



Man Is Indestructible: Legend and Legitimacy in the Worlds of Jaroslav Hašek

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Man is Indestructible:
Legend and Legitimacy in the Worlds of Jaroslav Hašek

A dissertation presented

by

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to

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Abstract

Czech author Jaroslav Hašek (1883-1923) is internationally renowned for his novel *The Fates of the Good Soldier Švejk in the World War*. During his lifetime, despite publishing prolifically, Hašek was primarily known as a notorious prankster. Anecdotes grew into a legend which depicts Hašek as a larger-than-life bon vivant. This image, however, has historically been in tension with the high esteem he ultimately earned with his great novel. My reading of Hašek proposes an anti-authority theory of authorship as the unifying force between the two seemingly incompatible aspects of his oeuvre. I understand the Hašek legend as a constructed literary text, improvised like the rest of his work. I argue that his original pranks and their preservation as anecdotes express a disdain for institutions of political and cultural authority. At the same time, Hašek encoded self-referential material into his later literary works, drawing attention to the already potent legend and championing authorship as an ungovernable refuge.

The introduction presents a theory of authorial legend, followed by a brief biography. Chapter One, “The Bugulma Tales: Improvisation and Autobiographical Experiment,” discusses Hašek’s service in the Red Army and the satirical, pseudo-autobiographical stories he published upon returning to Prague. Chapters Two and Three are both devoted to the Švejk novel. Chapter Two, “Authorship as a Challenge to Authority: Storytelling in *Osudy dobrého vojáka Švejka*,”

analyzes the codes of self-censorship in Hašek's depiction of wartime Prague and finds that oral storytelling exists as a bastion of self-expression for the low-class characters the novel champions. Chapter Three, "History as Fodder" discusses Hašek's irreverent and skeptical treatment of historical discourse and, by extension, all supposedly non-fiction genres. Chapter Four, "My Friend Hašek: Memoirs Beyond Fact and Fiction," explores how Hašek's legacy came to be defined through a series of memoirs written after his death by friends and collaborators. In the conclusion, I propose reexamining Hašek's role in global literary culture, paying particular attention to Russia. Hašek's time in the Red Army legitimized him for a soviet readership, with the effect that his writings were never censored under the communist regime. Among Russian readers, Hašek remains the most popular Czech author, yet his appeal is paradoxically in conflict with his success.

I find that Hašek created and managed his own authorial legend while remaining intentionally outside of, indeed antagonistic to, normative political and literary institutions. Taking seriously both Hašek's writing and his celebrity invites a new understanding of the dynamic relationship between authorship and authority, a model that allows for both the essentially chaotic nature of Hašek's work, and his virtuosity. Hašek was unique among the major writers of interwar Europe in that his genius appears not in spite of but in concert with his anti-intellectualism.

Table of Contents

Introduction: Indestructible Hašek

Chapter One: The Bugulma Tales: Improvisation and Autobiographical Experiment

Chapter Two: Authorship as a Challenge to Authority: Storytelling in *Osudy dobrého vojáka Švejka*

Chapter Three: History as Fodder, or, You Can't Spell Slaughter Without Laughter

Chapter Four: My Friend Hašek: Memoirs Beyond Fact and Fiction

Conclusion

Bibliography

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While this dissertation, like the Hašek legend, is attributed to a single author, it has in fact been a collective effort. My work has benefitted tremendously from the unbelievable dedication of my dissertation committee. I am so grateful to them for believing in this project. Bill Todd, a model professor and colleague in every way, was knowledgeable enough to direct me to the perfect source for every query, yet unpretentious enough to harbor a genuine love for Švejk. In no small way, his involvement legitimized this entire project. Justin Weir's input on theoretical questions, especially the implications of authorship and biography, has been invaluable. Thank you to Jindřich Toman, whose perspicacity is matched only by his kindness.

Veronika Tuckerova, my cherished mentor for eight years, was the first person to bring Hašek and his circle of co-conspirators into my life. She has been infinitely helpful as I've worked to understand Czech literary culture and navigate the professional landscape. The friendship of her daughter Sophia has been an unforeseen boon to my long graduate studies.

I never formally asked Jonathan Bolton to be my advisor because, as František Langer says of Hašek's candidacy in their fake political party, this role "se rozuměla sama sebou." Over the course of the last six years, he has challenged me, supported me, and professionalized by building a relationship of mutual trust. Especially in this past year, his tireless encouragement and advice have been a godsend. Every grad student should be so lucky.

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My family and friends provided the necessary emotional support to help me complete this project. My fellow graduate students in the Slavic Department have inspired me with their own work and made me feel validated with mine, creating an exceptionally humane micro-culture within a usually cut-throat industry. My parents, John and Wendy, and my brother Zak instilled in me the value that humor is the most useful of all forms of intelligence. Phil knew exactly when to tell me that this was exactly the dissertation I should write, and for that, I will always be grateful.

I dedicate this dissertation to the memory of Jennifer Day, my Russian professor at Bard College. One day in her office, I noticed she had a stack of books in Polish. She explained that when you go to graduate school for Russian, they make you learn a second Slavic language. She added excitedly, "And you get to learn this fun thing called Old Church Slavonic."

"*That,*" I thought with a shudder, "will never happen to *me.*"

INTRODUCTION

“Indestructible Hašek”

The lecture I shall give in response to your wishes will necessarily frustrate you in a number of ways. — Max Weber

Genius and history

In 1911, a manuscript appeared in Prague which detailed the history of an obscure political party whose members had, unbeknownst to broader Czech society, made a monumental contribution to human history. In the section of the text that traces the unexpected influence of the party's members, one chapter proclaims, “V dějinách celého lidstva vyskytl se jen jedinec tak všestranně dokonalý, a to jsem já” [“In all of human history there has appeared only a single individual so completely perfect, and that is me”]. The title of the chapter is “Největší spisovatel český, Jaroslav Hašek” [“The Greatest Czech Writer, Jaroslav Hašek”]. Its author was the Czech writer, Jaroslav Hašek.

Politické a sociální dějiny Strany mírného pokroku v mezích zákona, or *The Political and Social History of the Party of Moderate Progress Within the Limits of the Law* is the written counterpart to a stunt that Hašek and his friends pulled during the 1911 elections for the Reichsrat, the imperial parliament in Vienna. Hašek, then twenty-eight years old, improvised live speeches in an elaborate performance as the candidate of this invented party, and later wrote a 250-page “history” of the party. The manuscript would not be published until 1963, even then in a cobbled-together and somewhat improvised form.¹ In the chapter dedicated to his own greatness, Hašek describes false modesty as a disgrace, a sin, and most of all a scam. He has therefore decided to stop acting ashamed, admit his genius, and acknowledge that he will

¹ Because of the way the text bounced between publishers during its fifty-year limbo, the editor of the 1963 volume Zdena Ančík wrote, “The manuscript had a fate almost as dramatic as that of its author.”

“remain forever the most famous writer in the world.”² “The world,” he writes, “must come to this opinion, humankind must duly value me, and not only for my great gifts and immense abilities, but above all for my fantastic talent and my incomparably sincere character.”³ Hašek’s humor plays not only on the performativity of modesty, but also, and more pointedly, on his own reputation. Although he had already published dozens of short stories and newspaper articles, in 1911 neither Hašek’s readers nor the author himself believed he possessed a “fantastic talent.” It would be twenty years before he would begin work on his masterpiece, *Osudy dobrého vojáka Švejka za světové války* [*The Fates of the Good Soldier Švejk in the World War*]. Within a few years of its publication, *Švejk* became the first internationally acclaimed Czech novel of the twentieth century. Eventually, the world did come to something like the opinion Hašek presumptuously and prematurely proclaimed. The subject of my research is how his tongue-in-cheek pronouncement, meant and taken as a joke, turned into a prophecy.

This dissertation addresses itself to the authorial legend of Jaroslav Hašek (1883-1923). Although today he is best remembered for *Osudy dobrého vojáka Švejka za světové války*, [*The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the World War*, henceforth referred to as *Osudy*],⁴ unfinished but published serially between 1921 and 1923, Hašek was well-known during his lifetime as a short story-writer, journalist and, especially, prankster. His antics inspired a set of anecdotes which circulated orally in Prague and beyond, and which were eventually immortalized in a diverse set of memoirs written by various friends. These anecdotes are still repeated today by Hašek fans the world over. Hašek also encoded a great deal of self-referential

² “zůstanu vždy nejslavnějším spisovatelem světa” (Hašek, *Politické a sociální dějiny* 138).

³ “Svět musí přijít k tomuto názoru, lidstvo musí mne náležitě ocenit, a to nejen mé velké vlohy a obrovské schopnosti, nýbrž hlavně můj báječný talent a můj nevyrovnatelně ryzí charakter” (Hašek, *Politické a sociální dějiny* 136).

⁴ Conventionally, the novel is referred to by the shorthand *Švejk*. I prefer *Osudy* because it clearly distinguishes between the novel and its eponymous hero.

material into his fiction. Many of his early short stories were essentially hyperbolic versions of the anecdotes about him, which themselves were exaggerated retellings of original incidents. Sometimes during the writing process, he changed the names of the other people involved, either to be courteous or to replace an unremarkable name with a funny one. In his mature texts, namely *Osudy* and a set of short stories known as the Bugulma Tales, the self-referential gestures became more sophisticated and meaningful. Since his death in 1923, Hašek has become one of the most beloved twentieth-century Czech authors, and his legend remains robust, although critics as well as some of Hašek's friends and collaborators have long argued that there is a darkness to Hašek's life and fiction which is irreconcilable with the light-hearted anecdotes. Hašek scholars have generally made one of two choices: indulging in the legend, or ignoring it. To date, no one has theorized the Hašek legend thoroughly enough to uncover the principles that unite Hašek's outsized antics and his fiction.

The goal of my project is to offer a critical reading of Hašek's oeuvre that takes seriously the legend as a cultural product, one that he sometimes enacted and sometimes inscribed into his fiction. While it is a mistake to ascribe too much intentionality to Hašek, it is equally erroneous to underestimate the extent to which he controlled his authorship. Hašek created and managed his own authorial legend while remaining intentionally outside of, indeed antagonistic to, normative political and literary institutions. My reading of Hašek therefore also reconsiders the concepts of authorship and authority and examines the interplay of these two forces. Both authorship and authority become potent only through a dialogic exchange that establishes legitimacy; they have meaning only when perceived as meaningful. For Hašek, a writer and historical actor perennially at odds with institutional authorities, authorship represented the only opportunity for self-expression and self-definition. Obviously, Hašek was committed to

authorship as a practice, but it also appears as a motif in his fiction; many of his texts highlight characters who resist oppressive authorities through creation, and ultimately, self-creation.

In an essay from 1923, the year of Hašek's death, the Russian formalist critic Boris Tomashevsky coined the term "legendary biography." In Tomashevsky's usage, the legendary biography encompasses "the literary conception of the poet's life, and this conception was necessary as a perceptible background for the poet's literary works. The legends are a premise which the author himself took into account during the creative process" (51-52). Tomashevsky is most convincing when writing about the legendary biographies of Romantic poets such as Pushkin and Lord Byron. He writes, for example, that "Puškin was concerned about his 'biography,' and the image of a young exile with a hidden and unrequited love, set against the background of Crimean nature, fascinated him" (50). Tomashevsky is interested in the trends, events and decisions that shaped Pushkin's life, but only to the extent that the same forces also served as motifs in his literary texts. Most important for Tomashevsky is the construction of a poet-hero: the reader's perception, based on what she knows of the author, that a poem's lyrical speaker resembles its creator. This means that the poet's life must include dramatic episodes, such as enduring political exile or suffering through a passionate but impossible love affair, which become known to the readers. I would add, moreover, that the Romantic poet, like the hero of a Romantic poem, is courageous, sensitive and set apart from the rest of society. Insofar as Romanticism embraces nonconformity, a poet-hero's individualistic tendencies illustrate their exceptional nature. Romantic poet-heroes, assured of their own genius, become the willing outcasts of an uncomprehending normative culture. This is the tradition Hašek would build on and, in a brazenly anti-intellectual way, subvert.

Although their legends too were transmitted through oral anecdote, I perceive a qualitative difference between the poets' usage of legendary biography and Hašek's. Tomashevsky writes, "The poets used their lives to realize a literary purpose" (51) and this was certainly the case for Hašek too, but Hašek's literary purpose was irreverent and unassuming. Importantly, the fame that Hašek enjoyed during his lifetime was a sort of notoriety, the result of a mutual rejection between him and literary institutions as well as other centers of authority. His journalistic activities, for example, demonstrate how even when he seemed to be cooperating, Hašek was constantly subverting institutional authority. He habitually wrote for political newspapers whose views he did not share and, according to a famous (and verified) anecdote, for a while he wrote simultaneously for two rival newspapers under different pseudonyms (Parrott, *Bad Bohemian* 76).

