). When Vojtěch falters during his début at the Rudolfinum, his patron applauds him contemptuously and leaves the concert hall. Unable to recover his poise, Vojtěch flees the stage. In Vojtěch’s dream, hundreds of Kadečkas fill the concert hall. They sing in

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12Ibid., p. 136.
unison, accompanying his performance.\textsuperscript{13} One Kadečka grows to the size of a giant and plays on the pipes which he has taken from the organ: 'Tu teprve [Vojtěch] viděl, jak tento mocný muž z blízka vypadá. Viděl slabounce modrové oči jeho s makovými zřítelnicemi, s výrazem neobsáhlé domýšlivosti a vědomí o vlastní důležitosti a v té chvíli krajině domýšlivé, šlehající bleskem vítězné muzikantské kritičnosti. Byl to faun, byl to Pan!’\textsuperscript{14} The critic’s initials lead one to assume that Čapek caricatures Šalda. Šalda had not yet reviewed any of his works; however, the Rodin polemic between Čapek and Šalda takes place in 1902.

Čapek may parody several of his critics in the character of the critic in ‘Zpověď naturalistova’. The critic who destroys the career of the eponymous protagonist is identified as O. F., writing for Naše Časy; Otokar Fischer (1883-1938), who wrote an unflattering review of Patero novel for Naše doba, used this cipher.\textsuperscript{15} The Naturalist of the story refers to O. F.’s assessment that his work was focused on external incidents: ‘ano, každá moje povídka, každý můj román jest detektivní v nejhorším slova smyslu, každá práce souhrn čistě vnějších zažitků.’\textsuperscript{16} This recalls Arnošt Procházka’s repeated condemnation of Čapek’s works for their lack of psychological depth. The Naturalist also makes a direct reference to Šalda and the Rodin polemic. Summarizing the critic’s views of his work, the Naturalist asks: ‘Proč toto všechno, věci Tobě známé, uvádím zrovna téměř veskrze Tvými slovy? – Působí mi to rozkoš, můj drahý, a pokládej takové mé kochání v lahůdkách Tvé "mateřstiny geniů" za poslední hostinu k smrti odsouzeného ...’\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{13}Ibid., p. 143.

\textsuperscript{14}Ibid., p. 149.


\textsuperscript{16}Ibid., p. 311.

\textsuperscript{17}Ibid., pp. 312-13. See above, the title of Šalda’s introduction to the Rodin exhibition. The short story was first serialized in Zvon in 1906-7, before the reconciliation between Šalda and Čapek.
The *Ich-Erzähler* of *Větrník* addresses Čapek’s critics by name. He refers, for example, to the 1921 polemic of Čapek with Šalda, stating that before he could allow anyone to visit his ‘duševní dílna’, he would have to tidy it up: ‘byl by tu nanejvšši svrchované potřeben důkladný úklid zbytků po výrobě posledních mých nečistých a pokřivených grotesek (F. X. Šalda)’.18 The narrator addresses two critics who disparage Jindrové: J. R. Hradecký (pseudonym for Josef Roubiček, 1886-1947), notorious for his ‘nedostatku erudice’, and Jindřich Vodák.19 Čapek’s narrator sets a trap for one of these critics by stating: ‘Já bych vsak byl málem vzkřikl: "Heureka"; kdyby tak nebyl už v šedém dávnověku učinil Aristoteles.’20 In a footnote he adds: ‘Jsem opravdu dychtiv, zdali můj nesmiřitelný a již nahoře dotčený kritik pozná jemnou léčku tuto mu nastrojenou. Autor.’21 When the narrator mentions critics who have attacked the exploitation of coincidence in his fiction, he is alluding to Vodák.22 The narrator seeks to refute the notion that he is a pessimist;23 his detractors, like Šalda, as well as his admirers, like Rutte, perceived a pessimistic view of the world behind his works.

In this section I shall treat Čapek’s responses to reviews of his works. His contemporaries described him as hypersensitive to criticism. The clippings, transcriptions and careful notes which he made of reviews, preserved in his papers at the National Literature Museum, indicate that he paid close attention to what

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19 Ibid., p. 42. Čapek addresses criticism of Jindrové in "Z čista jasna" ...!’, Cesta, 3 (1920-21), 43, pp. 667-8.

20 Čapek-Chod, *Větrník*, p. 43.

21 Ibid. In other words, the crass schoolboyish replacement of Archimedes by Aristotle.


23 Ibid., p. 42.
critics wrote about him. He did not forget a harsh word, even if it was included in a positive review. He was grateful and loyal to those who admired his works and expressed support, as his friendships with the fiction-writer Božena Benešová (1873–1936) and the opera-singer Ema Destinnová demonstrate. His conflicts with critics must be considered in the context of other polemics. Personal animosities sometimes determined the nature of reviews; and, as in the České slovo review of Nové patero, criticism of Čapek’s works could be motivated by rivalry between newspapers of different political persuasions. These personal and political differences have affected the labels literary critics have since applied to Čapek. For example, the comment that Čapek’s occupation as a journalist marred the character of his fiction constituted an attack on Čapek as the editor responsible for the Národní listy polemics. The polemics over reviews also indicate that Čapek was criticized not for the aesthetic qualities of his works but for his ‘outlook’, which perplexed or irritated contemporary critics.

2. Kašpar Lén mstitel
Reviews of Čapek’s third novel did not occasion a polemic. Arne Novák’s reviews of the work, however, elicit a private response from Čapek. In ‘Román o zločinu’, printed in Lidové noviny, Novák describes the work as, ‘knihu odvážného, drsného, místy až brutálního naturalismu’. He approves of Čapek’s ‘original’ choice of subject matter, and he admits that the novel has much dramatic power. He finds fault with the author’s apparent carelessness. Novák also criticizes him for concentrating on the


26Ibid.
circumstances surrounding the crime instead of the crime itself. His praise is guarded: 'je zajímavým obrazem života lidí nám neznámých, života nejvýš bědného'. Novák is more generous in the review he published in Přehled, 'Karel Matěj Čapek: Kašpar Lén, mstitel'; Novák here provides a brief overview of Čapek's work. He praises the consistent Realism of Povídky, Čapek's first collection. Of Čapek's later works, however, he writes: 'Zdá se však, že K. M. Čapek nasadil veškeré síly, aby přestal vůbec kritiku zajímati. Opustil svůj trpělivý, studený, solidní objektivism a se svou groteskně a burleskně neklidnou osobností vmísil se do dějů.' Kašpar Lén represents a return to the author's beginnings. Novák claims that Čapek makes the same mistake as other Naturalists when he represents the individual as the product of the environment: 'Postavil se docela úporně na překonané a dnes už vysmívané stanovisko literární; ale přece jen úpornost, s níž se stal reakcionářem, mně imponuje.' Novák rejects the second part of the novel as overladen with arabesques, genre details and burlesque. Novák criticizes the characteristics of the second part of the novel one would associate with the grotesque: 'jest to referát psaný s protivnou vtipností a přeplněný vtírávými nápady, kde se děj nerozvíjí, ale vykládá, kde postavy nerostou, nýbrž gestikuluji'.

In a letter to Novák, he objects that the author of Kašpar Lén is not Karel Matěj Čapek, but K. M. Čapek: 'Tak zní totiž moje literární jméno. Ani občanské jméno moje není Karel Matěj

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27 Contrast with Ignát Herrmann’s comments on the novel. Herrmann praises Čapek for not describing the murder. See: Papers: Čapek-Chod; letters from Ignát Herrmann to Čapek-Chod; letter dated 21 September 1909; PNP.

28 Novák, 'Román o zločinu'.

29 Arne Novák, 'Karel Matěj Čapek: Kašpar Lén, mstitel', p. 393.

30 Ibid., p. 394.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid.
Čapek, nýbrž /odpust'te!/ Matěj Čapek.'³³ Čapek cannot resist a joke at his own expense.³⁴ He states that he is pleased that Novák does not consider him a poet (básník, i.e. Dichter): 'Za živý svět nechtěl bych totiž býtí básníkem Vaší klassifikace.'³⁵ Čapek defends his style by comparing it with that of two writers of the grotesque, Jean Paul and Edgar Allen Poe; later critics of Čapek's works rebuke him for his similarity to these writers. He asserts that his sentences are not awkward in comparison with Novák's in 'O době a působení Václava Matěje Krameria'. He regrets that none of his critics has understood his intention in writing the second part of the novel: 'Přiznám se, že jsem první díl napsal jenom k vůli tendenci druhého, tendenci proti trestnímu řádu soudnímu, myslím, že je dost zřetelná! Nastrčití nevinného inkulpáta, nebylo by bývalo nic těžkého, ale záleželo mi na jemnostech omylu odborných právníků.'³⁶

3. Nové patero
Čapek engages in a polemic with critics over reviews of Nové patero at the same time that he fends off attacks on his honour for remaining on the editorial board of Národní listy. Predictably, the Realist Čas and the National Social České slovo print negative reviews; Moravská orlice prints a review written by Josef Holý (1874-1928). Arnošt Procházka, in Moderní revue, expresses contempt for Čapek and for the collection, referred to as Druhé patero: 'Člověk má pocit něčeho troglodytního při této

³³Papers: Čapek-Chod; draft of letter to Arne Novák, 24 February 1909; PNP.


³⁵Čapek-Chod, draft of letter to Novák, 24 February 1909.

³⁶Ibid.
knizé. Like other critics, Procházka labels Čapek's work not only Naturalist but also grotesque. Thus, the reviewer for Osvěta describes the short story 'Poslední večer Antonína Vondrejce' as Naturalist, and expresses reservations about the grotesque character of 'Zpověď' naturalistova'. The reviewer for Pražská lidová revue praises the collection, but objects to the grotesque quality of the short stories. Jan Krejčí (1868-1942), in Naše doba, objects to Čapek's 'petty' and 'undignified' attacks on other literary trends; that is, he interprets 'Zpověď' naturalistova' as polemical. He admits, however, that the Vondrejć short stories are among the best works that Čapek has written.

'Poznámky o K. M. Čapkoví', printed in Lidové noviny, constitutes the second appreciative review Novák writes of Čapek's works. Novák's review concentrates on the last three stories in the collection: 'Zpověď' naturalistova', 'Antonína Vondrejce státní stipendium' and 'Poslední večer Antonína Vondrejce'. He identifies fear and passion as the dominant motifs and he finds no humour in the works, which, in his opinion, are characterized by an atmosphere of imminent catastrophe: 'Zde všechno křičí, syče, supí, úpí, svijí se a plází v jakýchsi hrozných křičích'. Novák describes Čapek as an experienced Naturalist, dissecting the passions and tragic fates of his characters. He praises Čapek's bold, if primitive, style: 'nezná nuancí, jemných přechodů a polotónů; on umí zahrát

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37 Arnošt Procházka, 'Knihy příspou', Moderní revue, 22 (1909-10), 6, p. 333.
38 'Výpravna prósa', Osvěta, 40 (1910), 5, p. 418.
40-ejč [Jan Krejčí], 'K. M. Čapek: Nové patero', Naše doba, 17 (1909-10), 12, p. 927.
41-il. [Arne Novák], 'Poznámky o K. M. Čapkoví', p. 1. The first two stories in the collection are 'Tři dopisy MUC Růženy Hamáčkové MUDru Marii Loukotové' and 'Mates Holejch'.
42 Ibid.
jen fortissimo a to tak živelně, že až fysickými pocity reagujeme na jeho divošské produkce'. He asserts that the treatment of the erotic by most other Czech writers, in comparison with Čapek, is 'lifeless'. Novák assesses the Vondrejč short stories as Čapek's best work to date; he adds that it is difficult to recall another work which is similar and equal to the Vondrejč stories. Novák admires above all Čapek's individual vision. He echoes the manifesto of the Česká Moderna when he writes that Čapek has achieved the aim of every artist: to be distinctive.

The anonymous reviewer for Čas condemns the collection, though he makes perceptive comments about the work and about the reception of Čapek's writings. The reviewer addresses, first of all, the superficial judgments of Czech critics who are loath to abandon labels they have given to writers. Critics have labelled Čapek a Naturalist, without considering theoretical definitions of the term 'Naturalism': 'K. M. Čapkovi zůstane cedulka naturalisty a mladí adepti literární historie, rozmnožení jako houby po dešti, budou psát o něm dlouhanánské fantasie na to téma.' The reviewer criticizes Čapek's similarity to writers of the grotesque, noting that Čapek has more in common with Jean Paul, the 'alcoholic' E. T. A. Hoffmann and Edgar Allen Poe than with Naturalist writers. The reviewer condemns the 'doubling' of the narrator as a character who takes part in the spectacle and as one who analyses it. One has the impression that the reviewer attacks a rival journalist through an attack on the style of the short story: 'Skládá se to ze samých rozumafských, novinářských, zpravodajských úvodků, přechodů a floskulí.'

The reviewer does not appreciate the Vondrejč short stories. He mocks Vondrejč's pseudo-philosophizing: Vondrejč labels his

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43Ibid.

44'Poznámka o literární etiketě', Čas, 6 February 1910, p. 4.

45Ibid. Čapek interprets this comment as addressed to Novák.

46Ibid. He also identifies the influence of Jakub Arbes (1840-1914) in 'Zpověď' naturalistova'.

47Ibid.
need to drink as 'objektivaci subjektu', because he aims to overcome his subjective perception of his own suffering; that is, he wants to regard himself as an object, for which he can feel pity. The reviewer identifies Vondrejč with Čapek: both like to create illusions which they subsequently destroy. Although the reviewer's intention is malicious, he does identify features of Čapek's fiction: the self-reflective character of the narration and the tragicomic perspective from which the implied author regards the characters. The reviewer misinterprets the narrator's ironizing of Vondrejč, in particular in the scene treating the poet's death, as ghoulishness. To provide further evidence that Čapek is not a 'Naturalist', the reviewer considers that Čapek's style teems with strange words, with women's 'kitchen talk', Czech as spoken by Germans, bureaucratic jargon, the ill-mannered diction of a butcher: 'Ne pro charakteristiku, ne z naturalismu, - nebot' vše je tu nadsazeno, vyšinuto z polohy, zkarikováno, - nýbrž jen pro tu bujnou pitvornost.' The reviewer inadvertently identifies Čapek's delight in language for its own sake. This 'pitvornost', the reviewer concludes, contains something of the tragedy of life in that it cannot rise from its baseness to penetrate to the light, to beauty and nobility.

Holý derives his judgments mainly from the Čas review. He describes the first short story, 'Tři dopisy', as 'lively', adding that the epistolary form of the story is implausible but that the work is nonetheless entertaining. In his opinion, 'Mates Holejch' is the best of the short stories; the last three are unsuccessful. Holý does not read 'Zpověď naturalistova' closely; he assumes that it is the girl's father, rather than her brother, who has epilepsy. Her father does not actually appear in the short story. Holý states that the Naturalist of 'Zpověď naturalistova' is sentimental and expresses himself crudely. Holý unintentionally describes the paradoxical nature of the story:

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48Ibid.

49Ibid.

'pan Čapek nechtěl podat ani karikaturu, ani vážný zjev, nakreslil pouze schema nemožné duši, jež při tragice vzbuzuje smích a při komice odpor'. He identifies, and criticizes, the 'artificiality' of the story, a feature which one associates with the grotesque; the story, he claims, is characterized by extreme devices, an accumulation of contradictions, affectation and implausibility. He compares it, unfavourably, with the works of Poe and Arbes, and recognizes the influence of Hoffmann in the depiction of the divided psyche of the Naturalist.

Holý also expresses contempt for the Vondrejc stories: the narrative devices arouse only disgust. Holý berates Čapek for attempting to present Vondrejc as a serious writer; he claims that any student of the fifth form would laugh at Vondrejc the poet, who is a clown, a confused, distorted 'pačlověk'. Holý thus comes closer to guessing the author's intention than those critics who describe Vondrejc as a tragic figure.