Insofar as the legendary biography of a Romantic poet correlates to the values expressed by their work, the legend illustrates the poet's seriousness and worthiness of regard, in other words, their genius. In contrast, the shamelessly anti-intellectual Hašek engaged in the discourse of genius only ironically, as in the text that opened this introduction. In his lifetime he was referred to primarily as a humorist (*humorista*), a word which in Czech can mean either a writer of humorous texts or a person who likes to make jokes and amuse people (*Slovník spisovného jazyka českého*). The earliest incidence of Hašek being associated with "genius" comes from the Czech novelist Ivan Olbracht's influential early review of *Osudy*, published in the communist newspaper *Rudé právo* in 1921, in which he praises the novel's "geniální idiotství" ["brilliant idiocy"] (Olbracht, "Osudy dobrého vojáka Švejka" 16). A crucial component of Hašek's *historical* biography is that, while he was a sort of folk legend among the bohemian set, he

eschewed the kinds of literary institutions, such as professional criticism and prestigious publishing houses, that endow legitimacy.

There is more at stake in the legitimacy that Hašek spurned than the reputation of a single author. Hašek came of age in late imperial Austria-Hungary, served in the First World War and then in the Russian Civil War, and returned home to the newly-founded democratic Czechoslovak Republic. In each of these regimes, he encountered forms of authority that differed radically, or at least attempted to justify themselves by radically different means. Hašek reflected on topical political debates as well as his own experiences in his fiction, often by means of subversive satire and parody, but there were other, let's say more earnest attempts to frame and understand these issues. The emergence of sociology in the late nineteenth century was partially an attempt to formalize questions about the organization of society. In his satire Hašek frequently targeted the sociology professor Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, who would eventually become the first president of Czechoslovakia, but another early European sociologist had ideas about authority that were remarkably congruous with Hašek's. This was Max Weber. In 1918, Weber delivered a lecture at Munich University in which he attempted to define three basic justifications for legitimate authority; this text became his seminal essay "Politik als Beruf" ["Politics as a Vocation"].

To start with the internal justifications: there are in principle three grounds that legitimate any rule. First, the authority of "the eternal past," of custom, sanctified by a validity that extends back into the mists of time and is perpetuated by habit. This is "traditional" rule, as exercised by patriarchs and patrimonial rulers of the old style. Second, there is the authority of the extraordinary, personal gift of grace or charisma, that is, the wholly personal devotion to, and a personal trust in, the revelations, heroism, or other leadership qualities of an individual. This is "charismatic" rule of the kind practiced by prophets or – in the political sphere – the elected warlord or the ruler chosen by popular vote, the great demagogue, and the leaders of political parties. Lastly, there is rule by virtue of "legality," by virtue of the belief in the validity of legal statutes and practical "competence" based on rational rules. This type of rule is based on a person's willingness to carry out statutory duties obediently. Rule of this kind is to be found in the modern

“servant of the state” and all those agents of power who resemble him in this respect. (Weber, *The Vocation Lectures* 34).

The first decades of the twentieth century, the era in which Weber and Hašek both produced their greatest works, saw a massive shift in geo-political organization and structures of authority. One way to approach World War One and its aftermath is as a battle between different modes of legitimizing authority. Weber’s model, while not necessarily reliable for understanding the historical development of different regimes, is nevertheless a useful tool for categorizing the types of states that entered into and emerged out of the war.

In Weberian terms, the Central Powers might be said to represent a coalition of traditional authorities. The Habsburg Empire had extended over the Kingdom of Bohemia since the sixteenth century. While there were some democratic concessions such as the Reichsrat, by the early twentieth century nationalistic Czechs and other imperial subjects across Europe increasingly felt that traditional authority did not justify such extensive Habsburg rule. After the war, the emerging nation-states organized themselves as legal or rational authorities. The doctrine of self-determination justified creating borders around the historic homelands of ethno-national or linguistic groups with the implication that the emerging post-colonial states would establish democratic governments. Woodrow Wilson held up the Czechoslovak Republic, under the leadership of Masaryk, as a model rational authority. (It’s interesting to note that at that time, Soviet Russia was also an exemplary rational authority, albeit a rival type. Not until Stalin’s rise to power in the mid-1920s did it fully transition into a state defined by charismatic authority.)

Because of his interest in the process of legitimation, Weber’s classification system helps explain the unseen mechanisms that underlie obedience to various forms of authority, and we can apply his thinking metaphorically to literature. The storyteller, whether oral or compositional, assumes authority on two levels. In the first place, even at its most basic level, storytelling is an

authoritative act, implying one's ability to reliably convey information. Here the emphasis is on the story itself, what the Russian formalists called *fabula*. In the second place, the art of storytelling hinges on the ability to command the attention of the audience, conveying information not just reliably, but compellingly. This shifts the emphasis to the telling, or *syuzhet*. Just as Weber sought to explain how states gain the obedience of their subjects/citizens, I propose that storytellers can likewise be legitimized only through recognition by their audience. Authors, then, can employ various strategies to legitimize their narratives and hence win the readers' attention and even devotion. They might make rational appeals through the development of character psychology or use traditional means, such as references to legend, mythology, religion and folk tales.⁵ We encounter charismatic authority with authors whose personalities loom over their oeuvres, sending us back to their legendary biographies.

In his own life, Hašek struggled perennially with institutional authority, and much of his fiction hinges on antagonistic confrontations between powerful institutions and disempowered individuals. At the same time, the devotion Hašek inspired both as an author and as the hero of a robust folk legend suggests that he possessed a version of "the authority of the extraordinary, personal gift of grace or charisma" (*Vocation Lectures*, 34).⁶ In Hašek's life and work, all institutional authorities tend inevitably towards hypocrisy, exploitation and dehumanization

⁵ Of course, tradition itself is a constantly evolving realm; this mechanism might also include popular anecdotes and literary intertextuality

⁶ Grigory Freidin makes a similar claim for Osip Mandelstam as a charismatic poet in his book *A Coat of Many Colors*. Freidin writes, "Consonant with the early Formalist dictum that an artist's life must be judged as a work of art, Mandelstam's poetry, like that of his more illustrious contemporaries, is difficult to separate from the legendary biographical aura that surrounded it" (6). But the difference between a serious, and seriously regarded, poet and a raffish humorist has serious implications for questions of charisma and self-mythologization. Hašek at least usually performed arrogance only in order to ridicule the self-serious.

regardless of how they justify their claims to power.⁷ Unlike governmental authority, Hašek's personal charisma was not used to gain political power over others, but simply to assert its own right to exist free from compulsory obligations which ultimately benefit institutions more than individuals.

Hašek's distrust of institutional authority was indiscriminate; by the end of his life, he was equally hostile to political, ecclesiastical, military and cultural authorities. As he matured as an author, and as he moved away from journalism to focus purely on imaginative literature, Hašek identified another authority that warranted suspicion: narrative itself. While he had always been a master parodist of many genres, his later works express skepticism about the concept of non-fiction and the authority it implicitly presumes as a locus of truth-telling. In Hašek's career as a journalist and propagandist, he practiced writing as a tool for manipulation, an experience which appears in his later works, especially *Osudy*. But *Osudy* also bears the marks of a wholesale rejection of many conventional literary practices, including the psychological realism which characterized nineteenth-century novels. Experimental, iconoclastic and comic, *Osudy* has more in common with other modernist works from the interwar period than with the commemorative war literature written by veterans of the Czechoslovak Legions who fictionalized their own experiences in conventional heroic terms.

Tomashevsky likewise describes a historical shift away from nineteenth-century authors who assumed personal moral authority.

In the twentieth century there appeared a special type of writer with a demonstrative biography, one which shouted out: "Look at how bad and how impudent I am! Look! And don't turn your head away, because you are all just as bad, only you are faint-hearted and hide yourselves. But I am bold; I strip myself stark naked and walk around in public without feeling ashamed." (53)

⁷ In this way Hašek resembles the great Czech-German author who was his contemporary, Franz Kafka. For a classic comparison of the two authors, see Karel Kosík's essay "Hašek a Kafka neboli groteskní svět" ["Hašek and Kafka, or, the Grotesque World"].

This posturing is absolutely perceptible in Hašek's fiction, which is as unrestrained and irreverent as was his life. There was very little editing in his writing process, so that his texts sometimes come across as sloppy or unfinished as, indeed, *Osudy* and others were. But this is not necessarily an oversight. Hašek was firmly committed to improvisation as a creative principle. Spontaneous creative activity was central to his method as a writer and cabaret performer, as well as to the public pranks which I consider a form of proto-performance art. Although Hašek may not have consciously theorized it as such, I read his improvisatory practice as a facet of his resistance to rational narrative authority, championing instead the untamable creative mind. Jindřich Toman and Jindřich Chalupecký have both identified tendencies in Hašek's work which invite comparisons with Dadaism, even though Hašek was not in communication with the Dadaists in Zurich or elsewhere. Indeed, Hašek was probably not even aware of this school of art with which he shared a commitment to unrestrained creative production, as well as techniques like literary collage and photomontage (Toman, "Now You See It, Now You Don't"). Although Hašek self-mythologized, the convergence of his life and art was not closely managed. The Hašek legend, like everything else we attribute to him, was created through improvisation.

The title of my dissertation, "Man is Indestructible," is taken from Max Brod's review of an early stage adaptation of *Osudy*. Writer and editor Brod is best known in the United States for his involvement in another literary legend; it was he who disobeyed Franz Kafka's dying wish that his manuscripts be burned. Although they were contemporaries, fellow creatives and residents of the same small city, Hašek wrote in a very different milieu than the intellectual Czech-Germans Brod and Kafka. In his memoir *Život plný bojů* [*A Life Full of Struggle*], Brod admits that, while he knew who Hašek was, he never thought much of him as an author. But in 1923, shortly after Hašek's death, Brod attended a performance of *Osudy*, about which he wrote,

“You won’t leave the theater convinced that man is good, but you will have one beautiful certainty: man is indestructible” (Brod, “Dobrý voják Švejk” 28).⁸ Brod managed to identify the philosophical core of Hašek’s entire creative career, a career which produced a body of written work as well as a robust authorial legend. Even in Hašek’s lifetime of political pivots and other improvisations, we see the belief that unified his life story and his oeuvre – the individual alone is sacrosanct. Political, religious and cultural institutions have the power to shape our lives; they can conscript us, imprison us, deem us enemies and degenerates. But the human spirit is resilient, and in the lucky few, those we call heroes or geniuses, it’s unbreakable.

There is, however, another, darker way to understand the indestructible man: as the pernicious individual whose status within powerful institutions shields him from consequences. This dynamic is at play in both abuses of power, and those “legitimate” expressions of power that oppress, exploit and victimize disenfranchised people and communities, including war, environmental damage, and unfair labor practices. An indestructible man may also be an icon, a historic figure for example whose memory is so cherished, he becomes above reproach, and woe to the critic who would dare revise the narrative. In the former interpretation, relating to the indomitable human spirit, my translation of “člověk” as man is meant to have a gender-neutral meaning. In the latter case, however, such indestructible people are indeed almost always men – dictators, military leaders, clergymen, CEOs, the current American president. And while Brod describes Hašek’s Švejk as a “nezničitelný člověk” [“indestructible man”] in the former sense, it is in the latter sense that Hašek, over the course of his career, railed against indestructible men.

Historical context

⁸ “Z divadla neodcházíš přesvědčen, že člověk je dobrý, ale máš jednu krásnou jistotu: člověk je nezničitelný.”

Before beginning my analysis, I will provide a basic biographical sketch of the author. Through the story of his life, I will also explain the major moments of Czech history in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In order to provide a full view of the forces that shaped the writer's life and work, my historical summary will begin before the author's birth. While I will not follow the narrative of Czech history after his death, the final chapter of my dissertation concerns the way authors who survived Hašek articulated and negotiated his legacy.

Any analysis of Hašek's work must include a treatment of historical context for two main reasons. First, Hašek's involvement, however sardonic, in politics and the military means that he was directly involved in historical events in a way that not all writers are. Serving in the Austrian Army, Czechoslovak Legions and Red Army, Hašek witnessed and participated in the defining historical events of not only his generation but also his nation, and indeed Europe at large. So historical circumstances are clearly critical for understanding Hašek's life, but they also come to bear on his work. As a journalist and a fiction-writer Hašek satirized the events that made up the news of his day, and a skeptical attitude towards journalism and historiography consistently orients his creative work. His satire of history is one of the major areas of my research.

Confusion surrounds Hašek's biography. On a purely material level, Hašek left behind no diaries that might serve as an unmediated source for understanding the events of his life, or at least his interpretation of those events. His correspondence, when it has been preserved, is often problematic because Hašek approached letter-writing as he did every other writing project: as an opportunity for clowning, parody and exaggeration. This brings us to what is, from my perspective, the most consequential and interesting cause for confusion: Hašek's life is distinguished by pranks and mystifications. They range in duration, impact and notoriety, but cumulatively they have the effect of obscuring what is "true" in Hašek's biography. Any account

of Hašek's life will be made up of a combination of verifiable facts and elements of legend. For example, in his extensive cultural history *Prague in Black and Gold*, Peter Demetz includes a few pages about Hašek. In addition to an admiring discussion of the plot and impact of *Osudy*, Demetz provides an overview of Hašek's character. Demetz' biographical sketch, however, is beset with inaccuracies, including the detail that Hašek's Russian second wife was of aristocratic origins. In fact, this was a typical Hašek yarn: returning to Prague from Russia in 1920, he introduced his new bride as Princess Lvova, when in truth she was a printing press worker proud of her proletarian background (Parrott, *Bad Bohemian* 202; Pytlík, *Toulavé house* 270; I discuss this episode at length in my final chapter). And yet, however much the Hašek legend deviates from fact, the biographer ignores this component of Hašek's life at her own peril. A drive to mystify, deceive and thereby reveal the inner-workings of authoritative discourse was an essential part of Hašek's life and artistic method.

Many writers and historians have told versions of Hašek's life-story, and their attempts can be divided into three categories: memoirs detailing a friendship with the author, ideologically-motivated reconstructions, and biographies intended primarily to parse fact from fiction. In the fourth chapter of this dissertation, I treat the memoirs as literary texts, but for my historiographical purposes, I have relied primarily on the biographies by Emmanuel Frynta, Radko Pytlík and Cecil Parrott, all of which fall squarely in the third category. Pytlík's painstaking bibliography *Data, fakty, dokumenty* provides the most complete overview of Hašek's publication history. Parrott's book remains the most detailed and dispassionate English-language account of Hašek's life but, as he admits in the introduction, it hews extremely closely to the order and content of Pytlík's *Toulave house* [*Wandering gosling*].⁹ These biographers set

⁹ Parrott's most important literary contribution is his 1973 translation of *Osudy* which is, to this date, the standard English-language version.

themselves the task of presenting an account of Hašek's life that allows for, but does not rely on, the myths propagated by Hašek and his devotees. While drawing on their accounts, I intend to go one step further by advancing a critical theory of how to read Hašek's legendary biography. In any case, there has been no new biography of Hašek in forty years. While invaluable, the books by Frynta, Pytlík and Parrott are nevertheless methodologically and discursively dated.

The period of Hašek's short life, from 1883 to 1923, encompasses the first of four dramatic political transformations which make up Czech twentieth-century history. To contextualize the metamorphoses of twentieth-century Czech political culture, I'll briefly summarize the history which created the conditions for change. Hašek was born into the Kingdom of Bohemia, a part of the Austrian empire since 1526, when Ferdinand of Habsburg was elected king (Judson, 21). In Czech national memory, Habsburg domination is usually dated to the Battle of White Mountain in 1620, when the Czech Hussite army was defeated by a confederation of Austrian and German Catholic forces.¹⁰ Modern Czech nationalism began as an idea equally cultural and political. The nineteenth century *Národní obrození* [National Revival] was a decades-long process of reviving, updating and promoting the Czech language and culture in the light of centuries of Germanic hegemony. Philologists, historians, poets, novelists, ethnographers and journalists led the charge, and it was not uncommon for adherents to work in a combination of those disciplines. The goal of this cultural renaissance was not necessarily governmental autonomy over the geopolitical space. After all, Bohemia enjoyed a fair amount of political autonomy, and her needs were represented by elected local officials serving on the Reichsrat, the Austrian imperial parliament. Rather, the *národní obrození* was an expression of

¹⁰ Inveterate myth-buster Andrea Orzoff points out that the Bohemian army was "Czechified" in later historiography, namely in the profoundly influential writings of František Palacký. She argues that in reality, the forces was made up of "mainly German-speaking officers, commanding a mercenary army" (Orzoff, 28).

romantic-era nationalism along the lines of Johann Gottfried Herder, which located the essence of a nation in language and literature, both written and oral. It was an attempt at identifying, articulating and promoting a lofty version of the Czech collective identity.

Medieval history provided one major source for the ethos of a modern Czech identity, along with images and concepts that would later be employed in the First World War and creation of the Czechoslovak Republic. The historian František Palacký began this tradition, and proposed that rationality, humanism and Christian ethics distinguished the Czech national character (Orzoff, 27). The martyred fourteenth-century reformer Jan Hus and the warriors that fought to defend his teachings embodied this; many of the Czech units in the First World War were named after legendary Hussites like Jan Žižka. But where medieval history failed to provide examples, inspiration had to be forced, or forged.

The notorious rukopis Královédvorský and rukopis Zelenohorský [Queen's Court and Green Mountain manuscripts, respectively], the work of philologists Václav Hanka and Josef Linda, are poems written in 1817-1818 in the style of, and passed off as, medieval manuscripts. Like the poems of Ossian, Hanka and Linda's creations were hugely popular and extremely influential when they first appeared. Questions as to their authenticity were raised almost immediately, notably by Hanka's mentor, the Revival-era philologist Josef Dobrovský.¹¹ But the texts' popularity and centrality to the hard-won idea of a Czech nation made them effectively untouchable. They were not conclusively debunked until the 1880s, when a group of philologists, scientists and historians, at great professional and personal risk, launched a coordinated effort to prove the texts' fraudulence. The debate played out in the pages of different journals with

¹¹ In an ironic turn, the historian Edward Keenan proposed in 2003 that Dobrovský was the author of the controversial Russian text, *Слово о полку Игореве*. To this day, authorship of that potentially spurious document has not been definitively established.

various political affiliations, but the winning arguments ran in the journal *Athenaeum*, edited by the young sociologist Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk. I will return to the figure of Masaryk later on in this introduction, and many times throughout the dissertation. With his steadfast pursuit of his vision, Masaryk (1850-1937) provides a political, methodological and moral counterpoint to the anarchic and unpredictable Hašek, yet it's worth noting that both men consciously cultivated their own larger-than-life legends.

Hašek was born to a middle-class family in Prague in 1883. His father died when he was nine years old, imperiling the family's finances, but both Hašek and his brother Bohuslav managed to complete school. Hašek received a gymnasium-level education and then went to work as a pharmacist's assistant. He was employed first by a Mr. Kokoška, then Průša (Pytlík 54), names which bear mentioning only because they are the butt of Švejk's famous first joke, in which he mistakes the assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand for two Ferdinands from his neighborhood in Prague: "One is a messenger at Průša's, the chemist's, and once by mistake he drank a bottle of hair oil there. And the other is Ferdinand Kokoška who collects dog manure" (4).¹²

In 1900 he went to study at the Czechoslovak Commercial Academy, a premier educational institution. Hašek did not distinguish himself as a student, but his talents as a humorist were beginning to emerge. A professor of English predicted that Hašek would one day become "the Czech Mark Twain" (Pytlík, *Toulavé house* 57). At the academy he met Ladislav Hájek, with whom he collaborated on the 1903 book of lyrical parodies *Májové výkřiky*. Hájek would become one of the few relatively permanent fixtures in Hašek's life.

¹² "Jednoho, ten je sluhou u drogisty Průši a vypil mu tam jednou omylem láhev nějakého mazání na vlasy, a potom znám ještě Ferdinanda Kokošku, co sbírá ty psí hovínka." (Hašek, *Osudy dobrého vojáka Švejka za světové války* Díl 1: 9)

Hašek drew on his experiences at the academy in his first humorous publications. For example, the story “Obchodní akademie” (“The Commercial Academy”), printed in the humor magazine *Karikatury* (*Caricatures*) in 1909, satirized the Commercial Academy’s rector (Pytlík, *Toulavé house* 56). The unflattering portrait, which alleges that the rector was a former servant of the Russian tsar, led to a libel suit against the editor of the paper. The court ordered the then-26-year old Hašek to publish a letter of apology, but the resulting text was steeped in sarcasm and ambiguity (Parrott, *Bad Bohemian* 44). Already in this episode, the main impulses of Hašek’s method emerge. His apology conformed to the formal demands of the genre, but the subversive contents undermined its supposed purpose; the letter was effectively another work of satire.

Another habit that Hašek developed around the same time was traveling. After graduating from the Commercial Academy in 1902, Hašek began to journey throughout Central and Eastern Europe. He was sometimes accompanied by his brother or a friend, such as the anarchist author Zdeněk Matěj Kuděj who later wrote a memoir of this time. Moving mostly on foot, Hašek traveled throughout Slovakia, Galicia, Hungary, the Balkans and today’s Romania. His experiences abroad formed the basis for his early publications in 1903 and 1904 in *Narodní listy* [*National pages*]. These were mostly brief, humorous pastorals depicting village life throughout the empire, as well as exaggerated tales of life among the “gypsies.” With his natural ear for languages, Hašek picked up German, Hungarian and Serbian on his travels (Parrott, *Bad Bohemian* 63). The inclusion of multi-lingual vocabulary was a distinguishing feature of these early texts and would remain a signature of Hašek’s fiction. Although he was briefly employed by the Slavia bank, Hašek’s itinerant habits were at odds with steady work, and in any case, his writing generated enough income for his bohemian lifestyle. In 1903, in addition to co-authoring

the book *Májové výkřiky*, Hašek published seventeen pieces in newspapers and journals. In 1904, his publications numbered forty-five.

The Czech press was deeply connected to the political party system, a symbiotic relationship established in the nineteenth century. Most newspapers advanced the political agenda of their owners or editors, and many papers functioned as the official organ of a given political party. In her book *Battle for the Castle: The Myth of Czechoslovakia in Europe 1914-1948*, Andrea Orzoff points out that a proliferation of new political parties in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century created a more vibrant and diverse “journalistic marketplace of ideas” (36). Among the important publications were *Národní listy* [*National Pages*], a liberal newspaper founded by František Palacký and other architects of the National Revival; by the early twentieth century, it had become the mouthpiece of the Young Czech Party. The progressive journalist Karel Havlíček Borovský promoted liberal politics and national autonomy for the Czechs in his capacity as editor of *Národní noviny* [*National News*] (Orzoff, 32-33). When Masaryk founded the Realist Party at the turn of the twentieth century, he took over the editorship of *Čas* [*Time*]. For most belletrists and public intellectuals, journalism was the path to prominence and political influence.

Hašek first became involved with political journalism and activism in 1904 when he fell in with the Prague anarchist circle (Parrott, *Bad Bohemian* 53). Soon he was not only contributing to their newspaper *Omladina* [*The Youth*], but also sleeping in their editorial offices. At the same time that he was publishing journalistic pieces in the radical anarchist press, he was writing stories for the organ of the politically dominant Young Czech party, *Národní Listy*. Participating in anarchist rallies and actions led to Hašek’s first brief spells of imprisonment, but it was probably for more mundane reasons that he broke with the group; Parrott suspects that

working full-time as an anarchist agitator was financially untenable (58), even for someone not paying rent. For a few years, Hašek confined his publication to more mainstream outlets, such as the illustrated cultural magazines *Světobzor* [*View to the World*] and *Besedy lidu* [*People's Chats*].

In 1907 Hašek renewed his association with the anarchists, contributing to *Nova Omladina* [*The New Youth*] as well as *Komuna* [*The Commune*], of which he soon became the editor (Parrott, *Bad Bohemian* 67). And yet, even when Hašek published in more politically moderate papers, he often did so with an irreverent spirit. In 1908, he was publishing in both *České slovo* [*The Czech Word*] and *Právo lidu* [*The Right of the People*], the organs of the rival Social Democrat and National Socialist parties, respectively (Parrott, *Bad Bohemian* 76).¹³ Many of these works are unsigned or pseudonymously authored, giving Hašek the opportunity to polemicize with different versions of himself (Parrott, *Bad Bohemian* 76). According to Parrott, Hašek once wrote a denunciation of the leaders of the National Socialist party and brought it to the *České slovo* offices with a threat to publish it in *Právo lidu*. By the end of the meeting, he had changed the names in the text to those of the Social Democrat leaders so that it could be published in *České slovo* instead.