Čapek writes two responses to this criticism: a letter to the editor printed in Národní listy; and the epilogue published in the second collection of Vondrejc short stories, Patero třetí (1912). In the letter to the editor, Čapek cites Novák's praise of the collection; he asserts that the title of the Čas review identifies it as a polemical response to Novák's piece. The Čas review, he claims, makes personal attacks, an activity characteristic of the review column of the Realist newspaper. In

\[51\text{Ibid.}\]
\[52\text{Ibid.}\]

\[53\text{I would argue, and the comments of reviewers appear to confirm, that Vondrejc is a grotesque figure; he is presented at such a distance from the reader as to be regarded, simultaneously, as pitiable and risible. He has the tragic flaw of hubris. For the interpretation of Vondrejc as a tragic character see: R. [V. Červinka], 'Z literárního trhu', Zlatá Praha, p. 583; Tristan [either Vratislav Friedl or František Josef Čechetka], 'K. M. Čapek: Patero třetí', Žvon, 12 (1911-12), 37, p. 588; Václav Stejskal, 'Doslov', K. M. Čapek-Chod, Antonín Vondrejc. Příběhové bášníka, 6th edition, Prague, 1955, pp. 471-2.}\]

\[54\text{K. M. Čapek, 'Slavná redakce!' (Zasláno), Národní listy, 18 February 1910, p. 6.}\]
attacking Novák, Čapek asserts, the Čas reviewer hurried to defend his pre-eminence as executioner. Čapek states, however, that he is able to laugh off the attempt to strangle him; he has long recognized that the Čas reviewer is incapable of judging a literary work fairly. The Čas reviewer does not perceive that all five short stories are 'stylistic imitations'. Čapek appears to suggest that the stories constitute experiments with form and points of view: the first story is epistolary; the second is related by an eye-witness ('sousedský pamětník'); the third comprises the confession of a writer, addressed to his critic; the fourth and fifth are told from the point of view of the central character, Vondrejc. Čapek claims that in the Vondrejc stories: 'Ani jediný vjem, ani jediná myšlenka, úsudek, závěr, metafora, pocit v těchto obou povídkách vyjádřený, nesměl se fiktivně totiž díti mimo přesně determinovaný mozek tohoto básníka a korrektora, inferiorního jako literáta i jako člověka.' One may argue with Čapek's assessment; if the reader is meant to observe that Vondrejc is an inferior poet, a point of view other than Vondrejc's must be expressed in the short stories. Indeed, the narrator constantly ironizes Vondrejc's perspective. Furthermore, the narrator has greater knowledge of the other characters than does Vondrejc. Čapek's intention here is to distinguish between the perceptions of the author and those of the central characters. He objects to the Čas writer's identification of the characters with the author.

Čapek turns his attention to the review by Holý, which he recognizes as a paraphrase of the Čas review. He states that the spiteful character of the review is explained if this Holý is identical to the author of Adamovské lesy (1905): 'Při této svatbě dopustil se totiž český Faust, "Vašíček Nejlů" neliterární nezpůsobu a tenkráte byl on položen na břich a přijal ode mne odměnu mu náležitou. Za to v "M. Orlici" převrátil nyní můj literární kabriolet "koly vzhůru" do blátivého příkopu.'

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55Ibid.

56Ibid. I have not been able to find Čapek's attack on Holý's Adamovské lesy, which provoked a polemic among contemporary writers and critics. Procházka accuses Čapek of creating the most
Regarding Vondrejc’s verse, disparaged by Holý, Čapek comments: ‘Vondrejc opravdu jest myšlen jako prostřední, ale přes to přece ještě lepší básník než pévec z Lesů Adamových’.37

Certain that critics will not perceive his intentions, Čapek provides his interpretation of the Vondrejc cycle in the ‘Autorovy poznámky’, printed in Patero třetí. Here, he states that the account of Vondrejc’s death was written first.58 The sequence of public events described in the short stories is fictitious; thus, the cycle is not set in a specific period of Czech history. Čapek comments that the action might be set at the end of the previous century, if it were not for references to contemporary ideas, in particular in the Upanišáda sequence. He notes that he has included these anachronisms to prevent the identification of characters with living persons.59 Čapek states that the Vondrejc stories are: ‘psychologickou kasuistikou případu básníka a korektora Antonína Vondrejce, při čemž úpadek tělesný naznačen pokud bylo nutno, jeho fáze uvést v souvislosti s fásemí duševní regresse Vondrejcovy, o níž on sám byl v klamu’.60 The author is certainly wrong when he asserts that the stories are almost entirely concerned with Vondrejc’s perceptions and ideas.61 Perhaps Čapek hopes that with this assertion he will distinguish his point of view from Vondrejc’s; he may also hope to maintain that there is a measure of continuity in his works: ‘Zevní Antonínův svět autor sám nevidí ("nechce viděti"), jinak

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fuss over the literary scandal: Julius Čepek [A. Procházka], ‘Poznámky’, Moderní revue, 17 (1905-06), 6, pp. 166-70.

57Čapek, ‘Slavná redakce!’.


59Ibid., p. 514.

60Ibid., pp. 514-15.

61Krejčí also notes that Čapek does not succeed in his alleged intention to present only Vondrejc’s point of view. Krejčí recognizes the complexity involved in the presentation of Vondrejc’s epic poem. See: K., [F. V. Krejčí], ‘K. M. Čapek: Patero třetí’, Právo lidu, 13 October 1912, supplement to no. 283, p. [1].
než jeho zrakem a vnitřní život jeho vyčetl autor z vidma, promítnutého do mysle Antonínovy hranolem vlastní Antonínovy introspekce. Zkrátka autor nic jiného nelíčí než dění duše Antonínovy a sledoval při tom tuže methodu, jako ve své práci Zpověď naturalistova ("Nové patero") a v I. dílu románu Kašpar Lén." He notes that the ideas, judgments and conclusions expressed in the cycle are Vondreprjc’s. He makes this statement, he explains, because a certain critic, himself a poet, criticized Vondreprjc’s verse as if it had been the author’s. Čapek asserts: ‘že by jeho rek byl výtečným básníkem, autor ovšem netvrdí, a nechce, aby byl považován za lepšího, než jak vypadá’.

Vondreprjc’s poetry is of the same quality as his philosophical speculations, Čapek states, and thus he is surprised that Vondreprjc’s ‘načisto již pathologická spekulace se Spencerovou větou o nepomíjitenosti hmoty ("Poslední večer") byla vytýkána autoru (!) jako nemálo smělá’. Čapek asserts that the role of the critic is to determine the intention of the author, and demonstrate whether or not he succeeds in realizing it: ‘Neslýchnanou vlastností některých našich kritiků jest pak svlékatí reka z toho, do čeho oblekl jej autor, roztrhati to v čary a navlékatí je autoru, dokonce i jako osobité jeho vlastnosti.’ Čapek is certain that his reviewers have ulterior motives in identifying characters with the author: ‘Působí to neodolatelně, zvláště když lze pozorovatí, jak se při tom v kritikově teteli jízlivá zlomyslnost, odemstivající politické i žurnalistické strannictví na autora. A že se politické orgány stran svými kritickými rubrikami hojí na mé beletrii, dosvědčí mi každý znatel poměrů.’ Čapek states that the reviewers for Právo lidu, Národní politika and Lidové noviny are exceptional in that they distinguish between Čapek the writer and Čapek the

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63 Ibid., p. 516.
64 Ibid.
65 Ibid., pp. 516-17.
66 Ibid., p. 517.
journalist/political opponent. He concludes by repeating that the 'author' knows, 'že rek jeho Vondrejc není rekem, nýbrž slabochem, že jej právě takovým chce mít.'\textsuperscript{67} He notes that one critic described the death of Vondrejc, in \textit{Nové patero}, as 'unkontrollerbar'. That critic has since died, afflicted by an illness similar to Vondrejc's. Čapek states that he felt great compassion for the critic during his illness and adds that now the critic cannot relate his experience of the process of dying because he was fated to die the first time that his life was threatened. He, however, has been able to relate his experience: 'Nevrátil se už od brány, jejíž kliku já před dvaceti a několika lety také už v ruce držel - a proto mohl jsem kontrolovat.'\textsuperscript{68}

4. \textit{Begův samokres}

Reviewing Čapek's first play for \textit{Máj}, Kronbauer (1864-1915) writes: 'Tak dlouho psal divadelní referáty, až napsal sám divadelní kus! Novellista, romanopisec, referent - není to mnoho úskalí najednou? V K. M. Čapkovi uvízlo kus medika, a poněvadž mu ukončil pitevní nůž, zachoval si alespoň pitevní péro. Prováděl dost často a někdy dost bezohledně vivisekci - a ejhle - konečně se dostal na operační stůl sám!'\textsuperscript{69} Kronbauer comments that, given Čapek's influential position as a journalist, it is not surprising that both the critics and the audience awaited the première of \textit{Begův samokres} with malicious anticipation: 'Do této chvíle, panáčku, jsi dělal censora - ted' se posadíme my na tvoje křeslo a ted' budeš poslouchat ty nás, co soudíme o tvé hře!'\textsuperscript{70} Kronbauer's statement thus supports Čapek's claim that critics take revenge on him, for personal and political reasons, in their reviews of his works. Kronbauer's review is generally positive:

\textsuperscript{67}Ibid., pp. 517-18.

\textsuperscript{68}Ibid., p. 518. Čapek is referring to the bout of typhus he suffered in 1888.

\textsuperscript{69}R[udolf]. J[aroslav]. Kronbauer, 'Begův samokres', \textit{Máj}, 9 (1910-11), 24, p. 301. For a comparison of the play with the short story on which it is based, see: Brusák, 'Narrator Turned Dramatist', pp. 216-33.

\textsuperscript{70}Kronbauer, 'Begův samokres', p. 301.
he praises Čapek’s talent for delineating characters and milieu. He regards Léna as the ‘pillar’ of the play and admires both the character and the actress who plays the role. He criticizes, however, the contrived motif of the cursed weapon. Kronbauer also notes that in depicting a German family in decline, ‘jezdí Čapek na svém zamilovaném koníčku’. In other words, for Čapek’s contemporaries, the play concerns the nationalities conflict in the Bohemian Lands.

Jaroslav Kamper (1871-1911) writes that the only merit of the work lies in the originality of the subject matter. The play bears the signs of its prose origins: the author has no awareness of what can be portrayed effectively on stage. His Naturalist representation of life is not at all dramatic. Čapek’s strength as a writer, his pursuit of novel material, is also the source of his weakness, since it carries him beyond the limits of propriety. Kamper finds the last two scenes of the play tasteless. There is little hope, he concludes, that Čapek’s attempts to write drama will meet with greater success in the future. Miroslav Rutte likewise judges the play crude and vacuous. It leaves one with the same impression as does perusal of the daily newspapers. Rutte aligns himself with a Decadent point of view in rejecting Čapek’s ‘Naturalist’ aesthetics: ‘nenoří se do bažin, aby z jejich otráveného lůna vynesl odvážně smutnou bledost tajemných květů, noří se do nich pouze pro rozkoš páchnoucí lázně’.

The dramatist Jaroslav Hilbert (1871-1936), writing in Venkov, condemns the play: those who saw more in Čapek’s novels than mere vulgarity, Hilbert writes, had an opportunity during the first night of Begův samokres to witness the ‘nízkou

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71Ibid., p. 302.
73Ibid., p. 282.
75Ibid., p. 359.
Hilbert states that he knows of no other Czech author with such a predilection for Naturalist 'řavostí'. Hilbert also objects to the 'unseemly' subject matter which Čapek treats on the stage: of the three main characters, one is blind; one has a miscarriage; and the third shoots himself. Hilbert comments, 'Není to rekord nevkusu a ošklivosti?' Hilbert criticizes the melodramatic presentation of the miscarriage, which occurs during a storm. Like Kronbauer, Hilbert reproaches Čapek, 'well-known for his positivism', for using the motif of the charmed pistol, which brings bad luck to anyone who claims it as a trophy.

Čapek responds with a letter to the editor printed in Národní listy, written from the point of view of Kašpar Lén. 'Lén' claims that his name and honour have been slighted by Hilbert; he is responding to Hilbert's comment in his review of Begův samokres: 'tu není více zedník Lén se svou láskou k nevěstce'. 'Lén' writes: 'Poněvadž jsem řádný zednický tovaryš a lepší fačárník, který se poctivě vlastníma rukama živí, kterému nikdo nic zadarmo nedá, oznamuji vám, že slečna Mařenka Kryštofova nebyla moje milá, ale že jsem zlatku ke zlatce skládal, aby to nešt’astné děvče po starém kamarádu vyplatil z místa hanby.' 'Lén' states that in his relations with Mařka he was more honourable than the fine society surrounding 'rytíř

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76 J. Hilbert, 'Begův samokres', Venkov, 8 March 1911, p. 8. Hilbert may be reacting to Čapek's critical review of Česká komedie (1907). Čapek's writes there that Hilbert's best work was his first play, Vina (1896). KMC. [Čapek], 'Česká komedie', Zvon, 9 (1908-9), 19, pp. 301-2.

77 Hilbert, 'Begův samokres', p. 8.


79 Kašpar Lén [K. M. Čapek], 'Jeho Blahorodí, pánů, panu JAROSLAVU HILBERTOVI' (Zasláno), Národní listy, 9 March 1911, evening edition, p. 3.


81 [Čapek], 'Jeho Blahorodí'.
Kura’, the eponymous hero of Hilbert’s novel *Rytíř Kura* (1910).

Seven months later, Čapek’s review of Hilbert’s *Patria* (1911), also responds to the *Begův samokres* review. Čapek complains that the subject of Hilbert’s play is tedious and lifeless. The audience, he claims, ‘bavilo se zjevně na útraty autora výsmechem na místo smíchem’. With his sarcastic comments on the jokes in the play, Čapek refers to Hilbert’s review: ‘ó vzněšená rasovostí umělecká! [...] ó rasovostí! [...] vysoká rasovost!’.

The *Samostatnost* reviewer is more generous than Hilbert about *Begův samokres*. He comments that the censor’s deletions have detracted from the impact of the play. The reviewer for *Národní listy* suggests that those deletions have weakened the presentation of the nationality conflict in the play. The *Samostatnost* reviewer perceives the ‘characteristic’ features of Čapek’s art in the play: his curious and often crude interpretation of reality, and his romantic leaning towards the grotesque and unusual. He praises Čapek for treating a military milieu, generally avoided by Czech dramatists. Like Hilbert, however, the reviewer objects to the representation on stage of an incident such as a miscarriage. He also criticizes the use of German in the dialogue. The German, he maintains, does not add to the characterization or the representation of the milieu; on

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82 KMČ. [Čapek-Chod], ‘Patria’, *Zvon*, 12 (1911-12), 4, p. 62.

83 Ibid.

84 Ibid.


86 Bor. [probably Jan Jaroslav Strejček], ‘Begův samokres’, *Samostatnost*, p. 135.


88 Bor., ‘Begův samokres’.
the contrary, it strikes one as affected, an attempt to impress
the audience with the originality of the device.