During that year, he met Jarmila Mayerová, a young woman whose liberal lifestyle seems to have been somewhat in conflict with her family's conservative values. The two fell in love, but Mayerová's parents opposed the match on account of Hašek's affiliation with anarchism and lack of steady employment. Eventually, her parents made the continuation of their relationship and eventual marriage contingent upon Hašek's gainful, and non-controversial, employment. Hašek turned to an old friend and collaborator from his days at the Commercial Academy, Ladislav Hájek, who was then working at the popular science magazine *Svět zvířat* [*World of*

¹³ The Czech National Socialist Party has no historical or ideological relation to German *Nationalsozialismus*.

Animals].¹⁴ Hájek arranged for Hašek to join the staff of the magazine. Hájek soon quit the job because of a personal dispute with the owner, Václav Fuchs, with the expectation that his friend would join him in an act of solidarity. Instead, Hašek opportunistically replaced Hájek as editor.

In addition to editorial work, Hašek became a man Friday for Fuchs, running his dog kennel and handling his pet baboon Julča. Mayerová's father had agreed that the couple could marry if Hašek found a permanent position, and Fuchs agreed to raise Hašek's salary after they wed, so in May 1910 they were married. This period and the pranks Hašek pulled while in Fuchs' employ provided rich literary material that would make its way into a number of different works. For example, Hašek's experiences with the baboon inspired his story cycle "Má drahá přítelkyně Julča" ("My dear friend Julča"), published in the illustrated journal *Zlatá Praha* [*Golden Prague*] in 1914.¹⁵ The most notorious of Hašek's *Svět zvířat* exploits owes its fame to Hašek's own retelling of the story; Hašek fictionalized this episode in *Osudy dobrého vojáka Švejka*, a treatment I discuss in depth in chapter three of this dissertation. In brief, Hašek began writing accounts of invented animals in the style of factual, scientific reports. Complete with quotations from imaginary authorities, Hašek's fabrications had the form and appearance of advertisements, science-journalism and advice on pet care. During this period, readers of *Svět zvířat* would learn not only of discoveries of unusual species in far-off corners of the globe but also, more locally, of the muskrat infestation in the Vltava, and which Prague pet store sold the best werewolves (Parrott, *Bad Bohemian* 92). Eventually Fuchs had to fire Hašek in order to save

¹⁴According to legend, Hájek's employment at the magazine was also bound up with a romantic relationship: he was in love with the owner's daughter, a fact that was exploited by his employer.

¹⁵ Two years after the appearance of "Julča," Kafka published "Ein Bericht für eine Akademie" ("A Report to an Academy"), which also deals with a non-human primate moving through human society.

his paper, but by that point, the author had a wife and a wealth of comic material, perhaps his two real motivations for taking the job in the first place.

Hašek unleashed two important creations in 1911: the good soldier Švejk, and the Party of Moderate Progress within the Limits of the Law. The unfinished four-volume novel *Osudy* is, in fact, the third vehicle for the title character. The earliest Švejk text, titled simply “Dobrý voják Švejk” [“The Good Soldier Švejk”] appeared in 1911 the humor magazine *Karikatury*, edited by Hašek’s friend Josef Lada who would go on to provide the iconic illustrations for the novel. In 1912 that text, retitled “Švejk stojí proti Italii” [“Švejk faces Italy”], along with subsequent installments and additional Hašek pieces, was published in book-form as *Dobrý voják Švejk a jiné podivné historky* [*The Good Soldier Švejk and Other Strange Stories*]. Hašek sold the third installment in the cycle to *Dobrá kopa* [*Good Guy*], a rival humor magazine, allegedly because he was irritated with Lada over late payments. Lada sought revenge by hiring another humorist to publish, under the pseudonym Jaroslav Ašek, a story in which Švejk is executed (Parrott, *Bad Bohemian* 108). In any case, there is some continuity between the early stories and the novel, although the latter was a far more ambitious project. For one thing, in the early stories we see Švejk as a soldier in the Austrian army, a past he alludes to in the later novel. For another, Švejk always acts like a buffoon. It’s only the sophistication of his buffoonery that changes.

The other important Hašek invention of 1911 was the parodic political party alluded to in the beginning of this introduction. *Strana mírného pokroku v mezích zákona* [the Party of Moderate Progress Within the Limits of the Law], of which Hašek was the candidate, had its headquarters at Kravín, a pub in Prague’s Vinohrady neighborhood. In fact, the pub gave rise to the party. In his memoir *Byli a bylo* [*They Were and It Was*; discussed at length in my fourth chapter], František Langer recalls how each political party was associated with a bar, so a group

of friends decided to drum up business for their favorite watering hole by establishing a party there.¹⁶ All of Hašek's skills as a humorist contributed to the artistic, not to say political, success of the party. Delivering improvised speeches to crowds at the increasingly packed Kravín, he mimicked the campaigns of real politicians, satirized their reputed duplicitousness and the ineffectiveness of imperial administration. He touched on topical concerns, such as women's right to vote, and penned a party anthem that parodied a popular anarchist song which was sung at the beginning of every rally. Hašek began writing *The Social and Political History of the Party of Moderate Progress Within the Limits of the Law* during the campaign, but it was not published until 1963, in part because Hašek's attacks on real candidates were potentially libelous. The 1963 book combines Hašek's hyperbolic accounts of the origins of the party with original speeches and manifestoes and other texts from that. Much of the original manuscript is in Mayerová's handwriting, pointing to her contribution as Hašek's amanuensis and collaborator (Parrott, *Bad Bohemian* 110). Indeed, the full extent of Mayerová's involvement in Hašek's work remains to be identified, although a number of the memoirists remark on the importance of her contributions.

Parrott suggests that the written *Social and Political History of the Party* is the "civil counterpart to *Švejk*, doing to Bohemian and monarchical political life what *Švejk* does to the army and spirit of militarism" (*Bad Bohemian* 120). True as that may be, the literary text began as a byproduct of the stunt. The party was essentially a work of collaborative long-term performance art; the ingenuity and appeal of the project is easier to glean from Langer's account of the experience than from Hašek's ex post facto written texts. In fact, the party launched

¹⁶ Like Hájek's connection to *Svět zvířat*, the plot around Kravín was an elaborate romantic intrigue. Eduard Drobílek, one of the founding members, was in love with the daughter of Kravín's owner, and thought that he might curry favor by raising the profile of the bar.

Hašek's career as a cabaret performer. Some of the other participants in the project, such as Emil Artur Longen, were stars of the Prague cabaret scene, and Hašek's talents as a performer and short-form author, not to mention his irreverent brand of humor, made him a natural. But stage presence does not always translate to acting skills, and Hašek's career as a performer suffered because of his carelessness and problematic drinking (Parrott, *Bad Bohemian* 131). Sadly, his marriage was another victim of these habits. For longer and longer spells of time, Mayerová would stay with her relatives while Hašek, moving in with friends, indulged in a bohemian lifestyle. The couple continued to meet, and Mayerová gave birth to a son, Richard, in 1912, but by the time Hašek was called up for service in the world war, his marriage was in all meaningful ways already over. Hašek identified himself as unmarried and childless on his 1915 enlistment form (Pytlík, *Toulavé house* 212). Probably this was no prankish obfuscation of the facts but rather a statement of what was true, practically if not legally.

First World War

It is extremely difficult to trace Hašek's political "development" over the course of the war. A full account of his life must allow for inconsistency, contradiction and seemingly irrational decision-making. Scholars and critics sometimes write about Švejk as an "everyman" whose narrative encompasses the Czech experience of World War One. The same cannot be said of Hašek, who was already a well-known public figure when he enlisted in the armed forces. Moreover, he contributed to a variety of newspapers that made up the robust sphere of Czech war journalism. This means that he was participating in polemical debates as the direction of Czech war effort changed course.

Czech participation in the Habsburg war effort was complicated, and later historians with a Czech nationalist agenda had reason to whitewash the tendentious, controversial or just plain

embarrassing aspects of the story. Because the Czechoslovak Republic (known today as the First Republic) was established after the collapse of the Habsburg Empire, there is a tendency, especially in the earliest Czech accounts of the war, to suggest that from the very beginning of the war Czechs were resistant to Austria and set on national self-determination. In fact, many Czechs were loyal subjects of Austria, and their greatest ambition was that their contribution to the war effort would lead to raising the political status of the Czech lands within the empire, akin to the privileges that Hungary enjoyed. In *Osudy* Hašek unapologetically depicts ambiguity in the Czechs' loyalty, especially among the high-ranking officers, such as Lieutenant Lukáš, who says to his recruits, "Let's be Czechs, but no one need know about it. I'm a Czech too" (Hašek, *The Good Soldier Švejk* 166). Those Czechs who did imagine a future free from Austria tended to frame it in terms of nationalistic kinship, drawing the doctrine of pan-Slavism to envision a Slavic empire united under the Romanov throne. And just as in the pre-war era when Hašek wrote for newspapers that represented a multiplicity of political orientations, his flexibility travelled with him to the front. At various points throughout his service in the war, Hašek espoused monarchist conservatism, nationalism, revolutionary radicalism and, eventually, Bolshevik communism.

Many of Hašek's experiences as a soldier in World War One appear, recognizable if transformed, in *Osudy*. He attributes some of his own experiences to individual characters, especially Švejk and Marek, while other characters in the novel are based on people he encountered. Frynta and Pytlík have done the work of identifying the historical source for many of characters and episodes; I will refer to this information only when it is directly relevant to my overarching themes. Hašek enrolled as a one-year volunteer at the end of January 1915 and was sent with the 91st battalion to the Bohemian city Budějovice, expelled from his training program

and frequently jailed during his service (Parrott, *Bad Bohemian* 145). These experiences are preserved in the character of Marek, a major focus in my discussion of *Osudy* in chapter three. Although Hašek did attempt to desert when the battalion was ordered to the front, his behavior as a soldier seems more prankish than treasonous. In fact, with time Hašek proved himself a capable and enthusiastic soldier, eventually earning a medal for bravery (Parrott, *Bad Bohemian* 150).

The creation of an independent Czechoslovak army with its own national and political ideology emerged out of the political organizing of Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk and Edvard Beneš. Masaryk had served as a representative in the Reichsrat, first in 1891 for the Young Czech Party, then in 1907 for his own Realist Party. Masaryk took these posts seriously, but we recall that Hašek parodied the whole premise of representation in an imperial system with his Party of Moderate Progress. When war broke out in 1914, Masaryk went abroad to begin forging relationships with the Allies and laying the groundwork for a future Czechoslovak state. He left behind a group of political actors working for a free Czech or Czechoslovak Republic who would report to him on political events at home (Demetz, 326). Many of these Masaryk loyalists would go on to make up the cabinet of his presidential administration.

In Masaryk's vision, an independent Czechoslovak army would collaborate with the Allied powers to defeat Austria. Initially called the Družina [Company], two populations were drawn upon to furnish this outfit with troops: the ethnic Czech population in Russia and Ukraine, and Czech soldiers in the Austrian army who had been taken prisoner in Russia. In the beginning of the movement therefore, all its troops were volunteers; general mobilization would not begin until after the Russian Revolution changed the nature of the conflict (Parrott, *Bad Bohemian* 172). Many in the latter category joined, however, not for ideological reasons but because

service in this new Czech army seemed preferable to remaining in the filthy and harsh prison camps.

Hašek was taken prisoner in mid-September 1915 and brought to Totskoye, a camp in the Orenburg oblast of Russia. Threatened with typhus and feeling no loyalty to Austria when he encountered Družina recruiters, he volunteered and was put to work as a recruiter himself (Parrott, *Bad Bohemian* 162-3). This was an unexpectedly apt use of his skills as a charismatic improvisational orator. In terms of physical health, Hašek suffered from the same minor ailment as Švejk: rheumatism. Whereas the Austrian army sent Hašek to the front, the Družina declared him unfit for service, although it is likely that his health had been weakened in the prison camp (Parrott, *Bad Bohemian* 160). He was therefore given a clerical assignment and allowed to write propagandistic journalism for the First Regiment of Jan Hus (Pytlík, *Toulavé house* 229). The first paper he wrote for in this context was *Čechoslovan* [*Czecho-slav*], the Kiev-based organ of the politically reactionary Svaz (the League), led by the pan-Slavist Václav Vondrak.¹⁷ Although most of Hašek's contributions were humorous feuilletons, he also wrote political op-eds advocating for a Romanov-dominated pan-Slavist empire. His chameleon-like ability to adopt radically different political perspectives was an application of his skills as a parodist, here put to the purpose of survival rather than humor.