Krejčí, reviewing the play for *Právo lidu*, also states that
the play bears the imprint of its author: Naturalist
representation of milieu and the use of slang, and the focus on
a bizarre tale.\(^{89}\) Krejčí finds the motivation for Bureš’s
suicide attempt implausible; he is, after all, a war hero. He
asserts that the portrayal of the psychology of the characters
is superficial. However, he judges the realistic representation
of the milieu as a merit: 'Něco z vůně určitého českého kraje dýše
z prvých dvou aktů i ze stuchlého ovzduší upadající poloněmecké
důstojnické rodiny, uzavřené do svých těsných zájmů a
předsudků.'\(^{90}\)

Karel Čvančara (1882-1970), writing for *Osvěta*, takes issue
with Krejčí's criticism of the portrayal of Bureš: such heroes
are the most sensitive people, thus the suicide attempt is
plausible.\(^{91}\) Čvančara addresses the question of whether or not
Bureš's suicide is determined by Fate, commenting that an
attentive member of the audience will perceive that Bureš himself
is responsible. He criticizes the play as more like a short story
than a drama. In his opinion, Čapek’s preoccupation with the
bizarre does not suit the stage.

Viktor Dyk’s feuilleton in *Samostatnost* does not actually
constitute a review, since the author admits that he has not seen
the play. Dyk responds to claims in *Národní listy* that the play
presents 'Czech material' taken from real life.\(^{92}\) Dyk comments
that the dispute over the use of 'foreign' as opposed to
'domestic' subjects in art has a long history. He is compelled,
however, to revive the discussion because the author of *Bégův
samokres* had once lectured him on the necessity of working with

\(^{89}\)K. [F. V. Krejčí], 'Bégův samokres', *Právo lidu*, 8 March
1911, p. [9].

\(^{90}\)Ibid.

\(^{91}\)Karel Čvančara, 'Obzor divadelní', *Osvěta*, 41 (1911), 4,
p. 312.

Czech themes. This comment probably alludes to Čapek’s review of Dyk’s Poražení (first staged in 1911). Čapek had attacked Dyk’s choice of the French Revolution as subject: ‘Vůbec jaký má mít smysl a rozum toto psání francouzských kusů českým jazykem? Proč lézt z vlastní zahrady do sousedovy na švestky? Čeká skutečně, snad dokonce ve Francii někdo na to, co český autor dramaticky řekne o francouzské revoluci? V nejkrásnějším případě, kdyby cyklus "Revoluce" byl skutečně řadou dramatických perel, bylo by vždy škoda, že se těmi perlami nestaly – látky domácí.’

In ‘Látka’, Dyk argues that the choice of subject matter is secondary to the artist’s skill in shaping the material. Dyk states that the ‘Czech’ character of Čapek’s play is superficial: his Czechness derives only from the setting and his use of dialect. The play resembles, in his opinion, a German Schicksalstragödie; he comments: ‘Na podiv, jak skoro všichni ctihodní hlasatelé českých látek kotví v němectví’. Dyk also objects to the unsavoury subject matter: in plays like Begův samokres, the ‘Czech’ atmosphere reeks of a pig-sty. Such a presentation of ‘domestic’ material derives from a sorry conception of one’s native land. The role of the dramatist is to move the people with tragedy. But Čapek does not write tragedy: ‘Miluje pouze grotesky. Miluje pathologické případy a miluje vondrejcovskou ubohost. Osvobozujícího slova se od něho nedočkáte. Pouze grimasy.’ Those who rely on a ‘domestic’ subject do not have a strong ‘Czech character’. Dyk may be indulging in self-promotion when he comments, ‘Nevěřím ostatně, že by veliký talent českého ducha nedovedl dátí látce třeba cizí.’

In a letter to the editor printed in Národní listy, Čapek

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93 KMČ. [Čapek-Chod], ‘Poražení’, p. 349.

94 By referring here to ‘M. A. Čapek’, Dyk may be teasing Čapek for having adopted the name Karel, or may be deliberately putting him alongside Šimáček.


96 Ibid.

97 Ibid., p. 2.
responds to Dyk’s criticism of the treatment of Czech themes: ‘Pan Viktor Dyk napsal o mé hře "Begův samokres", že její české ovzduší jest "atmosferou prasečího chlívka". Čapek’s retort is brief and good-humoured: ‘Mám za to, že tento dojem jest ryze subjektivní a že by panu Dykovi pomohly přiměřené prostředky. Anebo tak zavaní snad obsah jeho kalamáře?’

Čapek’s review of his own play, printed in Zvon, constitutes a further response to his critics. He states that he is compelled to reply in order to correct the misunderstandings of his reviewers. Čapek denies the importance of the motif of the cursed pistol to the play: ‘Nikdo z referentů nepoukazal k tomu, že motiv kletby, vepsané na staré bambitce, jest pouhou dobovou devísi a že zápletek i její řešení má svou samostatnou motivaci výhradně psychologickou, která přece ironizuje nejposlednější závěr Burešův, dovršený suggescí fatalismu kletby.’ Čapek also reproaches an unnamed critic for identifying the character of Bureš with the author. He defends the play against the charge of brutality and vulgarity; much more daring material had been presented in the National Theatre. Furthermore, the miscarriage occurs in the interval between the second and third acts. Čapek addresses the critics who are displeased by the use of German in the play, turning their barbs against them: ‘Nic mne netěší více než tento dojem. Tato lekce je zdravá v době, kdy naší společnosti a veřejnosti němčina začíná tak sladnouti ...’ He states that the play represents one episode in his life-long battle against the Germans and Germanness (‘němectví’). He adds, however, that the standpoint of Realism justifies the use on stage of German, like the use of dialect.

In an ironical dénouement to the polemic, Národní listy

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99 Ibid.

100 KMČ. [Čapek], ‘Begův samokres’, Zvon, 11 (1910-11), 26, p. 413.

101 Ibid. This comment reads like jingoism, considering that conflicts between Czechs and Germans in the Bohemian Lands had been constant since the early 1890s.
reports that a Berlin theatre journal, Der Bühnenroland, carries a long review of the play. The reviewer, after summarizing the plot, concludes: 'Tim končí hra, nejlepší, jakou jsme v posledních letech na tomto jevišti viděli. Autor ukázal mistrovskou techniku, která nám slibuje ještě mnoho krásnějšího.' Záhřebský obzor prints a review which identifies the Czech-German conflict as the main theme of the play. The reviewer writes: 'Tolik bujnosti, síly a koloritu ode dávna neviděl jsem v současné české činohře.' He states that everyone, except those critics who have been stung by Čapek's theatre reviews, must admit that the form and content of the play are original and successful.

The polemic finds an echo in the comments which Jindřich Vodák makes about the play in acknowledgement of Čapek's sixtieth birthday. Vodák uses the opportunity to attack Čapek's dramatic works, none of which, he notes, has become a permanent feature of any theatre repertoire. The plays, Vodák writes, manifest Čapek's 'pentrant for curiosities, for various peculiarities'. For example, he writes, in Begův samokres, the cursed pistol plays the most important role. Vodák refers to Čapek's Naturalist 'daring' in depicting Erna's miscarriage, and the accident which dislodges the bullet from Bureš's body. He implicitly identifies the author with his characters, stating that Čapek's speciality is characters who speak a mixture of coarse ('bezohledná') Czech and some foreign tongue, in particular German. He concludes with condescension: 'Každý projevujeme lásku k lidem svým způsobem a Čapek chce je brát tak, jak vyšli uhněteni z dílny přírody při

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102 O premiéře "Begova Samokresu", Národní listy, 6 April 1911, p. 3. The reviewer also comments that the audience applauded the author. Udon Radenius, resident in Prague, is the author of the review. See: 'Divadlo', Národní listy, 9 April 1911, p. 4.


104 Ibid.

The journal prints a response from Čapek which indicates that he interprets Vodák’s comments as unjustified. He writes that the play was awarded the Novotný prize in 1914; Šalda chaired the committee which made the awards.  

5. Slunovrat  
The public received Čapek’s second play with enthusiasm, but critics condemned it. Resentment informed Čapek’s response to his critics, in particular Viktor Dyk.  

Krejčí, however much he admires Čapek’s fiction, can find little positive to say about Slunovrat. He criticizes its conventional and old-fashioned ‘romanescnost’. The characters are one-dimensional, each representing a moral attitude. Krejčí concedes that the play has strong scenes. He insists, however, that in writing the play the author has relinquished the best features of his style: wit and unusual diction. Krejčí adds: ‘Je sentimentalní, a to mu nesluší, nebot’ zdá se nám, že vidíme stále za tím tvář duchaplného ironika a parodisty, jenž nemůže

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106Ibid.  


108Jaroslav Kvapil tried to discourage Čapek from having Slunovrat performed. Papers: Čapek-Chod; letters from Kvapil to Čapek-Chod, 1893-1923; see letter dated 22 May 1912; PNP.  

109The play was performed, without Čapek’s permission, by the amateur theatre company ‘Pokrok’ in Vienna. A letter from the young director, Hanuš Klár, suggests that the audience found certain scenes ridiculous rather than funny. Regarding a disturbance during the performance, Klár explains that reportedly someone had sprinkled a powder which provoked sneezes. Papers: Čapek-Chod; two letters from Hanuš Klár to Čapek-Chod; see the letter dated 18 April 1913; PNP.  

110K. [F. V. Krejčí], ‘Slunovrat’, Právo lidu, 7 November 1912, p. 9.
tyto věci brát tak strašlivě vážně. As an example of affected diction, Krejčí cites the line which Julča utters when it appears that the man she has fallen in love with will leave for America without her: 'S bohem, ó, můj lzný snej'. Krejčí comments, 'Tento "lzný sen" mi zní u autora Vondrejcových příhod přímo nemožně, skoro jako náběh k parodii.' Krejčí compares the character of the evil cousin with that of Franz Moor in Schiller's Die Räuber. He also notes that Čapek imitates Ibsen in attempting to summon up an image of the past through dialogue. Krejčí does not make these comparisons in Čapek's favour.

Hanuš Jelínek (1878-1944), writing for Samostatnost, praises Čapek as a fiction writer and journalist; however, when he attempts to write drama, Jelínek continues, he fails. He tries to include too much in three acts; because of his adherence to the three unities, the action strikes Jelínek as unrealistic, schematic. He criticizes Čapek's indiscretion in including a scene in which two men fight a few feet away from a corpse. Arnošt Procházka dismisses the play as a popular story of the oldest sort; one does not know whether one should be more surprised by the naive arogance of the villain, the childlike character of the noble adventurer, or the artistic simple-mindedness of the author. Otokar Fischer describes Slunovrat as a combination of Naturalism and Schicksalsromantik. The reviewer for Stopa also comments that Čapek has adopted Ibsen's method of revealing the past; he has forgotten, however, that

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111Ibid. One tends to agree with Krejčí's assessment.
112Ibid.
113Ibid.
115A. P. [Arnošt Procházka], 'Divadlo', Moderní revue, 26 (1912-13), 3, p. 142.
he's not Ibsen at all, but only K. M. Čapek.\textsuperscript{117}

One suspects that generosity rather than enthusiasm motivates those critics who review the play favourably. Panýrek (1867-1940), writing for Máj, states that the play manifests all the merits of Čapek's style.\textsuperscript{118} He notes that the audience applauded the author and threw flowers onto the stage. He does not specify what the play is lacking. The reviewer for Zlatá Praha praises the play's vitality and 'artistic self-confidence'.\textsuperscript{119} In Osvěta, Čvančara comments that the play is an improvement on Begův samokřes; he describes the atmosphere of the play as, 'sentimental Ibsenesque'.\textsuperscript{120} Benešová's review is positive, but her comments are vague: 'Již smělost, s jakou vtěsnal autor složitý děj do necelých dvanácti hodin, a obratnost, s níž rozvinul v této krátké lhůtě i spletitou minulost jednajících osob, poutá a tvoří napětí zvláštního rázu.'\textsuperscript{121} She praises the author's 'groteskní bravurou' in the characterization of the evil cousin.\textsuperscript{122} The last two acts do not constitute a drama, but a 'prudce vzedmutou a rychle opadavající vlnou zneklidnění a vydražděnosti'.\textsuperscript{123} The similarity between the romantic pasts of the two sisters, however, lends itself to caricature and impairs the dramatic impact of the play.\textsuperscript{124}

Čapek responds to his critics in the afterword published with the text of the play in 1913. These 'remarks' manifest

\textsuperscript{117}Arne Laurin [Arnošt Lustig], 'K. M. Čapek: Slunovrat', Stopa, 3 (1912-14), 8, pp. 229-30.

\textsuperscript{118}Dr. P. [Duchoslav Panýrek], 'K. M. Čapek: Slunovrat', Máj, 11 (1912-13), 7, p. 86.

\textsuperscript{119}R. [probably Vincenc Červinka], 'K. M. Čapek: Slunovrat', Zlatá Praha, 30 (1912-13), 10, p. 119.

\textsuperscript{120}Karel Čvančara, 'Obzor divadelní', Osvěta, 43 (1913), 1, p. 69.

\textsuperscript{121}[Božena Benešová], 'Slunovrat', Česká kultura, 1 (1912-13), pp. 153-4.

\textsuperscript{122}Ibid., p. 154.

\textsuperscript{123}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{124}Ibid.
several of Čapek's characteristic polemical techniques; one misses here, however, the more vigorous self-irony and vivid metaphors of his other exchanges with critics. He begins by stating that the play was well received by the public, a fact which even his detractors admit. Čapek stretches the truth when he gratefully acknowledges that most critics praise the play; this acknowledgement serves to diminish the importance of the critics who reject it. He does not mention any critic by name. Čapek appeals to the reader's forbearance in allowing him to state his views in the afterword since he has no other tribunal to which he can appeal. Čapek represents himself as victimized and, indeed, silenced by those critics whom he has just described as marginal. He declares his intention to address not the criticism but the unusually great disparity in appraisals of his second play: '[the author] Myslí, že málokterý dramatik český setkává se u kritiky s tak pestrou směsí názorů'. He thus suggests that the tone of the reviews has little to do with the quality of the play. He contrasts Czech and German reviews which compare his style with Ibsen's with those which criticize the play as schematic. Čapek represents himself as naive, beleaguered, disappointed by his critics: he asks what an author, one of the youngest of Czech dramatists, is to think when he hears from one critic that his play reeks of boredom and desolation, and from another that his theatrical dexterity gripped the audience from the first to the last act. Čapek distorts the tenor of Krejčí's review when he claims it among the positive assessments of the play. He contrasts Jelínek's assertion that Čapek as a dramatist shows no understanding of psychology, with the Zvon reviewer's claim that Slunovrat presents the psychological drama of Anna, former lover of Jan: 'tento duševní proces Annin, toto bolestné drama její jest


nejkrásnější stránkou "Slunovratu". The reviewer for Zvon has discerned the author’s intention.

Čapek maintains that the critic’s task is to educate young and inexperienced talents. He can be only perplexed, however, when his critics contradict one another in such an overt manner: ‘Co si má autor z toho všechno vybrat pro svou snad nadějnou, snad zoufalou budoucnost dramatickou?’.

Čapek returns to Krejčí’s review. The playful epithet he invents for the critic manifests his delight in comic word formations; Krejčí is, ‘Jeden z nejdůstojnějších mračnopozorců našich’. Čapek responds to Krejčí’s criticism of the phrase, ‘S bohem, ó můj lzný sne!’: ‘Pro pánaboha, vždyť výrok s "lzným snem" řekne Julča a ne autor! a volí-li obrat v dívčí četbě z počátku sedmdesátých let tak běžný, zachovala se jako logické děvče své doby!’.

Čapek does not address the gist of Krejčí’s criticism, that Čapek’s depiction of Julča is uncharacteristically sentimental. Čapek ironizes himself in order to denigrate his critics, commenting that one person above all has derived an unseemly pleasure from the critical attacks: “náš prosaik, romancier a novellista K. M. Čapek”. Ten mnul si ruce radostí nad zády dramatika K. M. Čapka, na nichž hojili tak mnozí, co je již tak dlouho pálilo, za sebe a různé "ropuchy" svých kamarádů. Jakživo nedostalo se mu tolik uznání a lichotek jako tentokrátě.’ Čapek refers to the critics’ tendency to praise his fiction in contrast with his ‘inferior’ drama. The mention of ‘ropuchy’ probably recalls Čapek’s critical reviews of Dyk’s Revoluční trilogie, one part of which is titled Ranní ropucha (first staged in 1908).