After a brief spell of diligence and sobriety, Hašek fell back into his habits of alcohol-fueled irreverence. He was given to insulting the Russian officers who still held many of the top-ranking positions in the Družina (Parrott, *Bad Bohemian* 164). As in pre-war Prague, Hašek was once again sentenced to short spells in prison. Perhaps it was this return to form that revived another old memory: the figure of Švejk. Hašek wrote the feuilleton "Dobrý voják Švejk

¹⁷ Pan-Slavism, a political philosophy that emphasized unity among the Slavic nations reached its peak popularity in the mid-nineteenth century. WWI-era organizing for a Slavic empire proved to be the movement's swan song.

v zajetí” [“The Good Soldier Švejk in Captivity”] in February 1917, and it was published in book-form by the Czechoslovak press in spring of that year (Pytlík, *Toulavé house* 232; Parrott erroneously dates the publication to 1916 and claims that Hašek wrote it in prison (*Bad Bohemian* 166), à la Cervantes). This version of Švejk is closer to the character in the novel; a soldier in the world war, he is repeatedly stymied in his outsized desire to serve the emperor by being sent to prisons and asylums (Parrott, *Bad Bohemian* 166).

While Hašek was content to flit among parties and political viewpoints, the Czech army was in the midst of a power struggle. On the one hand was the Petrograd-based Národní rada [National Council], led by Masaryk and his allies who were working in Paris for support of a Czech state. They were opposed by the reactionary Svaz in Kiev. In some ways, the Legionnaires were the pawns in the political chess game, as the ground troops in Russia had no way to participate in the political maneuvering that was determining their fate, no way except to revolt. Indeed, the divergence between the soldiers’ will and the leaders’ agenda was at times vast. A famous incident that illustrates this is the death of Colonel Josef Švec, who committed suicide when his troops refused to obey him (Sak, 86). The Legionnaire veteran and author Rudolf Medek would immortalize this episode in his 1930 drama *Plukovník Švec* [*Colonel Švec*].

The Russian Revolution completely redefined the goals and identity of the Legions. The Legions had enjoyed an alliance with the tsarist Russian government based on both national kinship and political alignment. The Legions’ origin as a subdivision of the Russian Imperial Army would prove decisive for their eventual alliance with the White Army. But the first consequence of the February Revolution was to settle the dispute between the monarchist League and the democratic National Council. With the toppling of the Romanov dynasty, the National Council, reorganized as the Odbočka [the Branch], decisively claimed legitimacy and forged an

alliance with the members of the Russian Provisional Government (Parrott, *Bad Bohemian* 160). Hašek had long been critical of Masaryk and continued to voice his rebukes after the question of power and leadership was settled. In pieces published in *Čechoslovan* he attacked members of the Odbočka, many of whom would go on to hold prominent leadership positions in the First Republic. As a result of the power shift, Hašek was dismissed from the staff of *Čechoslovan* and the ranks of the Svaz. But he had also attacked the radical revolutionary group which had in the meantime been formed and launched its own newspaper, *Revolution*, and so he could not be published there either. Demoted, Hašek was forbidden from all publishing ventures associated with the Legions.

He was, however, allowed to participate in military actions. In June 1917, Hašek took part in the Battle of Zborov, which has been memorialized as the first major action of the Czechoslovak Legions. Again, we can look to the literary work of Rudolf Medek, whose 1918 poem-cycle *Zborov* became the basis of a propagandistic 1938 film with the same title. And yet the battle is more significant for political than military reasons. Chairman of the Russian Provisional Government Alexander Kerensky was suspicious that the Czechoslovak Legions might yet harbor feelings of loyalty to Austria-Hungary. At the battle in the Galician town of Zborov (in today's Ukraine), the Czechoslovak Legions fought alongside the Russian army to defeat an Austro-Hungarian unit. The actions of the Legions convinced Kerensky of both their martial aptitude and political reliability. Hašek, for his part, was reinstated as a clerk in the regimental office and awarded the Medal of St. George, the highest honor of the Russian military (Parrott, *Bad Bohemian* 174).

But as the Czechoslovak Legions rose in prominence, the Russian army unraveled. The World War was a hugely unpopular effort in Russia, and the abdication of the tsar in March 1917

had made its continuation debatable. Kerensky's Provisional Government was committed to prolonging the involvement, in part out of an obligation to the Allies on whom the weakened country relied for supplies. But the Bolshevik takeover that comprised the October Revolution immediately brought about a drastic change for the Russian military and the Czechoslovak Legions on Russian lands. As members of the Russian army reshuffled along lines of support for or opposition to the Bolsheviks, Masaryk urged the legions not to intervene in what he considered an internal Russian affair, while Bolshevik leadership grew increasingly wary of the threat posed by this well-organized and relatively well-equipped outfit with its ties to the former tsarist military and the emerging White Army.

The signing of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in March 1918 officially ended Russian participation in the World War, and cemented the Russian-German alliance, making the Legions severely vulnerable. Masaryk arranged with the Allies to have the Legions evacuated out of Russia and transferred to the western front in France, leaving the Russians to their own domestic conflict. Many Russian ports were occupied because of the Civil War and so it was decided, counterintuitively, that the Legions would travel eastward on the Trans-Siberian Railroad to Vladivostok to be evacuated via the Pacific Ocean. But this plan was met with opposition by those who wanted to stay in Russia and give their full support to the White Army, considered to be the inheritors of the democratic ideals of the Provisional Government and the last defense against a permanent Bolshevik takeover. In the end, historical exigencies won out above political considerations. Trotsky had ordered the disarmament of the Legions, increasing the Czech and Slovak soldiers' feelings of vulnerability and insecurity. A tussle broke out at Chelyabinsk when a train carrying legionnaires was attacked, although the instigators turned out to be not Soviet fighters but Hungarian prisoners of war. In any case the incident convinced the Legionnaires not

to give up their weapons under any circumstances (Sak, 29). In a series of uprisings, considered by some historians to be an outright revolt against their own military leadership, the Legions began occupying the cities on the train's route. They were in league with local branches of the White Army and anti-Bolshevik political groups, namely the Social Revolutionaries (Sak, 43). In Siberia the Red Army was neither organized nor powerful enough to push back the Legionnaires. Between May and July 1918, the Legions came to occupy the entire length of the train's route through Siberia (Sak, 61). This episode came to be known as the Siberian anabasis, and I will return to it in the third chapter of this dissertation.

At the same time, the immanent fall of the Austrian army meant the end of imperial power. Masaryk spent a fair amount of time in 1916 and 1917 in Russia negotiating to direct the course of the Legions. But that was all in the service of his broader political strategy of earning support among the Allied powers for the creation of a Czechoslovak state. Between late June and early September of 1918, France, Britain and the United States recognized the Czechoslovak right to independence (Orzoff, 48). While this was in line with Woodrow Wilson's doctrine of national self-determination, Masaryk and his supporters from a number of the Czech pre-war political parties effectively established a democratic state even before Austrian capitulation and the end of the war (Orzoff, 50). Masaryk would be president and other posts were divided among his supporters who had been active in politics and journalism during the pre-war era.

In all this, Hašek was moving further to the political left and the geographic east. Inspired by the radical politics of the Russian Revolution, Hašek began espousing more and more revolutionary opinions in his writings for *Čechoslovan*. Before the Legionnaires began spontaneously occupying Siberian towns, Hašek had criticized the plan to evacuate the troops, arguing that they should stay and support the revolutionary Russians in their struggle. This was a

viewpoint shared by many in the Legions. Still there was no consistency to Hašek's political thinking. When a Czech left-wing extremist group emerged under the leadership of the communist Alois Muna, Hašek first attacked them for failing to support the Legions. Later, Muna conspired with Bolshevik forces in an effort to overthrow Masaryk and take control of the armed forces, and Hašek participated in the attempted putsch, agitating the soldiers and calling for the arrest of the legionnaire leadership. But when the attempted coup was suppressed, the conspirators fled, leaving Hašek behind (Parrott, *Bad Bohemian* 181). By March of 1918, Hašek had alienated both the mainstream Czechoslovak leadership, and its most radical critics. Unable to publish in Muna's paper, to say nothing of the official legionnaire press, he decamped to Moscow.

Russian translation

In Moscow, Hašek joined the staff of *Průkopník* [*Pioneer*], a Czech-language communist newspaper whose staff had no connection to the Legions and no knowledge of Hašek's reputation as a troublemaker (Parrott, *Bad Bohemian* 184). He contributed articles that criticized the leadership of the Legions for withdrawing the troops from Russia. In March 1918 he officially joined the Communist Party. While many legionnaires wished to stay in Russia to fight alongside the Whites, Hašek urged the Czech troops to support the Bolsheviks. Although in his earliest Moscow publications Hašek expressed respect for Masaryk, he became increasingly pointed in his attacks on the Odbočka. He formally resigned from the Legions in April 1918 by means of an open letter in which he once more criticized their decision to abandon Russia (Parrott, *Bad Bohemian* 185).

Hašek again began working as an army propagandist and recruiter, this time urging legionnaires to join the Red Army. Together with other Czech communists, Hašek set up a

recruitment office in Samara, the Volga city through which all trains carrying legionnaires had to pass (Parrott, *Bad Bohemian* 184).¹⁸ Masaryk allowed these recruitment attempts in an effort to promote good relations with the Bolsheviks and in any case, only a few Czechs deserted the Legions for the Red Army (Parrott, *Bad Bohemian* 184-5). But while Hašek's actions were legally tolerated, he was taken to task journalistically. Prominent legionnaire writers Josef Kopta and Rudolf Medek, among others, denounced him in the military press (Parrot, *Bad Bohemian* 185 and 189). The literary antagonism between the author of *The Good Soldier*, and the good soldier-authors, was already underway.

Legal consequences for Hašek's anti-Legions actions and journalistic activities were a constant threat. In late May 1918, the legionnaires began to clash with Czech communists. As the Legions approached Samara with a warrant to arrest Hašek for treason, the author escaped, briefly disguised as a woman (Parrott, *Bad Bohemian* 191). He spent the following months traveling around the Russian provinces as a fugitive, perhaps harking back to his youthful days of tramping through Eastern and Central Europe. In September 1918, he reported for duty to the Political Department of the Red Army in Simbirsk, today's Ulyanovsk (Parrott, *Bad Bohemian* 192). One month later he was sent to the Tatar city Bugulma as an organizer. This would become the geographic and temporal setting for his series of stories known as the Bugulma Tales, the focus of the first chapter of this dissertation.

In December, Hašek was named Deputy Commandant of Bugulma (Parrott, *Bad Bohemian* 192). Bohumil Fořt points out that this is the highest rank Hašek achieved in Bugulma, meaning that the story "Adjutantem velitele města Bugulmy" ["Adjutant to the

¹⁸ Karel Kosík famously imagined a meeting of Hašek's Josef Švejk and Kafka's Josef K. on the Charles Bridge. One is tempted here to imagine a meeting between the narrator of the Bugulma Tales, a Bolshevik organizer who sets out from Samara, and one of Medek's legionnaire heroes.

Commander of the City of Bugulma”] may be autobiographical but the lead story in the series “Velitelem města Bugulmy“ [Commander of the City of Bugulma] is not (186). Yet again, Hašek devoted himself to journalism. Moving throughout the Russian provinces, Hašek managed, edited and contributed to newspapers that represented a single political perspective, Bolshevik communism, but they were written in an astonishing variety of languages. For example, Hašek edited *Красная Европа* [*Red Europe*], launched in February 1919, which included articles in Russian, Hungarian and German, and is an illustrative example of the multi-lingual ambitions of Red Army propaganda at that point. In Irkutsk in June 1920 he helped launch a newspaper written in Buryat, thought to be the world’s first (Parrott, *Bad Bohemian* 208).

The Ufa-based newspaper *Наша нить* (*Our Path*), which Hašek helped launch in January 1919, is the most consequential publication during this period of his life. It was his first writing job that had to be done entirely in Russian, but luckily, he had some help from a young woman who worked in the printing press: Alexandra Lvova, known affectionately as Šura. By all accounts, in 1919 the commissar Jaroslav Osipovič Gašek was a very different person from the man who had resigned from the Legions just a year before. Hašek was sober, diligent and not given to prankish stunts, and contemporaries who knew him before the war marveled at his transformation. In 1920 he and Lvova were married; she later maintained that she had been unaware of his earlier and still legally binding marriage.

In June 1920, the Central Bureau of Agitation and Propaganda recalled Hašek to Moscow to prepare him to return to Prague where he was to continue his work as an organizer. Hašek knew that he would be considered a traitor to the nation, and the prospect must have filled him with dread. Hašek knew that erroneous reports of his death had circulated in Prague and in January of that year he acquired a copy of his own obituary. Written by Jaroslav Kolman

Cassius, whom Hašek had once considered a friend, its headline read simply “Zrádce” [“Traitor”] (Parrott, *Bad Bohemian* 211). Hašek took his revenge through literature, publishing the story “Dušička Jaroslava Haška vypravuje” [“The Ghost of Jaroslav Hašek Speaks”], in which his soul travels to all the different places he was alleged to have died, thus revealing that the reports of his death were unreliable. But this cheeky story, which appeared in *Večerník Práva lidu* [*The People’s Rights Evening Edition*] in 1920, could only stem the tide against Hašek for so long. While in his youth, Hašek’s disdain for authority resulted in scrapes with the police, in wartime, it was treason.

In addition to his personal apprehension, Hašek doubted whether the revolutionary spirit could ever take hold in the Czech lands. A coup intended to establish a soviet republic in the working-class Bohemian town of Kladno had been suppressed just three days before Hašek’s arrival in Prague, and its leaders jailed. So Hašek, full of fear and doubt, returned home to find a demoralized and decapitated communist movement. Moreover, the reformed commissar was no match for the familiar temptations of home. After a significant spell of sobriety in Russia, Hašek was recognized by fellow Czechs on the train into Prague, and, yielding to their flattering toasts, got drunk for the first time in years (Pytlík, *Toulavé house* 277).

Returns and revivals

Although some old friends like František Langer, Emil Artur Longen and Ladislav Hájek welcomed Hašek back to Prague, his reputation was badly tarnished. There were three major counts against him: the twinned crimes of desertion and treason; Bolshevism; and bigamy. The Marxist left also distrusted Hašek, or in any case refused to take him seriously. Hašek took refuge in alcohol, and old friends noted that his drinking had changed from a boisterous, social conviviality to a more solitary habit that brought out resentment and anger. Where previously

Hašek's friends had always been willing to stand him a drink or lodge him temporarily, now they found him unscrupulous and unpleasant. Certainly, it was Lvova who observed the greatest change, having never known Hašek as a drinker. Nor had she known of his earlier marriage. He was not in Prague long before he resumed relations with his first wife (Pytlík, *Toulavé house* 282). It is not known whether their revived relationship was sexual, only that they renewed contact, including reintroducing the author to his son, by then eleven years old. Despite the estrangement, Hašek and Mayerová seem to have shared a bond unrivalled in his life.

In addition to drinking and seeing Mayerová, Hašek returned to another old habit: the cabaret. Longen encouraged Hašek to perform at the popular cabaret theaters he directed, including *Červená sedma* [Red Seven] and *Revoluční scéna* [Revolutionary Stage] (Parrott *Bad Bohemian* 226). At first, Hašek demurred, and Longen recalls how Hašek mocked the very premise of a "revolutionary stage" in Prague, allegedly saying, "You have a Revolutionary Street, Square of the Revolution, Revolutionary Stage, but all of you here lack the revolutionary spirit" (Longen, 128-129).¹⁹ Eventually he relented, probably for financial reasons. But his performances were unsatisfying. Disheveled in appearance, he refused to speak about his time in Russia, the subject about which audiences were the most curious. He also refused to write anything new for the theater, despite accepting a commission to do so. Instead, he read aloud from previously published feuilletons. Eventually, Longen dismissed Hašek from the theater (Parrott, *Bad Bohemian* 234).

After his exit from the theater, Hašek conceded to the public's desire for knowledge about life under the Bolsheviks and began writing his Bugulma Tales. But the stories, published in the newspaper *Tribuna*, do more to frustrate than satisfy his reader's wishes for information or

¹⁹ "Máte Revoluční třídu, náměstí Revoluce, Revoluční scénu, ale všem vám tady chybí revoluční duch."

political validation. He was attacked by critics from across the political spectrum; liberals rebuked him for betraying the nation, communists for betraying the revolution (Parrott, *Bad Bohemian* 234). The pleasure-reading public, however, must have enjoyed the Bugulma Tales, as publishers once again began to invest in Hašek. Hašek received an advance payment from one publisher for “Švejk among the Bolsheviks” and from another for “Švejk in Holy Russia” (Pytlík, *Toulavé house* 285; according to Parrott, *Bad Bohemian* 234, both commissions were for *Tribuna*). The stories were never published, if they were written at all, but the idea of Švejk seemed to Hašek to be the perfect vehicle for his critiques of the war, its memorialization, and the hypocrisy of Prague society, not to mention his own comeback. According to Lvova, Hašek’s ambition was from the very beginning literary but also vindictive. She recalls him saying, “I’ll laugh at all those fools and at the same time I’ll show them what our real character is and what it’s capable of” (Lvova, 23)²⁰ Indeed, out of all the projects and characters he had invented, Švejk was the one he returned to repeatedly and on which he spent the most time. And at what turned out to be the end of Hašek’s life, the Švejk novel-project held his attention for longer than anything ever had before.

Hašek self-published, perhaps because he had alienated the literary establishment, or perhaps because he expected that the manuscript of this novel would. Hašek’s old friend, the anarchist Franta Sauer, agreed to help him publish the first volume of the book (Pytlík, *Toulavé house* 285). It would be an ambitious revival of the familiarly subversive Švejk character. Equally ambitious was the plan for distribution. The first booksellers Sauer and Hašek approached found the book offensive and refused to carry the title, so the enterprising pair came up with a novel idea: they stocked their favorite bars with copies of the book. After a few days of

²⁰ “Vysměju se všem těm pitomcům a zároveň ukážu, jaká je naše pravá povaha a co dokáže.”

sales, the author would collect his earnings in a combination of money and bar credit (Pytlík, *Toulavé house* 289-290).

Hašek wrote the first installments at a pace typical of his younger years, but with increasing alcohol consumption, his health was rapidly worsening. His unconventional marketing strategy, moreover, left him with limited time to write. With Sauer on the verge of bankruptcy, and the book gaining popularity, the publisher Adolf Synek agreed to take over publishing and distribution (Parrott, *Bad Bohemian* 252). In the fall of 1921, the painter Jaroslav Panuška invited Hašek to join him in Lipnice nad Sázavou, an idyllic town about one hundred kilometers south of Prague. There, Hašek and Lvova took a room at the inn U Invalida and Hašek engaged the services of a local young man, Kliment Štěpánek, to take dictation. (In 1960 Štěpánek would publish the memoir *Vzpomínky na poslední léta Jaroslava Haška* [*Reminiscences on the Last Years of Jaroslav Hašek*]). In mid-September, with Štěpánek's patient help, Hašek returned to work on *Osudy*. The three volumes written in Lipnice are structurally very different from the one written in Prague. The chapters in the first volume are shorter, the action tighter, and each episode leads to the next in a logical sequence. The three later volumes are more haphazard, with long rambling chapters. This may be a function of the writing process, wherein Hašek, often intoxicated, extemporaneously dictated the episodes to Štěpánek. In this way he was able to produce a great quantity of pages, but a survey of secondary literature reveals that a century of criticism has focused disproportionately on the first volume of the novel.

Meanwhile back in Prague, Longen staged an unauthorized adaptation of the already popular first volume, assuming the right to do so because of Hašek's failure to deliver on his commission from the recent engagement with *Revoluční scéna* (Parrott, *Bad Bohemian* 254). The production caused a rift in their friendship that was never to be repaired. The bitterness in

Longen's memoir 1928 of their relationship *Můj přítel Jaroslav Hašek* [*My Friend Jaroslav Hašek*] is in part a result of this quarrel. Hašek eventually sold the rights of the play to Karel Noll, the actor who played Švejk in Longen's production (Parrott, *Bad Bohemian* 258). If Hašek was a two-timer in marriage, he was in business as well.

In Lipnice, Hašek worked on the fourth volume of *Osudy* through the very end of December 1922. He had planned a New Year's cabaret performance in the tavern of U Invalda but was unable to attract an audience (Pytlík, *Toulavé house* 296). That may have been a blessing; Pytlík describes the poems Hašek performed that night as uncomfortably sexual, even pornographic (*Toulave house* 296-297). Once a sharp-tongued and insightful satirist, Hašek was now bitter and indiscriminate in his anger.

After a New Year's bender, he died of heart failure, probably brought on by cirrhosis of the liver, early in the morning of January 3, 1923. He was thirty-nine years old. Hašek died destitute, and funeral arrangements were made by the local Sokol chapter, many of whom were veteran legionnaires (Langer, 87). One imagines that they may have felt torn between societal obligations and personal resentment of the late author. The funeral was small, as few of Hašek's fans, friends and family members travelled to Lipnice for the service. Hašek's son Richard is sometimes said to have attended, but this seems doubtful because neither Mayerová nor Hašek's brother Bohuslav made the trip, and Richard was a young boy at the time. Then again, Richard may have been predisposed to traveling, being his father's son. With its solemnity, the funeral bore no trace of Hašek's boisterous spirit, which admittedly had been tamped down in the last years of his life. And with its small size, it gave no hint that Hašek would eventually be regarded by some as the Greatest Czech Writer.

Plan of Dissertation

In the following four chapters, I will show how Hašek challenged authority and destabilized the notions of fact and fiction through a variety of means, including self-referential creative literature, parodies of non-fiction genres and, most importantly, the cultivation of his own legend, a project in which he was but one of many participants. I focus primarily on Hašek's final works, namely *Osudy* and the semi-autobiographical Bugulma Tales, because they represent his most mature experiments with these topics and final statements on them. Throughout his life and in much of his work, we see Hašek struggle against manifestations of power, opposing authority figures with and within his writing. But this is complicated by two facts: 1) political institutions underwent dramatic transformations during his lifetime and 2) Hašek was constantly switching sides. Yet although he was notoriously inconsistent in his beliefs and behaviors, I find that Hašek consistently endowed the figure of the author, meaning his biographical self and the author-functioning characters in his work, with the capacity to subvert institutional authority. In effect, his written and non-written creative texts, including his intentionally exaggerated life story, make the case that the only reliable, enduring authority resides inside the indestructible author.

This dissertation is composed of an introduction, four chapters, and a conclusion. In Chapter 1, "The Bugulma Tales: Improvisation and Autobiographical Experiment," I analyze the series of stories Hašek wrote after his return to Prague from Soviet Russia. I argue that the stories frustrate readers' desire for information about and judgment on the Red Army through the use of an obfuscating quasi-autobiographical protagonist. At the same time, an improvisational technique determines both the structure and content of the stories, amounting to a subtle critique of two forms of authority: Red Army administration and the norms that govern literary fiction.

Chapters 2 and 3 are devoted to Hašek's magnum opus, *Osudy dobrého vojáka Švejka za světové války*. Chapter 2, "Authorship as a Challenge to Authority: Storytelling in *Osudy dobrého vojáka Švejka*," argues that Hašek depicts war-time imperial Prague and the military as two zones in which the individual's ability to tell the truth is impeded, and presents storytelling as an alternative means of encoded self-expression. Storytelling dominates inter-personal exchanges and amounts for the bulk of the otherwise static novel's action. By endowing his characters with the skill of storytelling, Hašek puts forth authorship as a potent tool of resistance. Chapter 3, "History as Fodder" highlights Hašek's assault on historiography. The chapter focuses on three aspects of the novel: the narrator's sardonic historiographical commentary; a parody of the Czechoslovak Legions' Siberian campaign; and a character who bears a notable resemblance to Hašek and writes an irreverent military history. In all of this, Hašek suggests that history is a fundamentally deceptive genre, and proposes fiction as an empowering alternative.

In the fourth and final chapter "My Friend Hašek: Memoirs Beyond Fact and Fiction," I turn to a body of work that has never before been the object of a methodical study: the memoirs written by Hašek's friends and collaborators after his death. The focus of the chapter is the role of these memoirs in defining and preserving the Hašek legend. Reading the Hašek legend as a constructed text, I argue that the memoirs collectively do the work of commemorating Hašek in a non-institutional way that is true to the spirit of the author. With my conclusion, I look forward to the upcoming centennial of Hašek's death, and think about the meaning of a canonical Hašek. I also suggest ways to understand Hašek, or rather Gašek, in the context of Soviet Russian literature.

When we count his legend among his authored works, the case of Hašek frustrates our desire to distinguish between constructed author and biographical author, between legend and

biography, between fiction and non-fiction. In an era when television clowns are being elected president, the Hašek legend reminds us that legitimacy is in the eye of the beholder. Hašek's fiction, a broad category in which I include non-written literature such as his pranks, draws attention to the way narrative can be used to legitimize authority, and exposes our perhaps misplaced faith in narrative itself. His persona, immortalized in the unverifiable legend, looms over his oeuvre, urging us to be at once skeptical and good-humored.