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129Ibid.

130Ibid., p. 72.

131Ibid.
motivated by revenge, is more than convincing because it is expressed with humour; many of his contemporaries would concur. Čapek refers to Jelínek’s review in Samostatnost when he writes that one critic claims to tear Čapek apart as a dramatist for the very reason that he values Čapek so highly as a fiction writer.

In apologizing to those dramatists whom he has offended as a critic, Čapek again humbles himself in order to denigrate his opponents even further. He apologizes because now he knows that the most ridiculous creature under the sun is a theatre critic who knows what is needed to improve the drama of another writer, but forgets all such useful considerations when writing his own plays. He directs this remark at Hilbert, as is evident from the next line, in which he attacks Hilbert’s Patria. Čapek states that the most savage criticism of Slunovrat comes from a certain notorious executioner of dramatic literature who has a chest full of his own plays at home, but will never dare to entrust them to the public. With his reviews of the works of others, the critic has damned the reception of his plays: he prefers to collect the scalps of Czech theatre professionals rather than wreaths. Čapek relates that he had a dream about this critic after reading his review of Slunovrat:

Viděl jsem jej v strašné situaci; roztahoval svá nesmírná ústa tak, aby zavěsí jich koutky až na uši. Málem by se mu to bylo podařilo, ale kdykoli byl tak daleko, uši jeho vždycky povyrostly o znatelný kouslěek. Od té doby je mi četba jeho literárních studií teprve náležitým požitkem, při každě řádce vidím, jak mu ústa rostou do šířky a uši do výšky ..!

Čapek uses the same grotesque image in the Rodin polemic: ‘Vidíte, p. Šalda, že si nevidíte do úst! A přece jest jich velkohubost tak značná, že by bylo možno zavěsit je oběma koutky až za uši, kdyby tomu nepřekážela jich vyvýšenost!’ It is unlikely that Čapek addresses Šalda in his Slunovrat ‘remarks’.

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132 Ibid. He quotes from Krejčí’s review.

133 Cf. the polemic over Begův samokres.


135 Čapek, ‘Neodolatelný mílek muz, p. F. X. Šalda’.
I have not found a review of *Slunovrat* by Šalda. Šalda reviews positively *Z města i obvodu*, and Čapek dedicates *In articulo mortis* to Šalda. It seems more likely that Čapek found the image intriguing and refashioned it in the later polemic, which suggests the 'literariness' of Čapek's polemics. His self-representation in polemics is as crafted as the characterization of the narrator in a short story such as 'Zpověď' naturalistova'. In the polemics he represents his critics as characters even more bizarre than those of his fiction. Indeed, the portrait of the critic whose ears constantly outgrow the expansion of the corners of his vast mouth, has no equivalent in Čapek's fiction. One suspects that Čapek would have reserved such a caricature for one of his longstanding enemies. Perhaps, however, he hopes that each of his critics will see himself in the caricature.

6. *Dykuv případ a můj*

In an interview with Štorch-Marien, Čapek-Chod states that his favourite Czech poets are Březina, Dyk, Sova and F. X. Svoboda.¹³⁶ The assertion lends support to Sezima's observation that Čapek-Chod and Dyk came to respect one another, despite their unresolved quarrels from the years when Dyk wrote for *Samostatnost*.¹³⁷ The failure of *Slunovrat* to win an award occasions their most prolonged polemic from the period of their pre-war conflicts. It appears that Dyk sat on the committee which chose not to award Čapek a prize for the play. The polemic consists of ironical poems and letters to the editor printed in *Samostatnost* and *Národní listy*. Despite the insults and the accusations which they direct at one another, the tone of the polemic remains good-humoured; it is not as vituperative as the polemics with Šalda. Dyk's first verse apostrophe to Čapek is printed on the first page of *Samostatnost*. This suggests that the

¹³⁶Štorch-Marien, 'Na besedě u K. M. Čapka-Choda', p. 74. He states that in his youth he had admired Alexandr Dumas, and that Prosper Merimée and the brothers Goncourt had had an influence on him. He expresses admiration for Flaubert, Zola and, to a lesser extent, Balzac.

quarrels of the writers, however personal, were a source of interest and amusement to the general public.

Čapek appears to initiate the polemic with an attack on the members of the committee who reject the merits of his play.\(^{138}\)

Dyk replies with a poem:

Chodí v masopustní úterý
Prahovu maškary, ba příšery
z Mariánské ulice, zřím bledna,
nakoukla sem na mne také jedna,
křičí na mne orgán přehřmotný:
Hus a Žižka - Dyk a Novotný.

Rozmilý Matěji Čapku,
rozvahy zachovejte kapku,
když už těžko zachovat vkus.
Dokážu, že nejsem Mistr Hus.
Suchými to konstatuji slovy:
Nevěřil bych v glejty Sigmundovy!\(^{139}\)

Čapek responds with less elegance:

Chytřejší žet' Husa mistra,
hlásá V. Dyk, hlava bystrá:
on že nevěřil by v glejty -
radikální světe znej ty!

Tyhle že jsou jen rozdíly
mezi nimi? Bohumilý
shořel kacíř nám v Kostnici -
z to čicháme to všicci,
že jen pouhá sláma hoří,
když Dyk světy hubou boří.

Kde však spáliti se může
do opravdy česká kůže,
tam at' jiný, kdo chce běží -
na své doma Dyk si leží!\(^{140}\)

He ironizes himself by signing his name as 'Matěj Čapek'. In his reply, Dyk refers to Hejhola, the patriotic editor in Čapek's 'Vondrejc' short stories who is killed during an anti-Habsburg

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\(^{138}\)I have not been able to find the article which sparked off the polemic.


\(^{140}\)Matěj Čapek, 'Pan Viktor Dyk' (Zasláno), \textit{Národní listy}, 6 February 1913, p. 6.
street demonstration.\textsuperscript{141}

\begin{quote}
Čapku, Čapku, příliš slavný muži,
stojíte, jak vidím, o mou kůži.
Ale smutno žít i mříti sám.
Muži prošlý heroismu školou:
pojděte svorně se mnou za Hejholou.
Lacinějí kůži neprodám!\textsuperscript{142}
\end{quote}

Čapek's delayed response refers to Dyk's satirical political novel \textit{Konec Hackenschmidův} (1904). It did not inspire more than a curt reply from Dyk: 'Nazýváte mne čertovým chlapíkem;/ lituji, že se nemohu revanchovat.'\textsuperscript{143} Čapek's bitterness is evident in his retort: 'Pravíte, že se mi nemůžete revanšovat?/ Ale ano!
Očekávám Vaši obvyklou/ revanš positivně v nejbližší literární/ porotě, v níž budete sedět.'\textsuperscript{144} Dyk teases him in reply:

\begin{quote}
P. T.
Matěji Čapkovi
dramatickému autoru.

Máte pravdu, do jisté však míry:
"Slunovrat" váš zamarz' nemile.
Z pravidla sám nesedím však v jury,
nehmám také srdce zavilé.

Třebajury rovnalbyste katům,
nezmění to smutné pravdy běh.
Hlasovat pro cenu "Slunovratům"
můžejomen skalní Mladočech.\textsuperscript{145}
\end{quote}

Čapek in turn attacks Dyk's plays:

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{141}Krejčí states that the scenes do not refer to specific events. K [rejčí], 'K. M. Čapek: Patero třetí', p. [1]. Vykoukal interprets the crowd scenes as referring to demonstrations in favour of universal manhood suffrage for elections to the Bohemian Diet, and in favour of a settlement between the nationalities. F. V. Vykoukal, 'Výpravná prósa', \textit{Osvěta}, 42 (1912), 10, p. 790.

\textsuperscript{142}Viktor Dyk, 'Čapku, Čapku' (Zasláno), \textit{Samostatnost}, 7 February 1913, p. 7.

\textsuperscript{143}Viktor Dyk, 'Matěji Čapkovi' (Zasláno), \textit{Samostatnost}, 9 March 1913, p. 9.

\textsuperscript{144}K. M. Čapek, 'Viktoru Dykovi', \textit{Národní listy}, 10 March 1913, evening edition, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{145}Viktor Dyk, 'P. T. Matěji Čapkovi' (Zasláno), \textit{Samostatnost}, 12 March 1913, p. 7.
\end{quote}
Viktor Dykovi
p. t.
také dramatickému autoru!

Ano, nemile mi zamrz' "Slunovrat",
za to však vám po Poslu zbyl jenom - dým!
Pošla tak i vaše skvostná Ropucha,
publikum nechtělo jí do břucha.
Než i poslední váš aktik z Renana
(název zapomněl jsem) praskl do rána.
Tak propadl jste v první, druhé i třetí státnici
a přece posadil jste se na soudců stolici!
Tot' jeden z krásných našich literárních návyků:
míváme jury většinou jen z soudců laiků! 146

Dyk does not appear to be offended by this criticism:

Matěji čapkovi
p. t. dramatickému autoru

Do zdí vy jste zajel místo do vrat,
o hodnotu nejde mojich kusů,
nejbrž - zkuste také jiných vkusů -
na místě-li cena pro "Slunovrat".
Zbytečných já nemám mnoho slov rád:
řek' jste sám ne, *) tedy pac a pusu!

Viktor Dyk.

*) "Ano, nemile me zamrz' "Slunovrat". 147

In distorting the meaning of the phrase which he quotes from
Čapek's 'poem', Dyk employs a conventional technique of polemics
in the press. Čapek responds the same day. By addressing Dyk as
a juror, Čapek further attacks Dyk's abilities as a playwright:

Viktoru Dykovi,
dramatickému porotci p. t.

Tvrďe vaši pomoc nesu appercepci,
zticha světu hlasám to i nahlás šepci:
že chapadla přetěžká, Dyku, máte,
opřád jen té čiré ceny dbáte!

Nejde přece jenom o tu furáž,
ale do poroty jít, že měl jste kuráž!
Třikrát poražený Ropušín a Posla původce,
stane-li se, ajta, z něho nad dramaty porotce -

146K. M. Čapek, 'Viktor Dykovi, p. t.' (Zasláno), Národní listy, 13 March 1913, p. 6.

147Viktor Dyk, 'Matěji čapkovi' (Zasláno), Samostatnost, 14 March 1913, p. 7.
Dyk responds in a feuilleton titled 'K české polemické pathologii'. He quotes Čapek’s poems of 13 and 14 March and reprints Čapek’s positive review of Dyk’s Episoda and Smuteční hostina, printed in 1906. In his reply, ‘Dykův případ a můj’, Čapek uses Dyk’s own arguments against him. He states that even today he would praise Episoda and Smuteční hostina; if these plays had followed Posel (1907), Ranni ropucha (1908) and Poražení (1911), Čapek would have congratulated Dyk that, ‘z dramatického břidila stal dramatický básník’. In his later plays, Dyk no longer manifests the qualities of a true dramatist and: ‘pozbyv autokritiky (což jest skvěle dokázáno i politickým jeho vystupováním) nemá ani schopností kritických vůbec a nehodí se tudíž do literárních porot, nehledě ani k tomu, že dokonce výslovně připouští literární votum porotní odvislé od politického příslušenství’. By citing Čapek, Dyk provides evidence of his own decline; Dyk is not the first writer, Čapek asserts, to be ruined by journalism and politics.

Dyk’s response is addressed to ‘Matěji Čapkovi, tentokrát prosaikovi’. Dyk dismisses Čapek’s criticism of his drama by recalling that Smuteční hostina was written in the spring, and Posel in the autumn, of 1906: ‘Očividně přišel jsem o vlastnost dramatického básníka přes léto’. Regarding the deleterious influence of journalism and politics, Dyk comments, ‘U čerta!


151 Ibid.

152 Viktor Dyk, ‘Matěji Čapkovi’ (Zasláno), Samostatnost, 18 March 1913, p. 7.

153 Ibid.
Tedy politika a žurnalistika! Ale s politikou i žurnalistikou začal jsem mnohem později; jak to, že zhoubný jejich vliv dostavil se několik let předem? He advises Čapek to write fewer polemics, 'Aby to s Vámi také špatně nedopadlo. Nadepisujete beztoho své říkání "Dykův případ a můj." Pozor!' Čapek responds to 'Viktoru Dykovi, básníku tentokrát v prose'. He reiterates his criticism of Dyk as a writer in his paraphrase of Dyk's last letter: 'Tvrdíte, že u Vás politika plnou sílou propukla mnohem později než Jste přestal býtí básníkem. To je možno, nežádala-li politika ve Vašem podvědomí a mnohem dříve, než Jste vůbec poznal, že Jste politikem.' He advises Dyk to consult a 'psychopathologist': 'upozorněte jej zvláště na svou vetřelou představu, že se pokládáte za největšího českého státníka, že to dokonce na veřejných schůzích tvrdíte. Není-li to nic horšího než contagium, t. j. následek Vašich politických styků, ručím za to, že je Vám dosud pomoc'. He writes that Dyk need not fear for him; Čapek does not take politics so seriously. Thirty years of journalism have benefited him, whereas a few years have proved too much for Dyk. Therefore, his case is different from Dyk's: 'nejnápadnější rozdíl mezi námi jest, že já se Matěj pouze jmenuji, kdežto Vy matěj skutečně Jste!' Dyk's reply is dull. He repeats his view that Čapek is inconsistent in his judgments. He agrees that Čapek will be doing him a favour by ending the polemic: 'tohle je pro mne všetku "silná věc". Sobě býste byl však prokázal dobrodiní, kdybyste ji

154 Ibid.
155 Ibid.
157 Ibid.
158 Ibid.
159 Ibid.
7. Antonín Vondrejc

In 1919, in a feuilleton for Národní listy surveying recent literature, Miroslav Rutte describes the second volume of Antonín Vondrejc, together with Tilschová's Synové (1918), as the most significant works published in the past ten months. He describes Čapek as a disconsolate pessimist for whom Fate is a monstrous, evil mechanism which plays with human puppets, twisting their hearts and minds and distorting their least selfish wishes. Čapek, he writes, does not believe in God, in man or in Progress; he adds that Čapek 'disguises' his nihilism with ridicule and theatricality. This nihilism sometimes relents: in Antonín Vondrejc there are places where the author appears to lose the courage to mock. In those instances, according to Rutte, one feels all the weight of disbelief which crushes the author.

Čapek-Chod's letter to the editor of Národní listy indicates his reaction to reviewers who characterize his outlook as pessimistic. It is difficult to determine what motivates Čapek's response in this instance. On the one hand, one detects a note of peevishness in his reaction to Rutte, one of his most effusive admirers. On the other, Čapek may show perspicuity in his assessment of the average Národní listy reader, and of the demands made by the literary establishment on works at this time. Later polemics with Novák and Vodák suggest that works which do not evince a 'sober' and optimistic outlook incur the disapproval of the literary establishment. For example, in 'Pět literárních let', Vodák, a senior official in the Ministry of Education and National Culture in the First Republic, associates the contemporary decay of literature with the prevalent mood of cynicism; he writes that ridicule is the stance of the powerless, of those who are incapable


161 Miroslav Rutte, 'Trochu retrospektivy II.', Národní listy, 10 April 1919, pp. 1-2.

162 Ibid., p. 1.
of successfully laying a hand to the 'great national task'.

Čapek’s response to Rutte also indicates the attention which he gives to reviews of his work: considering that most serious critics (Krejčí, Novák, Sezima) had such high praise for the work, Čapek states, he was almost tempted to ignore Rutte’s ‘vehement and negative condemnation’ of his life’s work. However, he feels compelled to respond to some of Rutte’s conclusions. Čapek objects to Rutte’s characterization of the author of Antonín Vondrejc. He denies that one can find atheism in the novel; he is affronted by the ‘charges’ of lack of faith in man and Progress, charges of nihilism, theatricality and brutality. He refers to Novák’s review of Antonín Vondrejc, in which the reviewer describes the author as a clairvoyant psychologist without prejudice who reveals the purest human tones in Anna’s ‘racial animality’. Čapek endorses Novák’s interpretation of a redeeming moral philosophy underlying the novel. He cites Novák’s comment that the appearance of Floryš Vestyd at the beginning and end of the novel represents the triumph of life and power over decadence and death, Moravian youth over poisoned Prague. Čapek’s slightly ironic concluding remark gives an insight into his relations with Novák: ‘Přestávám na tomto svědectví kritika, o jehož významu nemůže být sporu [Novák], a který moje knihy až do románu "Kašpar Lén" potíral

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165 Ibid. See: Arne Novák, ’Román Antonína Vondrejce’.

166 Čapek-Chod, ’V rubrice "Literatura”’. 
co nejbřitéji, proti protestovanému referátu p. M. Rutteho s velikým zadostiučiněním a vděkem, jakožto čin mé záchrany předem sou mým a posílení mé víry - v člověka.'

A perplexed Rutte responds the following day in Národní listy. Rutte does not understand why Čapek considers the review a 'vehement and negative condemnation'. By stating that Čapek is a pessimist he does not thereby demean the artistic value of the work: even lack of faith can be a creative power. Only Čapek, he writes, could have the impression that Rutte had dismissed his work. He adds that Čapek knows that Rutte was one of the first to defend Čapek's works when others attacked it: Čapek's statements, therefore, are not only a deliberate untruth, but also an injustice. The comments in Národní listy are only a summary of Rutte's 'Ejhle člověk!', printed in Cesta. Indeed, the sentences about Čapek's lack of faith are quoted almost word for word from the Cesta article; at the time of its publication, Čapek had not protested.

Čapek's crafted reply suggests that he has been somewhat placated. The employment of metaphor and self-irony characteristic of his earlier polemics remains. He explains why he responded to Rutte's feuilleton rather than the earlier articles by the same critic: 'člověku zdravého žaludku jest totiž možno s chuti snísti i připálenou pečeni, odfizne-li oharek, a říci ještě "zaplat' pánbůh!", byl-li zbytek k jídlu, ale dostane-li se mu potom výhradně jen tohoto oharku, vzepře se tomu soustu i zdravý

167 Ibid.

168 Miroslav Rutte, 'K poznámkám K. M. Čapka-Choda', Národní listy, 13 April 1919, p. 3.

169 Ibid.

170 Ibid.

171 See also Rutte's article in Cesta, 2, where he writes: 'Mechanismus osudu, jenž láme surově lidské činy a s mstivou výsměšností karikuje čistá přání, tot' filosofie K. M. Čapka-Choda'. Miroslav Rutte, 'K šedesátninám K. M. Čapka-Choda', p. 687.
Regarding the reception of Rutte’s feuilleton, he states that the Národní listy readers of today are indifferent to what was written a year ago. A reader with a good memory would consider Rutte’s feuilleton a refutation of his earlier judgments of Čapek’s works. Most readers, who have poor memories, are concerned only with Rutte’s recent commentary, which reads like a warning against a dull book. Čapek’s conclusion may sound petty, but it was probably based on a sound assessment of the readership of the newspaper: ‘Co platno, že p. dr. Rutte ve svých nedělních poznámkách vytahuje – abych užil jeho obrazu – nůž z mého probodeného srdce, a ulamuje mu dodatečně hrot? Nemohlo těch několik uznalých řádek stát už v jeho retrospektivě ve čtvrtek? Byla by to bývala aspoň hořčice na ropuchu z onoho rána, a já bych ji byl spolkl a nebyl bych ani mukl.’ The exchange concludes with a note from the editors printed below Čapek’s comments. The editors state that Rutte was commissioned to write a survey of fiction and poetry and that therefore the remarks on Antonín Vondrejč were necessarily brief. They insist that Rutte’s judgment does not constitute a condemnation of Čapek’s novel.

A letter from Čapek-Chod to Růžena Svobodová indicates that

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Ibid.

Ibid.

The disparaging remarks about Rutte which Čapek makes in his journal indicate that he did not agree with the critic’s interpretation of his works. In December 1926, for example, he writes: "Česta" uveřejnila o mých "Čtyřech odv. povídkách" stručnou zprávu, v níž ujist’uje, že já jako dr Freud vidím v sexu nejmocnější hybnou sílu a že jej dovedu sledovati od "nejhrubší smyslnosti až po nejrafinovanější chlípnost". Což je obmyslné sprost’áctví dra. Rutte.’ Papers: Čapek-Chod; journal fragments, see 25 December 1926; PNP. Čestmír Jeřábek refers to the exchange in ‘P. Čapek-Chod není pessimistou’, printed in Moravsko-slezská revue. Jeřábek questions whether Rutte’s article can really be described as an ‘attack’. Č. J[eřábek], ‘P. Čapek-Chod není pessimistou’, Moravsko-slezská revue, 13 (1919-20), pp. 32-3.
the former objected to the review of Antonín Vondrejc published in Lípa. The review suggests that Čapek-Chod took revenge on actual literary figures by caricaturing them in the novel. He denies that any of the people on whom characters in the novel are based have ever given him cause for revenge.

8. Jindrové

Čapek responds to Vodák’s review of Jindrové in Čas, which disparages the novel as mere entertainment. The entertaining quality of the novel derives from the plot and from the curious pieces of information which Čapek ‘hangs’ on the narration. Vodák attributes Čapek’s attention to such a wide variety of apparently irrelevant topics to his occupation as a journalist: journalistic ‘blood’, according to Vodák, cannot be suppressed. Čapek replies that in his opinion both the novelist and the journalist have an obligation to entertain. He notes that Vodák’s objection is surprising, considering that the critic’s published work consists entirely of newspaper articles: ‘ačkoliv mu ovšem neupírám, že se

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177 Papers: Růžena Svobodová; letters from Čapek-Chod to Svobodová; see letter dated 23 July 1919; PNP. In a draft of a letter to Arne Novák, Čapek-Chod writes that the character of Vondrejc is based on a number of people: the author himself, his cousin Jan Čech, the poet Jan Spáčil-Žeranovský, R. J. Kronbauer and others still living. Papers: Čapek-Chod; journal fragments, 15 August - 16 September 1922; see p. [5] of the notebook; PNP. Tvrdoň discusses possible sources of the character of Vondrejc in: ‘Antonín Vondrejc a Jan Spáčil’, Ostravský kulturní měsíčník, 3 (1978), 4, pp. 24-5.


179 [Vodák], ‘Otázky Čapkova románu’.
v ní vyskytlo málo řádek, jež by zapřely krev zlého profesora'.

Vodák criticizes the author’s materialism as sensualism. He suggests that Čapek uses the scene in which he presents the sunbathing outing of the Opálka society as an opportunity to describe the female body. Vodák comments that Čapek must be aware that in his passion for beautiful, exuberant matter he reaches a limit at which he can be suspected of deliberately seeking out salacious stories. Čapek replies: 'Spílati mi za to smyslníků jest tolik, jako kdybych já, p. "jo" spílal vilníků, protože se kochá ve smyslnostech a z kontextu vytrženými citáty dělá smyslné knize reklamu a propagandu u - amatérů.' Čapek defends the theme of the novel as the tragic martyrdom of the innocence and virginity of Jindra Junior.

He rejects Vodák’s comment that he conceives of life only as a series of unexpected interventions from without. Vodák criticizes the construction of the plot around chance events, for example: Jindra Senior’s discovery of his illegitimate son; the colonel’s seduction of Jindra’s wife in India; the arrest of Jindra Junior in a café when he refuses to stand for the national anthem; the dispatch of Jindra Junior to the most dangerous location on the front. Vodák’s comment constitutes an attack on Čapek’s outlook, described as ‘truly wartime’; Vodák objects to the portrayal of the individual as subordinate to a treacherous, capricious and mocking power. He also implies that Čapek shirks his ‘duty’ as a writer by not justifying occurrences through the motives and emotions of

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181[Vodák], ‘Otázky Čapkova románu’.
182Ibid.
183Čapek-Chod, "Z čista jasna" ...!’, p. 668.
184Ibid.
185[Vodák], ‘Otázky Čapkova románu’.
186Ibid.
In supporting his argument, Čapek demonstrates the potential of a polemic to entertain. He states that Vodák’s review also found its way into Čas ‘z čista jasna’; if Čapek had not, by chance, met Vodák while walking in Riegrovy sady, reminded the critic that he had yet to review Jindrové, and sent a copy of the novel to him, the review would never have appeared. Čapek states that although he knew what the outcome would be, he was compelled to encourage Vodák to write the review: ‘to je moje slabost, že nemohu být bez jeho referátu. Snad je to pověra, ale čím víc p. "jo" některou mou knihu zřeže, tím skvěleji "potom jde"’. Čapek implies a causal connection between Vodák’s disparaging review of Turbina and the fact that more than eight thousand copies of the novel have now been sold.

9. Hořká groteska a úmyslné pokřiveniny
An exchange between Arne Novák and Šalda provokes a response from Čapek-Chod. Šalda is reacting to Novák’s review of Strom bolesti and In memoriam Růženy Svobodové. Šalda objects to Novák’s comment that he has attempted to create a legend rather than

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187 Čapek-Chod, ‘”Z čista jasna” ...!’, p. 668.
188 Ibid.
190 Šalda is referring to Novák’s review in Venkov, 10 May 1921.
present an objective portrait. Šalda insists that his aim had been to depict the reality. He objects to Novák’s assessment that Svobodová ‘se prodirala k prostotě čisté linie zahořklou groteskou’. Šalda does not see any inherent contradiction between ‘zahořklou groteskou’ and ‘prostou čistou linií’; he contrasts this admirable grotesque, exemplified in the work of Anatole France, with the grotesque of K. M. Čapek, so much admired by Novák. Novák has stated that Šalda’s poems contain, ‘deliberate flaws and distortions’. Šalda denies any such intention:

Šalda adds sarcastically that he is too clumsy to practise this kind of ‘verbal acrobatics’, a remark that recalls Šalda’s characterization of Čapek as a circus performer in the Rodin polemic.

Čapek replies in ‘F. X. Šalda, panegyrik a pamfletik’, printed in Cesta. He provides an ironic interpretation of why Šalda has attacked him in this instance: ‘Pan F. X. Šalda mou hlavu otlouká o hlavu p. dra. A. Nováka, nejekonomičtější to způsob, chce-li gigant s jakousi usporou času zabít dva pidimužky, jichž nosy se mu pohříchu nelíbí.’ Čapek facetiously expresses surprise that Šalda’s opinion of his works has changed since the time of his review of Kašpar Lén; he notes that Šalda’s review, together with

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192 Ibid., p. 253.
193 Ibid., p. 254.
194 Ibid.
Arne Novák's, had been responsible for the change in the reception of Čapek's works by Czech critics. Out of gratitude, Čapek had dedicated *In articulo mortis* (1915) to Šalda, and after sending the critic a copy of the work, Čapek relates, he had received a letter praising the work for its grotesque quality. Čapek here reprints the letter. Šalda writes: 'Přečetl jsem "In articulo" již dvakrát a znovu podivuji se Vašemu umění, kterým rozpoutal jste ten šílený hexensabat pozorování i fantasie, grotesknosti i tragičnosti, kypivé hry slovné i sevřené charakteristiky, pošetilosti i moudrosti, ale nad ně ještě Vašemu zoru, kterým roste celý ten bábel ze sebe a včleňuje se v sebe a tvoří tak organism, svět, kosmos.' Čapek alleges that either Šalda's praise or his criticism is insincere.

Čapek offers to provide evidence of the similarity between Šalda's judgments and those of Svobodová. He reprints sections from a letter which Svobodová wrote to him on receiving the second and third volumes of *Turbina*. Her praise of the work is extravagant: 'Umíte vidět, umíte slyšet, umíte chutnat. Je to renesanční. Snad Vám napíši ještě jednou o celku, dnes jen toto: Antičtí bohové s Vámi, vážený příteli. Bud'te zdrav, jste velkolepý a mužný!' Čapek also prints sections of a second letter in which Svobodová reiterates her praise. He comments: 'je-li jen zrnko ryzí soli v tom, čím mne obmyslil duch F. X. Šaldovi nejbližší a s duchem jeho takřka splynulý, necht' sám uváží toto svědectví k ohromnému svému despektu nad mým literárním dílem'.

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In his reply, Šalda explains why he referred to Čapek in his polemic with Novák: if Novák does not see any 'distortions' in Čapek’s work, he cannot see them in Strom bolesti either. Šalda insists that his point was directed against Novák, whom he challenged to define his terms more precisely. Šalda is unconvincing when he claims that he was only trying to shed light on questions of crucial importance to Czech literary criticism. He accuses Čapek of attempting to provoke a scandal. Šalda presents his response in six points. First, he defends his review of Kašpar Lén, stating that he had written it because he realized that Čapek’s work was underrated, just as it is at present overrated. He distorts Čapek’s words by claiming all the credit for himself for ‘breaking the ice of Czech criticism’ which had dismissed Čapek. Secondly, Šalda states that he would still praise In articulo mortis, because he considers it ‘excellent’. However, he would not praise Antonín Vondrejc with such enthusiasm: the novel as a whole is weaker than the original, individual stories. Thirdly, Šalda dates the change in his assessment of Čapek to 1917, when he reviewed Turbina: ‘Zde tedy - na počátku r. 1917 - počínají se mé pochyby o Čapkovi, počíná se můj ideový odklon od něho.’ Šalda cites passages from his review of Turbina which criticize the work for lacking a positive message; he states that he wishes to gain more than ‘a few negations’ from a work that is 600 pages long. Fourthly, Šalda comments, Turbina convinced him that Čapek could not manage the novel form. Jindrové, he asserts, further

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200P. X. Šalda, 'Ještě kus literárních mravů českých', Kritické projevy 11, 1919-1921, p. 255. First printed in Venkov, 12 June 1921, pp. 5-6. Novák interprets Šalda’s attacks on Čapek as motivated by jealousy of the writer’s success, and fear that Čapek’s fame will overshadow the works of Svobodová. Papers: Čapek-Chod; letters from Arne Novák to Čapek-Chod, 1912-1922; see letter dated 12 June 1921; PNP.

201Šalda, 'Ještě kus literárních mravů českých’, p. 255.

202Ibid., p. 256. Emphasis in the original.

203Ibid.
substantiates this impression: it is very lively and amusing, but not the epic work of art that a true novel should be. As his fifth point, Šalda notes that he has never displayed contempt for Čapek’s works. Čapek, he writes, is a hypochondriac. Finally, he states that his present assessment of Čapek does not contradict, but completes, his earlier assessment.