CHAPTER ONE

The Bugulma Tales: Improvisation and Autobiographical Experiment

There was no front. Everything was wide open. –Viktor Shklovsky

1. Introduction

Between 1915 and 1920, Jaroslav Hašek served in three different armies and fought in two different wars. He enlisted in the Austrian Imperial Army in January 1915, then joined the nationalist Czech Družina, the precursor to the Czechoslovak Legions, from a Ukrainian prisoner-of-war camp in September of that year. But then in March 1918, Hašek defected, joining the political branch of the Red Army and entering the Russian Civil War. After a brief stint in Moscow writing for the Czech-language newspaper *Průkopník* [*Pioneer*], he was sent as a journalist and recruiter to the Urals and Siberia. Hašek popped up, among other places, in Samara, Ufa and Bugulma working primarily as an editor of multi-lingual Bolshevik newspapers throughout this region (Steiner, “S puškou v ruce” 158). His newspaper publications from this period include editorials and news reports as well as stories and even poetry. Beginning with his Russian-language publications for the Ufa newspaper *Наша нить* [*Our Path*], one finds the byline Jaroslav Gašek. Because the Russian language has no h-phoneme, transliterated foreign names and loanwords that begin with the letter “h” are usually written with “g” instead, so that Habsburg becomes Габсбург, Harvard Гарвард, and Hašek Гашек. But as we shall see, Gašek went from being a transliterated pen name to a semi-fictional character.

In 1920, after two years in the Red Army, Hašek was appointed deputy of the Comintern and sent back to Prague, nominally to organize Czech communists (Fořt, 188). But when he reached what was now the democratic Czechoslovak Republic, he found that a long-planned soviet coup in the working-class Bohemian city of Kladno had been quashed (Parrott 1978, 222).

That disappointment, combined to a return to his familiar bohemian ways, resulted in his ultimate break with the Bolsheviks. He had now deserted from all three armies in which he had served, and was considered a traitor on all sides. The once popular humorist was welcomed home by only the most loyal of his friends and champions. In a state of social isolation, financial instability and legal uncertainty, Hašek began writing the Bugulma Tales, stories that fictionalized his time in Russia.

The stories were published serially between January and March 1921 in *Tribuna*, a newspaper founded in 1918 which was unaffiliated with any political party (Bednařík, 159).²¹ At the time, the stories seemed to respond to fans' requests for information about Hašek's time in Russia (Fořt, 189). Memoirists detail Hašek's unusual silence, in both public and private settings, about his Red Army service when he first returned to Prague in 1920. Emil Artur Longen, for example, engaged Hašek for a series of monologues about Soviet Russia at his cabaret theater Červená sedma [Red Seven], but Hašek would arrive intoxicated and deliver unintelligible speeches. Hašek's wife Alexandra Lvova later wrote that during these performances Hašek "cried inside, but at the same time laughed at how those 'foolish bourgeois' believed all the atrocious nonsense that he put forth" (22).²² His willingness to finally open up about the Red Army undoubtedly helped Hašek secure a commission for the Bugulma Tales. However, by publishing in the politically neutral newspaper *Tribuna* instead of a Communist newspaper such as *Rudé právo*, Hašek obfuscated his own political orientation. Moreover, the reputation he developed in pre-war Prague as a master of mystifications may have influenced readers' expectations of the texts' reliability.

²¹ The first editor of *Tribuna* was Bedřich Hlaváč; when Ferdinand Peroutka took over the post in 1924, the paper increasingly showed the influence of President Masaryk and his advisors (Bednařík, 161-162).

²² "Uvnitř plakal, ale zároveň se i smál, jak ti 'blbí měšťáci věří těm ukrutným nesmyslům, které vykládal."

In fact, the stories both reveal and play with the readers' assumptions about the Russian Civil War and Hašek's role in it. An implicit but important contrast existed between the democratic Czechoslovak Republic, to which Hašek was a traitor, and the new communist state in Russia, yet both were models of state authority vying for legitimacy. In the stories narrated by a quasi-autobiographical figure, Comrade Gašek, assumptions about heroism, ideological conviction and nationally defined identities are all upended. Although they hold out a tantalizing promise of illuminating the author's experience in Russia and his political viewpoint, the stories confuse more than they clarify. Today, just as we encounter these stories in bound volumes rather than newspapers, the Russian Civil War and Hašek's service to the Bolshevik regime have left the realm of journalism to enter into history. Today, we read the *Bugulma Tales* not to learn about still unfolding political events, but to appreciate the intricacies of Hašek's oeuvre. What can they tell us about Hašek's method and his creative use of self-referential material, and his evolving ideas about authority?

An unavoidable challenge in analyzing these texts is untangling the semi-autobiographical hero from the author. To do so thoughtfully yields important insights into the text and its place in Hašek's evolving experiment with the ambiguity of authorship. In the *Bugulma Tales*, we are dealing with three interacting levels of authorial self-creation: 1) Hašek, the Prague author and mystifier of suspect political leanings; 2) Gašek, the pen name of a Czech Bolshevik organizer and journalist in the Russian provinces; and 3) Gašek, the narrator and protagonist of his own military adventure tale (set in Russia, told in Czech), whose true political orientation is unknown. The reader's knowledge of each of these discrete entities interacts to inform her judgment of the stories. As Bohumil Fořt points out, only by assuming that Hašek, Gašek and the narrator-protagonist are all identical figures could Hašek's original

readers take these stories to be testimony about Soviet Russia (191). Returning to the stories almost a century later, we can appraise them for their literary rather than documentary value. Three main points will ground our reading of the series. First of all, it's crucial to recognize the importance of *improvisation* as both a literary technique and a theme. Second, the Bugulma Tales play with *authorial representation*. Third, improvisation and authorial representation come together in the stories' focus on competing forms of *authority*.

The importance of the setting, geographical and temporal, in the Bugulma Tales cannot be overstated. The Russian Civil War was an extraordinarily complicated conflict with multiple combatant groups and moving fronts; at stake was Russia's fate after the revolution and her role in the World War. Historians debate the causes and periodization of the conflict, and even the name is contestable. In his 1996 work *The Origins of the Russian Civil War*, Geoffrey Swain suggests that there were two distinct civil wars. The "forgotten" first civil war was between the Reds and those parties united only in their opposition to Bolshevik rule, who have come to be known collectively as the Greens. Most historians writing about the Russian Civil War use the term Greens as a catch-all to mean non-ideological, often mercenary forces that moved between the two main groups, the Reds and Whites. Swain, however, uses "Green" to mean the politically-guided anti-Bolshevik forces that predated the formal White Army. The first civil war, he argues, began with the October Revolution and ended with Admiral Kolchak's coup in November 1918. The second civil war, between the Reds and Whites, began in autumn 1918 and lasted for two years. Jon Smele's 2015 book *The "Russian" Civil Wars, 1916-1926* goes even further than Swain in exposing the variegated nature of the conflict. Smele emphasizes the multinational and multi-ethnic nature of all the various combatant groups and argues that the

conflict was in fact a series of discrete confrontations that only in retrospect appear to be one cohesive war.

The firmest footholds for the Bolsheviks were in the capitals: Petrograd, which had been renamed from St. Petersburg at the start of the World War and where the revolutionary activity began in February 1917, and Moscow, which was reestablished as the seat of government in March 1918. After the October Revolution brought about the disbanding of the Provisional Government and precluded the possibility of any other type of coalition government, political parties opposed to Bolshevik rule organized themselves in Siberia. Here was a diverse array of interests and orientations including Mensheviks, Socialist Revolutionaries (SRs), and former members of the Provisional Government. By September 1918, two centers of opposition had formed in Siberia, both declaring themselves governments. In Samara, the SR-dominated Committee of the Constituent Assembly (Комитет учредительного собрания, or Komuch) raised its own People's Army. They also forged a close relationship with the Czechoslovak Legions, the strongest military group fighting against the Red Army in Siberia. Swain convincingly argues that the Komuch, with its system of soviet organization and promise of bread, land and peace, represented the only viable democratic socialist alternative to Bolshevik rule. At the same time, an autonomous Provisional Siberian Government, which was politically to the right of the SRs, was established in Omsk. The two groups met in Ufa on September 23rd to form their own coalition government, a five-person Directory modelled on the Directoire established during the French Revolution. Less than two months later, on November 18th, Admiral Kolchak, perhaps fancying himself a Napoleon, overthrew this body and installed himself as the dictatorial leader of the now unified White forces.

The intervention of multiple foreign powers complicates the notion that this was a civil war at all, rather than a messy extension of the World War. One of the main foreign fighting units was the Czechoslovak Legions, now numbering around forty thousand troops, which the Allies esteemed as the only force capable of holding off the Red Army. (The Czechoslovak Legions are never mentioned in the *Bugulma Tales*, but they were quite near to the time and space of the stories' action.) In fact, the story of the Legionnaires in Siberia is inextricable from the domestic political negotiations occurring in the region. Beginning in June 1918, Legionnaires in Siberia defied orders from Trotsky to disarm and disband. Instead, supported by the Allies and the Social Revolutionary party (SRs), they began to capture cities along the Trans-Siberian Railroad, eventually occupying a stretch from Samara to Irkutsk in the west; I'll return to this episode in Chapter 3, where I discuss Hašek's parody of legionnaire history. A variety of factors contributed to the cessation of legionnaire activity in this region by September of that year, including the failure of Allies to supply reliable reinforcements, and the strengthening of the Red Army. Most important, the promised reward for the Legions' sacrifice was reaped on October 28, 1918 when the Czechoslovak Republic was officially established, supported by Woodrow Wilson and the governments of the Allied countries and with Masaryk as its president. The creation of the Czechoslovak Republic presaged the end of the World War; the armistice was signed not quite two weeks later, on November 11.

The *Bugulma Tales* begin in early October 1918, and while no further dates are given, the episodes unfold rapidly, presumably over the course of a few weeks. The final story therefore probably takes place around early November, after the October 28th establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic but just before Armistice ended the World War, and Kolchak appointed himself Supreme Ruler unified the White Army, intensifying the Russian Civil War. While

Russia had withdrawn from the war with the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in March 1918, the status of international soldiers still within Russian territories, such as the Czechoslovak Legions, was clarified only with the November armistice.

The characters in the Bugulma Tales speak about the White Army, but in fact, the Reds at that point were fighting two warring anti-Bolshevik factions: the Komuch and the Siberian Army. The only White leader mentioned in the texts is Colonel Kappel, who was indeed active in the region in autumn 1918. In some stories, characters also refer to Polish troops as enemy combatants, although the Polish-Soviet War did not begin until February 1919. The Czech commissar at the center of Hašek's stories necessarily evokes the fresh memory of Czechoslovak Legions' campaign. This memory is important and meaningful for two distinct groups: the Russian characters within the stories who meet Gašek, and the Czech readers encountering the stories in the newspaper. Inasmuch as he occupies an liminal position with regards to politics and nationality, the protagonist embodies the ambiguities of the temporal and geographic setting in which he finds himself.

These stories, like Hašek's Russian period generally, present a puzzle to his critics. Hašek's service to the Red Army legitimized him for a Soviet readership, but Soviet critics had the unenviable and ultimately impossible task of identifying ideological content in the stories. The Bugulma Tales themselves were not published in Russia until 1961, possibly because they do not contain a straightforward Bolshevik message. Stanislav Antonov, a Russian biographer of Hašek writing in 1964, asserts the pro-Soviet orientation of the Bugulma Tales, and by implication Hašek. As proof of the author's Soviet sympathies, Antonov points to the fact that Hašek contributed to the Czech communist paper *Rudé Právo* soon after publishing the Bugulma Tales (Antonov, 129) and he reads the Bugulma Tales as an expression of Hašek's belief in

progress, the righteousness of labor, and the strength of a Soviet power-base secured by the people's army. While Antonov's historical data is useful – his analysis of the Bugulma Tales is part of a larger reconstruction of Hašek's time in Russia – the commentary suffers from having been viewed through the requisite communist ideological lens. The Czech communist novelist Ivan Olbracht, an important early champion of Hašek, points out, nevertheless, that while nothing was off limits for Hašek's humor, he never explicitly satirized Soviet communism even after his return from Russia.