In his reply, Čapek indicates his interpretation of the article which had sparked off the polemic: ‘Ve statě “Ad vocem” šmahem, sumárně a paušálně beze všech taxativních výjimek smetl všechny mé grotesky s povrchu české literatury jako úmyslný kaz a úmyslnou pokřiveninu’. Čapek accuses Šalda of inconsistency because the critic appears to revise his opinion in ‘Ještě kus literárních mravů českých’: ‘Situation se tedy nápadně zlepšila, dnes jsou aspoň mé groteskní novely a tragikomické povídky chválabohu zase znamenitými; při svém výpadu proti A. Novákovi o nich nevěděl.’ Regarding the lack of positive values in Turbina, Čapek asks what sort of positive values Šalda finds in Madame Bovary, a masterpiece of negation. Čapek states that Šalda’s Loutky a dělníci boží (1917) does not fulfil the demands which he as a critic makes of a novel. Čapek levels the same reproach at Šalda which Vodák had levelled at him: Šalda’s characters, Čapek writes, are not human types but dreamt-up creations which never have lived and never will live. Šalda’s novels do not take place in the ‘real’ world, in which the author himself is in any case a stranger; Čapek maintains that Šalda is fortunate in that he is able to build his own world, in which he is happy. He states that no parting of ways had ever taken place between the two men: ‘nebylo nikdy mezi námi žádného ideového sklonu, není ani možným mezi dvěma tak polárně

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204 Ibid. The comment echoes Vodák’s criticism of Jindrové.


206 Ibid.
A polemic over Vilém Rozkoč began on publication. Čapek addresses his critics in the ‘Author’s Notes’ at the end of the novel: ‘Kdo čteš, rozuměj a seznáš vlastní účel těchto poznámek: jich pisatel chce jimi říci, že všechno, co bude jeho dílu vytýkáno, věděl napřed a dříve než k němu přikročil a že přes to je napsal tak, jaké je. Je v tom zápasnický chvat, vykroutit protivníků důtky.’ Čapek anticipates criticism of the eponymous protagonist as an anti-hero. He writes that he regrets that he had not entitled the novel ‘Všivák’, the damning name Madlena addresses to Rozkoč. Had he done so, Čapek writes, he would have disarmed those critics who agree with Madlena’s assessment of Rozkoč: with such a title, he would have demonstrated that he had intended to construct a less than admirable figure as protagonist. Čapek states that although nothing would have been easier, he had been unable to ascribe to his protagonist a noble sacrifice which would have pleased both readers and critics: ‘Nebude-li za t. zv. “osvobozující čin” tak neústupně požadovaný oficiální naší poetikou na epickém díle, pokládáno závěrečné vzepjetí Vilémova talentu, jest “Vilém Rozkoč” jako kniha ztracen a jeho autor s ním.’ Čapek states that in depicting Rozkoč he was determined by the character and its milieu. He asserts that he will be satisfied if readers acknowledge that the character is at least true to life.

Čapek also anticipates criticism of the novel as an accumulation of episodes that have little relation to the fate of the protagonist; he predicts that critics will attack the length of the novel and the plethora of characters. He defends his method as

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207Ibid.


209Ibid., p. [199].
an attempt to paint a panorama of life:

Ačkoliv jsem z toho všeho byl již mnohokrát káran, nikdy nezdám se nejmohutnější možnosti velkého románu o pražském prostředí, vyčerpatí totiž proud pražského života v určitém období až na samo dno a niceho si neodpustiti co na příklad Rozkočovu případu doděti může oba jeho světy, ze kteréhož vyšel i do kterého vstoupil. Mnohost života jest mi svrchovaným skladebným příkazem i abych zdůraznil také jeho kontinuitu, uvedl jsem do něho i některé karaktery z 'Turbiny' jako Tydu, Nezmara a Vážku, Zouplnu ba i Annu 'Vondrejcovu' a jeho dcerušku.\textsuperscript{210}

Vodák reviewed Vilém Rozkoč for Čas and České slovo, newspapers which for many years had derided Čapek as a writer and journalist. In the České slovo review, he criticizes Čapek for writing the novel to amuse himself: Čapek sees only the empire of his novel, in which he feels like an independent lord, recognizing only those laws which he imposes on himself.\textsuperscript{211} Vodák inveighs against the author's conception of the central character of the novel: 'pro nás je tuctovým, nerozvážným, bláhovým, unáhleným hochem, kterým romanově není proč se zabývat.'\textsuperscript{212} Rozkoč is too superficial a protagonist to sustain the novel. Vodák dismisses Čapek's assertion in the 'Author's Notes' that his narrative 'digressions' derive from a desire to study all aspects of life in Prague: the novel hardly depicts life in contemporary Prague; rather it leads one away from the real city into a strange, fantastic world. Vodák portrays the work as superficial: Čapek's narration is a clever, ebullient concealment of how little the narration actually contains. Vodák's characterization of Čapek's style resembles that in the review of Nové patero printed in the

\textsuperscript{210}Ibid., p. [200].

\textsuperscript{211}jv. [Jindřich Vodák], 'Volba hrdiny', České slovo, 4 November 1923, p. 6. Vodák's comment recalls the description of the grotesque as a 'ruleless realm'. See: Gerald Gillespie, 'Romantic Irony and the Grotesque', p. 323.

\textsuperscript{212}Vodák, 'Volba hrdiny'.
same journal, České slovo, in 1910.  
In the Čas review, Vodák writes that the work will offend every educated lover of literature who expects to find worthwhile ideas in a novel. He states that Čapek would have done well to omit the characters from earlier novels. To support this statement, Vodák describes at length the scene in which Zouplna seduces Anna Vondrejcová. For Vodák the scene exemplifies Čapek’s spiritual and intellectual sterility: Čapek harps on about the same thing: the inevitable victory of sensual, physical matter over the soul; for him, as for Rozkoč, man is driven by instinct and nothing else.  
Čapek responds in Cesta with ‘Autorovo mínění. (Studie epikritická.)’. The article begins with his recollection of a master at grammar school. The man had intended to introduce his students to the masterpieces of Classical sculpture; yet he was also concerned to protect their modesty. Therefore, when he had shown them photographs of sculptures, he covered the images with his notebook so that the students could see only the figures’ heads. Čapek comments: ‘Bývalý profesor p. J. Vodák zachoval se k mému Rozkočovi docela opačně než můj profesor k madoně z Milo.’ Vodák, he insists, dwells hypocritically on the bawdy incidents in the novel: ‘To jsou mravnostníci, kteří by byli s to


214[Jindřich Vodák], ‘Poznámky literární a divadelní’, Čas, 10 November 1923, p. 4.

215Ibid.


He dismisses the claim that he portrays the victory of sensual love over the soul: 'Vodák lže vědomě, nebot’ není tak tupého ignoranta, aby mu mohlo ujítí, že kniha je napsána jako očista rekova z pudu uměním.' Vodák’s obsessions blind him to the portrayals of self-sacrificing love in the novel. Čapek dismisses Vodák’s assertion that his novels do not depict with adequate complexity the character of life in Prague: 'V těchto mých románech a novelách je onen tisíc různých a rozmanitých pražských lidí a zjevů, jež mi Vodák drze zalhává, tváře se, jakoby o nich nevěděl'. As a critic and the most important figure in literary politics of the Ministry of Culture Vodák must be familiar with his works. Čapek claims that all other critics, except for Šalda and J. R. Hradecký, acknowledge him to be the originator of the ‘Prague novel’.

In the second part of ‘Autorovo mínění’, Čapek points out inconsistencies between Vodák’s two reviews. He rejects Vodák’s identification of the protagonist with the author: ‘scházel jenom, aby tvrdil, že v "Rozkočovi" Čapek vypravuje své vlastní erotické

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218 Ibid.
219 Ibid.
220 Ibid.
221 Ibid., p. 509. Čapek is furious to learn that after writing devastating reviews of Vilém Rozkoč, Vodák, in the state committee, votes that the novel be awarded the State Prize. See: Papers: Čapek-Chod; manuscript copy of ‘Světovost ...?’; PNP. This article constitutes a response to Vodák’s ‘Národní literatura a světová’, České slovo, 28 October 1924, pp. 8-9. Vodák prescribes thorough study of Czech and other European literature for those writers who aspire to produce works which are ‘national’ and on the same level as the masterpieces of Weltliteratur. He states that there are no world-class Czech authors. Čapek considers the article as a political statement of an official of the Ministry of Culture. He argues that no amount of study will produce a great artist, as is evident from the writings of Vodák and Šalda. He also argues with Vodák’s condemnation of contemporary Czech writers.
"zážitky", jak zní krásné slovo z geniovy mateřštiny'. Čapek concludes by citing Březina’s praise for his work: he betrays his anxiety about how his work will be received by future generations.

Arne Novák abhors the philosophy expressed in a novel whose artistic qualities he admires: 'marně hledám kritickou rovnováhu mezi obdivem románové technice Čapkově a mezi nesouhlasem s jeho koncepcí světa a osudu, právě zde důsledně a energicky provedenou'. The tragic element, he writes, is excluded from Vilém Rozkoč; one finds only Čapek's tragicomic burlesque. In formal terms, the novel represents an improvement on Antonín Vondřejc and Turbina: Čapek's ebullient inventive talent is here governed by his structural design. Novák comments on the treatment of sexuality and the erotic in the novel: 'Nebyl by to K. M. Čapek-Chod, kdyby podstatu zmatků citových nevyvozoval z fysiologických kořenů, jež obnažuje občas s odvahou duchaplné nestoudnosti a občas ze záliby pro dráždivé pohoršení'. Novák objects to the 'primitive' morality which informs the novel: 'Nikoliv prožitá bolest, nikoliv schopnost promítnouti své lidsvětí do bližního, nikoliv rozkoš z vlastního dobrého činu, nýbrž výhradně pomstychtivá snaha odčiniti utrpěné pohanění ovládá tento žižkovský svět'. He concludes that he expects a more elevated perspective, in addition to technical virtuosity, from a writer of Čapek's significance and maturity; thus he cannot admire Vilém Rozkoč.

In a letter printed in Národní listy, Čapek responds to Novák's 'subjective' dismissal of the novel: 'Povýšil Jste (či snížil?) vědecké stanovisko své kritiky na pouhý dojem soukromého

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223Ibid. Čapek is referring to the Rodin polemic with Šalda.


225Ibid.

226Ibid.
Regarding the question of a more 'elevated perspective', Capek replies as he had to Vodák: 'Může být něco vyššího nad osvobození ducha - a tvrdím, že v případě Vilémově také těla! - nad osvobození tvůrčím činem?' He outlines another ending according to which Madlena is reconciled with Rozkoď. Such an ending would satisfy Novák's demands, but would not accord with the milieu and characters which Capek presents. Madlena is not the type of woman to fall into Rozkoď's arms; and if she had forgiven Rozkoď, he would not have found redemption in his art. Capek writes: 'Nejsem já strůjcem postav a osudů, aniž mohu anebo chci být soudcem lidského života, já mohu být nejvýše malířem postav a osudů a jestliže jsem poznal zákony osudů správně, dosáhl jsem nejvyšší mety svého umění a jestliže znám zákony žižkovských správně, potom jest životní příběh Vilémův a Madlenin ethicky správný, at' třeba jen podle primitivní ethiky žižkovské.' He objects to Novák's phrases: 'Duchaplná nestoudnost'; and 'záliba pro dráždivé pohoršení'. By citing an encomium to his works in Novák's *Přehledné dějiny literatury české,* Capek suggests that Novák is inconsistent in his judgments; thus he adopts the argument which Dyk had used against him in 1913.

A copy of Capek's letter to Novák of April 1924 suggests other motives for the *Národní listy* letter. Capek states that he chooses to write a private letter because Novák has not responded to the public letter. He admits that he had decided to write the private letter after a night's reflecting on Novák's statement about the reasons for his loving his occupation, in *Lidové noviny.* Capek wishes to communicate something which he would rather not 'take

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228 Ibid.

229 Ibid.

230 Papers: Capek-Chod; letters from Capek-Chod to Novák, one draft letter from 1920 and one copy of a letter from 1924; see letter dated 23 April 1924; PNP.
with him to the grave': that he knows that Novák has been responsible on two occasions for the rejection of his works by the State Prize committee. The first instance concerned Jindrové. A member of the committee had suggested, without providing any public justification, that the work be excluded from the competition. Another member of the committee had supported the suggestion. Čapek does not specify in the letter which role Novák assumed, commenting only: 'Škoda, "Jindrové" přebe byli romanem Vašeho srdce, vážený pane profesore, soudě podle referátu "L. N.".' Novák was also on the committee which debated the merits of Větrník. Čapek states that the majority on the committee had favoured giving the award to the author of Větrník; the majority, however, had been overruled by those who favoured Jan Vrba's (1889-1961) Bažantnice a jiné obrázky z přírody (1922). Čapek implies that Novák had been one of those who argued against Větrník. He states that the fate of Vilém Rozkoč has already been decided, since Vodák and Novák have both written critical reviews. This would have been his last chance to win the award, he writes; he will soon celebrate not only his sixty-fifth birthday, but also the fortieth anniversary of his first publication in Lumír. His comment reveals a maudlin streak in his character: 'Skvělá příležitost k jubilejnímu kopnutí do břicha.' Čapek covertly addresses Novák and perhaps also Vodák in a short article printed in Lidové noviny whose title, 'Proč mám rád své povolání', indicates that it refers, and constitutes an ironical submission, to an essay competition organized by Lidové

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231 Ibid.

232 Ibid. Čapek preserves in his journal a letter from Novák (dated 1 January 1923) praising Větrník. See: Papers: Čapek-Chod; journal fragments, 3 December 1922 - 9 March 1923; PNP. In the entry for 18 November 1923 Čapek describes the committee meeting at which Novák argued against awarding the State Prize to Větrník. Papers: Čapek-Chod; journal fragments from 11 May - 1 December 1923, PNP.
Novák also submits a response to the competition, in which he writes of his occupations as teacher and writer, 'já sám cítím denně, že mne k nim Bůh dávno předurčil'. Čapek offers various justifications in answer to the question asked by the title: 'Protože nemám na vybranou!/Protože mi bylo tolik zostuzováno .../Poněvadž je pro mne hors concours!'. He suggests that his occupation is his 'competitive sport'; his typewriter competes with the type-setters. He must love his occupation, he states: 'když tak dožírá - největšího hlupáka v československé republice! Dožírat hlupáky bývalo odjakživa mým nejskvoštějším požitkem'. Here, he demonstrates his delight in verbal games: 'Poněvadž [the occupation] mne chrání před ničemností; nebot' je známo, že jen ničemové dělají něco lépe, než dovedou; já pak své povolání provozuji jenom, jak nejlépe dovedu. Jsou ovšem lidé, kteří mne svádějí k tomu, abych to dělal ještě lépe. Na štěstí nejsem této ničemnosti schopen ...'  

11. State Prizes
Resentment that he has not received his due recognition, and  

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234 Arne Novák, 'Mám dvě povolání', Lidové noviny, 20 April 1924, p. 8. Novák’s entry gives evidence of an almost mystical linguistic nationalism: 'V obou povoláních sloužím myšlence, užíváme nástroje, který jest mně na světě nejdražší. Míním mateřskou řeč, jež jest vlastně čímsi vyšším než pouhým nástrojem - jenom skrze ni si plně uvědomuji, jak myslím a cítím; ona mne spojuje s mrtvými a nenarozeným pokrovenci; jediné v ní mohu býti také tvůrcem.' Novák’s description of the ecstatic state he achieves when he writes and 'flows' into his thoughts indicates that he is a critic of the sort with whom Čapek would quarrel.


236 Ibid.

237 Ibid.
frustration that Vodák has such great influence over the award of prizes, explain to some extent the energy which Čapek-Chod devotes to the question of the award of State Prizes. The debates over the awards appear to have commanded the attention of critics and artists, as well as the general public. In 1920, Čapek-Chod receives a State Prize for Antonín Vondrejc. He does not receive the state award for Jindrové or Větrník. However, the Academy of Arts and Sciences awards Čapek-Chod a first prize for Jindrové, a second prize for Romanetto. Tři chodské grotesky. Pohádka, and a second prize Větrník.

In 1923, Jan Vrba’s Bažantnice was chosen for the State Prize in preference to Větrník. Vrba wrote an article in which he suggested that Čapek’s novel had not received recognition because of its polemical character. Větrník, he writes, constitutes a polemical response to the faults which critics have found in Čapek’s works. Vrba compares Větrník with ‘Dar svatého Floriána’; both works, he asserts, had been inspired by resentment at an injury. Vrba attributes the critics’ reaction to Čapek to his activity as a journalist: Čapek’s works were criticized because of the offence he had given as an aggressive journalist and polemicist.

Viktor Dyk reacted strongly to the new statute governing the award of State Prizes, announced in 1923. The statute specifies

238 For example, see: Karel Čapek, ‘O Literárních Poradních Sborech’, Lidové noviny, 6 May 1921, morning edition, pp. 1-2. He complains about the presence of political figures on the committee for the National Theatre.


240 Vrba considered Čapek-Chod a good friend.


242 Ibid.
that prizes should be awarded without regard to the nationality of the writers. Dyk argues that no state in the world awards prizes to works which are not written in the state language. \(^{243}\) Dyk also objects to the stipulation that a writer cannot receive the State Prize more than three times in a given field; this constitutes a bias against those writers who are not only prolific, but also superior. The State Prize is not a bursary, and should be awarded on the basis of merit, not need.

Šalda responds to Dyk in 'Na okraj dní', stating that members of the national minorities should be eligible for State Prizes; he believes, however, that a separate prize should be established for the minorities, since works written in different languages cannot be compared. He agrees with the regulation that specifies an author cannot win a State Prize more than three times. Czech critics are extreme in both their praise and condemnation of authors. He names Vrchlický as an example of a writer who won prizes for many consecutive years, regardless of the quality of his works; he also refers to the admiration of the French for Victor Hugo during his lifetime. Like all those who have not enjoyed freedom, Šalda writes, the Czechs lack self-control. \(^{244}\) The reaction of critics to Čapek-Chod constitutes a case in point, according to Šalda: 'Před "Kašparem Lénem" zacházel kritika s jeho knihami jako s trusem a smetím.' \(^{245}\) Šalda provides a distorted account of the reception of Čapek's early works, some of which received enthusiastic reviews; he takes all the credit for having established Čapek's critical respectability. Now the critics err in the other direction: 'Smečka pouličních literárních camelotů v čele s Arnem Novákem běží za

\(^{243}\)V. D. [Viktor Dyk], 'Státní stipendia', Lumír, 50 (1923), p. 495.


\(^{245}\)Ibid.
každou jeho novou knihou a může se uřvat vykřikováním její
geniality, hloubky, plastiky, intuice... nevím čeho všeho'.

The efforts of the judicious Vodák to point out Čapek’s shortcomings
have been in vain: 'Literární móda je hluchá, nepřístupná literární
myšlence a literárnímu soudu. Musí se vyzuřit a vyběsnit. Je to
jako epidemie a přeje to jako epidemic'.

Šalda implies that the
number of times an author can win a State Prize should be
restricted so that writers like Čapek-Chod will not win it for
several consecutive years. He argues with the awards that have been
made this year, attacking Vrba in particular. He states that the
decisions of the committee reflect the personal ties and suspect
tastes of Arne Novák.

Miroslav Hýsek (1885-1957), one of the members of the
committee, responded to Šalda’s remarks. He states that Šalda
welcomes the dispute over the prizes as an opportunity to attack
Novák and Čapek-Chod. Šalda, Hýsek writes, was a member of the
committee in the Ministry of Education and Culture when the prizes
were first established. At that time he had the opportunity to
express his opinions; however, he did not attend the meetings of
the committee. Regarding Šalda’s claim that the literary historians
on the committee for the State Prizes do not understand
contemporary literature, Hýsek states that Šalda had been selected
as a member of the committee on two previous occasions, but had
never attended the sessions, even when a car was sent for him. If
Šalda had fulfilled his obligations on those occasions, he would
probably have been appointed again. Hýsek dismisses Šalda’s
suggestion that the awards were made on the basis of Novák’s
judgments.

Čapek-Chod responded to Šalda in ‘Na okraj okraje’. He writes

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246 Ibid.

247 Ibid., p. 4.

248 Miroslav Hýsek, ‘K fejetonu o státních cenách literárních’,
Národní listy, 22 November 1923, p. 4.
that Šalda insults Czech artists with his praise for two poets of the German national minority, and debases his colleagues, who are members of the committee. With regard to the attack on his works, Čapek states that he considers Šalda an unfortunate man who cannot be held responsible for what he writes. His praise and his criticism are equally worthless. Čapek claims to be greatly amused by Šalda’s criticism, given the dubious quality of Šalda’s Dítě and Loutky a dělníci boží. Čapek adds that Šalda need not condemn Novák; if it were not for Novák, Čapek would already have his second and third State Prizes. Čapek refers to Šalda’s insulting phrases as ‘mateřština genia’.

Vrba also uses the phrase ‘geniovy mateřštiny’ in his response to Šalda; this may suggest support for Čapek-Chod. It also indicates that the Rodin polemic constitutes the background for debates between Šalda and Čapek-Chod in the 1920s. Vrba identifies Šalda’s attack on Čapek-Chod, Novák and Dyk as the primary motive for Šalda’s article. He states that the antipathy between Čapek and Šalda derives from differences in their personalities: Šalda cannot understand Čapek’s works because of the robust health which they manifest. Vrba implies that Šalda disparages Čapek in this instance because he wishes to indicate that Větrník is no more worthy of a State Prize than Vrba’s own Bažantnice.

In ‘Ještě státní literární ceny’, Dyk argues with Josef Kodíček’s point that the awards are not made by the nation, but by the State, and that therefore the nationality of the candidates is

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250 Ibid., p. 281.

251 Ibid.


253 Ibid., p. 181.
Dyk asserts that the State is a nation-state with one state language. He admits that Šalda’s assessment of Vrchlický and Victor Hugo is correct; he adds, however, that these writers produced more than three excellent works. He describes the comments on Čapek-Chod as an indication of Šalda’s ‘pathological arrogance’. Of Šalda’s characterization of literary fashion as a passing epidemic, Dyk comments, ‘Skoda, že lucida intervalla u F. X. Šaldy jsou velmi řídka; čině zde správnou diagnosu choroby, neuvědomuje si, že jí trpí nejvíce sám.’ The writer for the culture pages of Cesta defends Čapek, while at the same time endorsing some of Šalda’s views: ‘Nebudem se podrobněji zabývat názory F. X. Šaldy o hodnotě tvorby K. M. Čapka-Choda, v nichž je mnoho přepiaté ježitnosti a osobního zaujetí. Nemůžeme však než plně souhlasit s ním tam, kde kritizuje letošní rozhodnutí poroty při udílení cen literárních, v němž se tolik uplatnila individualita Arne Novákova.’

Čapek-Chod comments on the lax and irresponsible attitude which the ministry and members of the committee have to the procedures governing the award of prizes. In an article printed in

254 See Kodiček’s lucid article: ‘Státní literární ceny’, Tribuna, 13 November 1923, p. 1. Kodiček argues that the nationality question is the most important issue in the debate over the statutes for the State Prizes. He notes that the literary community has split into two camps over the issue of treatment of the nationalities: those who support the claims of the Germans and those who do not.

255 V. D. [Viktor Dyk], ‘Ještě státní literární ceny’, Lumír, 50 (1923), p. 555. Dyk implies that Max Brod should not be eligible for the State Prize because he is a Zionist: ‘Rozhodně nesprávná argumentace je, uvádí-li se jako argument pro správnost statutu propagační činnost určitých spisovatelů německých a židovských – jet’ Max Brod sionista.’ Ibid.

256 Ibid., p. 556.

257 Ibid.

258 Ještě o statut státních cen’, Cesta, 6 (1923-24), 18-19, p. 283.
Národní listy he relates that he had been nominated by the ministry to sit on the committee considering awards for drama. He visited Vodák at the ministry to announce that he could not accept the function: he did not consider himself a competent judge since he had attended plays only at the Municipal and National Theatres in Prague; moreover, he had been outside Prague from May to September. Vodák tried to dissuade him from resigning the function, stating that Hilbert, who was also on the committee, had been ill for a long time and likewise had not seen everything. He asked Čapek, 'což si myslíte, že členové poroty literární také všechno četli?' Čapek was convinced by Vodák’s arguments. After leaving the building, however, he changed his mind and returned to deliver his definitive resignation. Vodák commented cynically, 'Poctivost je sice krásná ctnost, ale k úřední potřebě není!' Čapek learned after the awards were made that he had not been replaced on the committee; the decisions were thus made by the remaining two members. Following the announcement of the awards, Vodák printed an article in Čas criticizing the decisions of the committee and attacking Hilbert for incompetence, because he did not see any performances for a period of three months. Čapek argues that Vodák has attacked Hilbert only because he did not share Vodák’s opinions regarding the candidates. Cesta comments that the affair confirms suspicions about Vodák’s ‘devious’ morality.

The airing of grievances over the issue of State Prizes probably occasioned the anonymous satirical poem entitled 'Karel Matěj Čapek-Chod', published in Apollon:

Od šíráku k špičkám bot

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259 K. M. Čapek-Chod, 'Příspěvek k historii první státní ceny pro herectví atd.', Národní listy, 5 December 1923, supplement to no. 334, p. 9.

260 Ibid.

261 Ibid.

geniální Čapek-Chod
vědom vlastní velké ceny,
kráčí vážný, nachmužený,
oko vrhá kolem blesky;
zván je český Dostojevský,
jej hoř prý jest ekvivalent
(-až na obsah, formu, talent!-) 263

Čapek-Chod prints a response in Národní listy:

Jene Klepetáři
Apollona osluněný září
za Váš na mně epigram
v němž není mozku miligram
Marsyas polobůže,
pozbyl vlastní kůže,
zdrhl mu ji Apollo,
že se k němu tlačil,
tak mu kuráž spáchil.
Vy druhý Marsye, vězte to
Vám urazi - klepeto! 264

In 1924, Čapek-Chod received a State Prize for Vílém Rozkoč. This
did not, however, silence his criticism of the statute governing
State Prizes.

12. Gustav Winter: Naše literatura ve Francii

In 1926, Čapek engaged in a polemic with Gustav Winter (1889-1943)
concerning Czech national self-assessment. Winter publishes an
article in Nová svoboda about the promotion of Czech literature
abroad. Cultural relations with France, Winter suggests, indicate
the immaturity of the Czechs: 'styky kulturní jsou doposud
jednostranné; Francouzi dávají a my přijímáme'. 265 This state of
affairs remains constant despite the fact that a few Czech novels
had 'well-nigh officially' been translated into French ('cestou
skoro úředně'). Winter comments that there is nothing inherently
wrong with this propagandist route; unofficial initiatives,


264 Čapek-Chod, 'Apollonu', Národní listy, 8 October 1924,

265 G. Winter, 'Naše literatura ve Francii', Nová svoboda, 3
(1926) 3, p. 37.
however, can accomplish more. Winter then criticizes the first route because official support is given only to those authors who have received a first-class grade in 'patriotism' and 'moral behaviour' in Czech official circles. Winter comments that foreigners will judge Czech authors not according to their patriotism, but their experimentation with style and content. Winter states that the French are not biased against the Czechs; French publishers would not hesitate to publish a Czech work which, because of its value or reputation, promised to be a financial success. Winter comments: 'Malér je v tom, že takových děl není, že francouzský nakladatel přijímá vydáním české knihy risiko'. If any Czech author, Winter writes, had the international stature of Masaryk, for example, he would have no difficulty finding a French publisher.

It sometimes happens, however, Winter writes, that when one has overcome the obstacles and found a French publisher for an obscure writer, one's efforts are thwarted by Czechs themselves. Winter relates that he had found a publisher willing to print a translation of a young Czech writer, who happened to be a Communist. Czechs expressed regret that this author was to be published rather than one who was known to be a patriot. The French publisher subsequently rejected the manuscript, probably because his attention was drawn to the fact that he would be committing a faux pas if he published an author who was not in favour at home. Winter maintains that no Prague political or literary clique should have power to decide which books are translated.

Winter refers to the PEN club conference which had taken place in Paris in the spring; the conference endorsed a motion to the effect that the PEN clubs of large nations should support the PEN clubs of small nations with publications of translations of three works into major languages. Winter assesses the potential value of

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266 Ibid., p. 38.

267 Ibid.
this support: 'Mravní pomoc francouzského literárního světa musí
skutečně předcházet jakoukoli akci, která chce mít trvalý význam.
Do francouzské literatury se nemůžeme vetřít, nýbrž musíme být do
ní uvedeni.' Winter considers the question of which works should
be translated. He states that few works could expect financial and
literary success abroad. Czech fiction, unlike Czech verse, does
not meet European standards: 'schází jí takřka veskrze komposice a
slohová kázeň'. He adds that many Czech writers lack a basic
knowledge of Czech. The French intellectual élite has an interest
in Czech poetry, he notes; poetry, however, has no appeal for the
public: 'Cestu do veřejnosti musí razit próza, ale jak jsem řekl,
nevím o české knize, která by zaručeně měla dostatečnou průbojnou
sílu.' He concludes that the Czechs do not need to worry about
inherent French indifference to Czech literature: 'Dočká-li se naše
próza jediného autora, jenž vynikne nad evropský průměr, jak jsme
již řekli, nebude třeba pomáhat mu do Francie uměle, naopak
Francouzi se sami postarají, aby ho poznali.'

One might expect that Čapek would empathize with Winter's
frustration with the literary establishment. Indeed, in his
response Čapek comments in a footnote that on three occasions plans
to translate his works were thwarted because of official
disapproval. Whether or not Winter's article offended Čapek's
vanity, he responds from the standpoint of national pride,
attacking Winter's judgments and the logic of his conclusions. He

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268 Ibid.
269 Ibid.
270 Ibid., p. 39.
271 Ibid.
272 K. M. Čapek-Ch. [sic], 'Dr. G. Winter o "Naší literatuře ve
Francii"', Lumír, 53 (1926-27), 1, p. 49. He refers to plans to
translate Turbina into Polish and Slovene. See his correspondence
with Adolf Černý (3 letters, 1922-23; PNP) and František Bradáč (2
letters, 1922-23; PNP). The latter was interested in translating
Jindrové.
interprets Winter’s article as a reproof of initiatives to promote Czech literature in France. Winter’s opinions of these initiatives, Čapek notes, are inconsistent. At first Winter writes that there is nothing inherently wrong with official attempts to promote literature. However, Winter concludes his article with the comment that it is impossible to force one’s way into the French literary world, which suggests that he does indeed condemn official and unofficial attempts to seek publishers for Czech works: ‘obě se pokoušejí "vetříti se do francouzské literatury"’. Winter himself, however, as he states in the article, has sought a publisher for a Czech author. That the publication of this work was only stopped because of official Czech disfavour indicates that, ‘pokus vetření českého románu do francouzské literatury skončil teoreticky naprostým úspěchem, zmařeným jenom stejně úspěšným negativním zakročením – z téže Prahy!’. Čapek quotes passages from Winter’s article which disparage Czech fiction writers. He asks how Winter was able to find a publisher for his unknown Communist writer: ‘Přišel k onomu francouzskému nakladateli a řekl mu: "Monsieur, já sice nevim o žádné české knize, která by měla zaručeně dostatečnou průbujnou sílu nebo záruku vnitřní ceny a komerčního úspěchu, anebo alespoň snesla evropské měřítko, ale vžal to nešt’, tady vám nesu překlad českého románu od spisovatele naprosto neznámého etc."’. If this writer were of European standard, Čapek notes, Winter would have mentioned him in the article. If he were not such a fine writer, Čapek suggests, Winter should not have attempted to find him a publisher. He regrets that Winter, with his negative opinion of Czech fiction, has such influential connections with French publishers. Winter’s criticism, and the identical ‘official’ view expressed by Vodák, will

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273 Čapek-Chod, 'Dr. G. Winter o "Naší literatuře ve Francii"', p. 49.

274 Ibid.

275 Ibid., p. 50.
discourage the French from attempts to translate Czech works. Čapek thus suggests that Czechs will not find recognition abroad if they do not value their own culture. He mentions Karel Čapek as an example of an author whose dramatic works, rather than his Krakatit [1924], have achieved international success. Drama, Čapek claims, like music and the graphic arts, is at an advantage in that knowledge of the language in which it is written is not essential to an appreciation of its effect.

In 'Ještě naše literatura ve Francii', Winter answers the objections made to his article; he does not respond specifically to Čapek-Chod. In his reply he mentions two articles: that of an anonymous writer in Československá republika,\(^{276}\) and Arne Novák's article in Lidové noviny.\(^{277}\) Winter responds to the claim of the Československá republika writer that the best works of Czech literature, for example those by Čapek-Chod, Sezima, Šrámek and Durych, are almost untranslatable. Winter argues that these writers do not surpass Flaubert, Meredith, d'Annunzio or Turgenev: in a certain sense, every work is untranslatable, but translations are adequate enough to allow readers to enjoy the works of Weltliteratur.\(^{278}\) Winter asserts that linguistic difficulties have not prevented the translation of Czech works. He denies having stated that no Czech work was worthy of translation.

In replying to Arne Novák, Winter repeats that French publishers have no bias against Czech works, but they cannot expect to make a profit from publishing them. Winter states that there are Czech authors of a quality equal to that of Italian, Russian and

\(^{276}\) [possibly Bedřich Václavek], 'O těžkých starostech s překládáním naší prózy do francouzštiny', Československá republika, 23 January 1926, p. 7.

\(^{277}\) A. N. [Arne Novák], 'Naše literatura ve Francii', Lidové noviny, 27 January 1926, morning edition, p. 7. Novák comments that the Communist writer to whom Winter refers is obviously Ivan Olbracht.

Spanish authors translated into French. He wonders, however, whether there is a Czech writer equal to Tolstoy, d'Annunzio or Kipling. He claims: 'Arne Novák mi mylně vytýká nedostatek "španělské hrdosti"; snad je právě přemíra této hrdosti, která mi raděj k opatrnosti a ukládá mi vysoké měřitko.' Winter's subsequent comments, however, appear to undermine this claim. He poses the question of why French works can achieve such success in Czechoslovakia, while Czech fiction, 'probíjí tak těžce, i do Německa, kde je jinak zájem o naši kulturu vyšší než ve Francii'. The answer, he states, is that French writers have an indefinable 'je ne sais quoi', which makes them interesting regardless of the language or country in which they are published. Czech fiction, by contrast, is characterized by 'nedostatek účelné a ukázněné tektoniky [...] nedostatek, který asi organicky souvisí se slabostí českého dramatu a se slabostmi české architektury'. Winter reflects that the Czechs might command the attention of Europe in a sphere other than literature. Rather inconsistently, he concludes with a quotation from Novák's article: 'Ucházející se o přízeň cizinců či chcete-li přátel, nesmíte pozbývati nic ze své hrdosti a ze svého důstojného sebevědomí.'

13. 'Věda, erotik a metafora v románě'
Šalda's review of three works by Čapek-Chod initiates the final polemic between the two men, who return to the themes of the earlier polemics. In his review, Šalda treats 'Experiment', from Romanetto, as well as Větrník and Vilém Rozkoč. Although he later insists that the review is simply an objective analysis of the works, a vindictive tone is manifest from the first sentence, in which Šalda declares that the three works provide sufficient

279 Ibid., pp. 116-17.
280 Ibid.
281 Ibid., p. 117.
282 Ibid., p. 118.
material for anyone who required further proof that Čapek-Chod woefully lacked, 'umělecké uvědomění a umělecká metoda'. Šalda clearly uses the review as another opportunity to vent his animosity towards Čapek-Chod. He does not consider the works as they are, but as they should be in his opinion; this critical perspective frequently characterizes reviews of Čapek-Chod’s works by Šalda, Novák and Vodák. He admires the plot of ‘Experiment’, but considers the narrative framing device ludicrous, a violation of artistic economy which weakens the central story. The author should have chosen a simple first-person narrator; in order to enhance the tragic dimension of the story, the author should have indicated the immorality of Slaba’s experiment. Šalda objects to the main theme of Větrník: ‘Psáti romány o romanopisečtění jako básniti o básnění, pokládám za vrchol narcissismu a nejnesnitelnější, poněvadž nejneplodnější koketerii.’ Šalda again demonstrates a lack of understanding of Čapek-Chod’s characteristic experimentation with narrative point of view; he grudgingly expresses admiration for the story within the novel of the hunchback Kačenka’s love for the circus performer, but dismisses the ‘tasteless’ manner in which it is told. Not surprisingly, considering that he is addressed by name in the novel, Šalda sneers at the literary invectives in the work.

Of the three works under review, Šalda considers Vilém Rozkoč to be the best. Even this work, however, is in his opinion

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284In a letter to Novák, who also objected to the narrative framework, Čapek-Chod states that this distancing device was necessary to him because his own experience is related in the story. In a second letter he states that ‘Experiment’ for him constituted an experiment in narrative: he wanted to relate a story backwards, from the end to the beginning. Papers: Arne Novák; letters from Čapek-Chod to Novák, 1909-1922; see letters of 10 May 1922 and 17 August 1922; PNP.

incomplete. He criticizes the sentimental episodes in the novel, for example, Šindelářová's devotion to her beloved. Čalda praises the conclusion to the novel, the 'moral catharsis' experiences when, having been rejected by Madlenka, he emerges from his pain a mature man and an artist capable of creating. Čalda, however, bemoans the fact that Čapek wrote the novel about this process of disillusion and maturation: 'Nebylo by zajímavější, protože umělecký i lidský plodnější, začítí román tam, kde končí: uvěstí na scénu člověka již aspoň na polo uzrálého? [...] Pan K. M. Čapek platí za autora po výtce robustního a velmi mužného a hlenění muže v pravém slova smyslu v jeho díle!' Čalda criticizes Čapek's flowery journaLeSE; his style is laborious and inconsistent, including mythological allusions alongside jokes appropriate to Švanda dudák. Čalda reiterates the criticism he had made of Čapek the journalist in the Rodin polemic: 'tyto žertovnosti a špásky, které nejsou výjimkou, právě jako ony barokní šnerkle a dekorativeness vnášejí do románu Čapkova něco frivolního, co mu odnáší vážnosti a důsažnosti. Je to psáno jako novinářský feuilleton nebo lokálka, ne jako životní a společenský epos'.

Finally, Čalda addresses the 'central shortcoming' of Čapek's works. His art would be better off if he knew less:

Čapek má mnoho vědomosti odborných, nezískaných tvorbou, nýbrž a priori: naukové a vědné. A tyto vědomosti navléká na šňůry svého beletristického děje, svých beletristických situací. Vzniká z toho četba rozhodně zábavná, pestrá, rušná, často hádankově napínává a namáhavá. Ale umělecká metoda tvůrčí je zcela jiná. V ní platí ne co autor ví, ale co poznává intuitivně při procesu tvořivém a procesem tvořivým.'

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286 Ibid., p. 253.


288 Čalda, 'Poslední K. M. Čapek-Chod', p. 255. In his attempt to discredit Čapek, Čalda makes a perceptive comment about his work: 'Subjektivní fantastika a zvůle leží mnohem větší měrou, než se zdá, na dně jeho díla a snoubí se zcela přirozeně s jeho naturalismem.' Ibid.
Whether Šalda’s criticism is valid or not, it is expressed in such a manner as to provide an easy target for Čapek’s retort.

Indeed, Čapek poses the question: ‘Jaká jest nepřekročitelná norma věd a nauk, ku které smí slovesný tvůrce dospěti a jaké smí ve své tvorbě použíti?’289 He points out the ridiculousness of Šalda’s assertion by recalling that not only many Czech writers, but also ‘world-class’ authors such as Flaubert, Zola and Tolstoy have used in their works knowledge gained a priori, that is, as defined in the polemic, knowledge acquired without the intention to use it in a particular work of art. Regarding Šalda’s criticism of his use of medical, in particular sexological and neurological, knowledge, Čapek replies that he considers it his obligation as a writer to know every aspect of man. To this end, he asserts, he has carried out studies for the requirements of specific works.290 All the female characters in his works who suffer from sexual disorders, however, he had observed in real life, without any preparatory study of sexological or neurological phenomena. He states: ‘jestiliže kritik žasne nad detaily těchto studii podle přírody, nemoha si jich vysvětliti jinak, než odborným studiem, pak je to holé neštěstí jeho naivní neprohlédavosti, kteráž nedovede rozceznati hysteriku od zdravé ženy, snad proto, že ideální ženství je mu s hysterii totožno!’291 It is no wonder, Čapek adds, that the mother in Šalda’s Dítě is hysterical and the main male character impotent. Čapek asserts that it is also the duty of the critic to have an understanding of pathological and psychological phenomena, the subjects which he must treat once he gives up his ‘ivory tower’ of intellectual isolation.

In the second part of his reply, Čapek responds to Šalda’s attacks on his style, in particular his use of mythological

289Čapek-Chod, ‘Věda, erotika a metafora v románě’, Cesta, p. 66.

290Ibid., p. 67.

291Ibid.
allusions. Capek’s approach consists in pointing out the shortcomings of Šalda’s creative writing, which suffers from the same flaws that he attacks in others. Thus, Šalda criticizes the description of Rozkoč’s banknotes as arrows which leap from the quiver of a legendary Nordic hero, yet in his poem ‘Princezně ze čtvrti tovární’ he compares a factory worker with an amphora filled with wine. Capek ties problems of style with the question of the writer’s use of information when he asserts that Šalda’s work would profit from more a priori knowledge. For example, a cursory study of the graphic arts would have dissuaded Šalda from comparing, in his poem, the breasts of the factory girl with two lemons; one can produce two pair of breasts from two lemons. Capek attributes the inconsistencies in Šalda’s review to the critic’s amnesia.

The title of Šalda’s reply, ‘Kritické příspěvky k poznání K. M. Čapka’, promises an analysis of the author. In fact, Šalda summarizes his objections to Capek’s work based on a conception of the role of the artist and the function of art. Šalda returns to the question of how much knowledge an artist should possess, which he had addressed in previous reviews of Capek’s works. In his review of Kaspar Lén mstitel, Šalda writes: ‘Autor ví příliš mnoho z vnějškových fakt a toto poznání vejcpává do nás – doslova vejcpává – neustále a vžitím, za příležitostí vhodných i nevhodných’. In his review of Z města i obvodu, by contrast, Šalda comments positively on Capek’s knowledge of various fields: ‘poznal tyto oblasti lidských zájmů do detailu dlouhým, láskyplným studiem, ne povrchní snůškou jakých takých vědomostí, posbíraných ad hoc z

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292 Capek-Chod, ‘Věda, erotica a metafora v románě’, p. 81.


příruček'. Reviewing the same work, Novák wonders whether less detail might not be desirable, but comes to no conclusion. František Sekanina (1875-1958) regards Čapek's delight in detail and digressions as a merit. Vykoukal considers that Čapek's wide range of knowledge contributes to the plausibility of his short stories. Krejčí also considers that Čapek's thorough knowledge of his subjects commands respect. Sezima, however, criticizes Čapek's reliance on 'encyclopaedias'.

In 'Kritické příspěvky', Šalda asserts that the writer must use his knowledge to create a work of art which is moving in that it presents a typically human phenomenon: 'Jinak podáva místo života anatomický praeparát; jinak děje se mu, co vytýkala a vytýká ještě dnes právem nejlepší kritika Žoloví, že často lepí z vnějšíka na figuru své poznatky odborné. Táž výtka, opakuji, stihla leckdy Čapka.' Šalda justly maintains that it is irrelevant whether or not the author based his characters on people he had observed in real life. Šalda refers to the character Eva in Vilém Rozkoč when he writes: 'znal-li ji, tož jí nedovedl vyvolat v životné přesvědčivosti a vtělí v řívý typ, který by žil objektivně

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298 F. V. Vykoukal, 'Výpravná prósa', Osvěta, 44 (1914), 2, p. 141.
299 K. [F. V. Krejčí], 'K. M. Čapek-Chod: Z města i obvodu', Právo lidu, 14 December 1913, supplement to no. 342, p. [1].
300-ilm- [Karel Sezima], 'K. M. Čapek-Chod: Z města i obvodu', Samostatnost, 4 February 1914, p. 3. Čapek responds in: 'Slovutný pane!', Samostatnost, 14 February 1914, p. 4.
301 Šalda, 'Kritické příspěvky k poznání K. M. Čapka', p. 42.
svéprávným a svézákonným životem'.\textsuperscript{302} A faithful depiction of reality does not result in great art. The role of the artist, Šalda states, is not to present life as it is, but to give order to the world of phenomena. Art should not be didactic; the doctor, rather than the artist, should lecture man about the mysteries of sexology. Šalda summarizes this view with a quotation from Goethe: 'Schaffe, Künstler, rede nicht.'\textsuperscript{303}

Čapek's declared intention to attack conventional lies and open the eyes of young men is not only redundant but misguided. Somewhat inconsistently, Šalda asserts that this is not an activity proper to the artist, and that superior artists, like Dostoevsky, have achieved as much with greater success than Čapek. Dostoevsky's success derives from his approach, his love for his characters, which contrasts with Čapek's ambiguous contempt: 'Tento zvláštní autorův stav, na půl interesovanosti na půl necitelnosti a výsměšnosti, odpuzuje nejvíce a poškozuje nejvíce uměleckou účinnost Čapkovu.'\textsuperscript{304} Šalda here criticizes Čapek's philosophy, as he had in his review of Turbina.\textsuperscript{305}

Šalda repeats his objection to Čapek's style as journalese, by which he means the use of complex periods. He describes Čapek as old-fashioned for attempting to defend his work by criticizing Dítě: 'Čapek jest z té specie autorů, která již v cizině vymřela a drží se snad již jen u nás.'\textsuperscript{306} That is, Čapek represents a reactionary faction which is retarding the development of Czech culture.

The second and third parts of Šalda's 'Kritické příspěvky',

\textsuperscript{302}Ibid., pp. 42-3. Italics in the original.

\textsuperscript{303}Ibid., p. 43. Italics in the original.

\textsuperscript{304}Ibid.


\textsuperscript{306}Šalda, 'Kritické příspěvky k poznání K. M. Čapka', p. 44.
which constitute responses to an article published by Čapek in Národní listy, do not contribute much to the polemic. Šalda describes Čapek as coarse and cowardly; he maintains that Čapek demonstrated his total lack of critical acuity by his abuse of Rodin, Bílek and Masaryk. Šalda thus misrepresents Čapek's involvement in the Rodin polemic, which did not address the work of the sculptor but the activity of the critic. With his reference to Masaryk, Šalda implies that if Čapek had had any true insight into politics he would have been able to predict Masaryk's eventual rise to power. Finally, Šalda defends the character of Aleš in Dítě against Čapek's ridicule. Čapek had written of Aleš: 'Jakž by také mohl být živým typem btb, který se domnívá, že hrou na housle v patře zabrání kontaminaci služky s jeho bratrem v kuchyni! Něco jiného by snad bylo, kdyby spustil bandurskou na turecký buben hned za dvěma!' Šalda's defence of the character indicates that he could never appreciate Čapek's anti-sentimental view on life; it suggests that, like other critics, Šalda's main objection to Čapek is philosophical.

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307 Ibid., pp. 84, 86. Šalda refers to the attacks on Masaryk in Národní listy before the war.

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