Contemporaneous with Antonov was the Czech philosopher Karel Kosík, whose essay "Hašek and Kafka, or, the World of the Grotesque" is one of the most creative and important essays about Hašek. Written in 1963, it illuminates the similarities between the two authors by imagining a meeting between Švejk and Josef K. from Kafka's *The Trial*. Less convincing is Kosík's 1969 essay "Švejk and Bugulma, or, the Birth of Great Humor." Kosík makes some insightful points in the forty-five theses that comprise the essay, especially about the way the Bugulma Tales reflect Hašek's disillusionment with the Russian revolution. Kosík sees the Bugulma Tales and *Osudy* as part of a continuum of Hašek's developing ideas about power and authority. He is right to point to Hašek's experience in Russia as key for the development of his emerging anti-authoritarian worldview. But he does the author a grave disservice by conflating Hašek with his characters and by ignoring the order in which these works were written and when they take place. Kosík suggests that Švejk and Bugulma's Comrade Gašek are both fundamentally autobiographical constructs, writing "Švejk could become a figure in world literature only because he had the experience of Bugulma. The basis of that experience is disillusionment" ("Švejk and Bugulma" 87). But to endow Švejk with the experience of having been disillusioned in Bugulma does not illuminate either *Osudy* or the Bugulma Tales. At one

point, Kosík mentions “Švejk (in the guise of Comrade Gašek)” (“Švejk and Bugulma” 92); the rest of the time, he simply refers to the narrator of the Bugulma Tales as Švejk. This conflation of figures serves Kosík’s imaginative reconstruction of Hašek’s biography, but it obscures essential differences between Švejk and Gašek and denies Hašek’s artistic vision.

The Bugulma Tales are valuable texts in their own right, not only, as Kosík and some other critics assert, because they provide a key to understanding *Osudy*. It’s true that the quasi-autobiographical basis of Gašek is a crucial aspect of Hašek’s experiment with representations of authorship. But only by recognizing the differences between Hašek and Gašek (not to mention between Hašek, Gašek and Švejk!), and developing a systematic framework for Hašek’s use of autobiography can we appreciate his complex achievement in these stories.

Kosík also rehearses the problematic myth that connects Hašek’s alcoholism with his productivity: “The spirit becomes inspired by the elixir of life in order to freely create fables, but the body grows feeble under the influence of this miraculous liquid” (“Švejk and Bugulma” 85). I discuss this in detail in my final chapter, on the Hašek memoirs, but suffice it to say that a critic writing about the Bugulma Tales needs to be especially careful in writing about Hašek’s use of alcohol not only because Hašek was sober during his Russian period, but also because abstention from alcohol is one of the key behaviors that distinguishes Gašek from his main rival in the stories, the tempestuous Red Army commander Jerochymov. Hašek had already returned to drinking when he wrote the Bugulma Tales, but he abstained during the time the stories take place. Kosík somewhat carelessly overlooks the fact that sobriety is among the autobiographical traits with which Hašek bestowed Gašek.

More perceptive was the early commentator Josef Kopta, a veteran of the Legions and author of a number of novels about his experience in the war. (Kopta’s prose joined texts by

other veterans such as Rudolf Medek and Hašek's friend František Langer to form a sizeable corpus of "legionnaire literature"). In 1925, two years after Hašek's death, Kopta reviewed *Za války i za sovětů v Rusku* [*In Wartime and Under the Soviets in Russia*], a collection that includes the Bugulma Tales, and took the opportunity to hypothesize about Hašek's time in Russia. Kopta suggests setting aside the possibility that Hašek really believed in Marxism-Leninism rather than Masarykian humanism and to focus instead on what Russia signified for Hašek. He writes, "Rusko mu bylo nekonečnou prérií na níž se bude moci volně proháněti" ["Russia was for him an endless prairie on which he could freely career"] (35). Kopta argues that it was not Bolshevik ideology but the exoticness of the unknown that attracted Hašek to Russia. The word "prairie" emphasizes a vast and wild, even uncivilized, space, and seems especially appropriate for the Volga region during the Civil War.

In contrast, some critics have written convincingly of Hašek's attraction to communism, while allowing for the disillusionment he experienced in the Red Army. Kees Boterbloem suggests in a 2012 article that Hašek's lifelong championing of "the little man" found resonance in Bolshevik rhetoric, which promised to make the powerless the subject, rather than object, of history. Boterbloem further argues that Hašek's disillusionment with the violence and dogmatism he encountered in the Red Army was part of the impetus for *Osudy*. The best essay on the Bugulma Tales is Bohumil Fořt's "Velitelem města Bugulmy?" from 2016. Fořt sheds light on the historical inconsistencies around the supposedly autobiographical basis of the text, showing that Hašek himself may never have held the title of *velitel* (in this context, "commanding officer") of Bugulma, and that therefore the presumption of autobiography should be regarded with suspicion. This is a useful contribution to the ongoing process of separating the author from even his seemingly most autobiographical creations. Rather than take Hašek's own political

beliefs, whatever they may have been, as the key to interpreting the stories, Fořt shows that the unique value of this work is how autobiography is used in the service of mystification; because the stories are concrete and specific with regards to material issues that distinguish Gašek's experience from Hašek's, the reader should look no further than the text itself for keys to interpretation.

Fořt is right to problematize the autobiographical component of the stories while simultaneously downplaying Hašek's political beliefs, because, ultimately, the Bugulma Tales are not about belief or ideology at all. I find that, above all, they are stories about authority. It is uncharacteristic for Hašek to set as main characters figures endowed with authority from the state; usually his protagonists are underdogs or people on the fringe of society. And indeed, Hašek's service in the Red Army represents the only time in his life that he conformed to the ruling powers and advanced the agenda of state institutions. But as the narrator-protagonist in the Bugulma Tales and his rival vie for authority, Hašek exposes the unstable, and potentially destructive, foundations of the new Soviet state. Hašek uses autobiographical details as guideposts for exploring unfamiliar terrain, including both a foreign culture and the new and experimental form of government coming into being. At the same time, he manages to lampoon the very genre of the war story, subtly interweaving a critique of Soviet administration. The autobiographical component cannot be ignored but, I argue, should be approached in the holistic context of Hašek's ideas about authority and experiments with authorship.

Translations of the Bugulma Tales have been included in two recent collections of Hašek stories: *The Secret History of My Sojourn in Russia* (2018, translated by Charles Kraszewski), and *Behind the Lines* (2012, translated by Mark Corner). Despite the texts' complexity, they remain understudied, especially compared to *Osudy dobrého vojáka Švejka*. With this chapter I

hope to contribute to the ongoing reappraisal of these texts and the emerging scholarly opinion that, together with the Party for Moderate Progress and *Osudy*, they are among Hašek's most sophisticated works. But because the texts are only now entering the canon, I will briefly summarize the plot of each story. More detail will be supplied for stories that bear on my analysis. In the first and most complicated story, "Velitelem města Bugulmy" ["Commanding Officer, Town of Bugulma"], the narrator, who in this story alone is anonymous, is appointed to the eponymous post by an officer in the Red Army Revolutionary Military Council headquarters in Simbirsk (today's Ulyanovsk). After traveling there with an entourage of Chuvash guards and peacefully establishing command, the narrator is surprised when, in his sleep, the town is "captured" by another officer from the Red Army, Jerochymov, the commander of the Tver regiment. The story ends with a transfer of power as Jerochymov holds a gun to the narrator's head, asserting his right to take control of the city he has successfully captured. Jerochymov appoints the narrator his adjutant, a position he will continue to hold in the next story, "Adjutantem velitele města Bugulmy" ["Adjutant to the Commanding Officer, Town of Bugulma."] While Jerochymov tries to institute violent and destructive policies, exaggerated versions of Red Army initiatives, his adjutant Gašek subtly undermines him in order to maintain peace and safety in Bugulma. At the end of the story, the Petrograd Cavalry Regiment arrives in Bugulma and subdues Jerochymov, enabling Gašek to take back his usurped post.

Scared away by the Petrograd Cavalry, Jerochymov is absent from the third and fourth stories. In "Krestný chod" ["Via Dolorosa"²³], which is based on an autobiographical episode, Gašek orders the nuns from the local convent to clean the army barracks. "V strategických nesnázích" ["In Strategic Trouble"] is the greatest example of autobiographical experimentation.

²³ Quotation marks are part of the title in Czech original, consistent with the story's overall mocking tone towards religion.

In this story, Gašek receives an order from the Revolutionary Military Council of the Eastern Front, and it sends him into an absolute panic over his lack of military education and preparedness. In the end, the Petrograd Cavalry saves the day, and Gašek's incompetence remains a secret. In "Slavné dny Bugulmy" ["Bugulma's Glory Days,"] Jerochymov reappears in town and the fight for control begins anew. Eventually, Gašek convinces him that the leadership in Simbirsk believes that a large number of enemy combatants have been taken prisoner in Bugulma. Jerochymov therefore leaves town to round up potential Polish POWs. In the next story, "Nová nebezpečí" ["New Dangers,"] Gašek frees Jerochymov's prisoners because they are, in fact, not Polish soldiers but Tatar civilians. Insulted, Jerochymov sends a telegraph denouncing Gašek to the Revolutionary Military Council, but Gašek intercepts it and uses it as incriminating evidence in order to subdue Jerochymov.

"Potěmkinovy vesnice" ["Potemkin's Villages] revolves around an impending visit by an inspector from the Revolutionary Military Council; convinced that Gašek has not fulfilled enough Bolshevik objectives, Jerochymov stages an elaborate deception designed to bamboozle the inspector. In "Nesnáze se zajatci" ["A Problem with the Prisoners,"] Gašek, Jerochymov and the commander of the Petrograd regiment debate how to deal with the three hundred men they have taken prisoner. In the final story, "Před revolučním tribunálem východní fronty" ["Before the Revolutionary Tribunal of the Eastern Front,"] a three-person committee from the Revolutionary Tribunal comes to Bugulma to investigate Jerochymov's claims against Gašek. Gašek calls Jerochymov to testify, but Jerochymov discredits himself by arriving drunk. The committee declares Gašek innocent and prepares to execute Jerochymov instead, but Gašek intervenes, and the committee, having reduced Jerochymov's sentence to a verbal warning, heads back to Simbirsk.

As the reader of even this cursory summary will notice, the narrator never goes to the front or encounters military action. In this way, the Bugulma Tales resemble *Osudy*, a military novel where the characters never actually go to war (Boterbloem, 136). Gašek's work is primarily administrative, and his antagonist is not the White Army or any of its leaders, but Jerochymov, a rival Red Army commander. The clash between Gašek and Jerochymov is essentially a battle between order, associated with Gašek and verbal communication, and chaos, associated with Jerochymov and physical force. Naming, such as the speech-act that authorizes Gašek to act as *velitel*, carries enormous weight in these stories. Whereas the name Jerochymov, neither Russian nor Czech, nor bearing any recognizable root words, is itself chaotic,²⁴ the name Gašek is immediately comprehensible in the context of authorship.

The original Czech readers, encountering the Bugulma Tales in the newspaper, could easily peg the character of Gašek to Hašek's byline. This sets up the expectation that Hašek would finally satisfy his friends' and fans' curiosity about the time he spent in Russia. But the stories produce a complex and counter-intuitive effect: in Prague, Hašek was notorious for his pranks, his capricious personality and his drinking. Rather than seeing his membership in the Red Army as an effort to reform his dissolute lifestyle, many saw it as the crowning act of a lifetime of reckless unpredictability. Hašek's readers may have reasonably expected Gašek to be a subversive, unruly character. What irony, then, that the Gašek character, literally and figuratively sober, represents and fights for order. In fact, Gašek is unique in Hašek's major works as a sympathetic protagonist associated with order and sobriety. Why did the author divide characteristics associated with himself, or at least his public self, between these two warring

²⁴ In the endnotes to the 1966 publication of the cycle, the editors point to a Comrade Jerochim, a man convicted of expropriation by the military revolutionary tribunal in Bugulma and sentenced to death. The January 1919 trial was covered by the Ufa newspaper *Nash put'* to which Hašek was a regular contributor at the time (*Velitelem města Bugulmy* 207).

characters, steadfast Gašek and reckless Jerochymov? And what's really at stake in a battle for administrative control over this small, obscure Russian town?

Nested inside Hašek's odd-couple rivals and exaggerated comic scenarios is a critique of the forces that legitimize power and the mechanisms by which power is exercised. As a soldier of three armies, each of which was associated with a radically different form of government, Hašek experienced firsthand the relationship between military might and political power. While he explored these issues in his fiction, often cloaking the seriousness of his concerns in the trappings of comedy, the emerging discipline of sociology offered another way to conceptualize sources and expressions of power, such as Weber's taxonomy of forms of legitimate authority: traditional (as in a kingdom), rational (as in a bureaucratic democratic or imperial state), and charismatic (as in a dictatorship). The boundaries between the three types are porous, and in every case, political power is guaranteed by the state's ability, implicitly legal, to impose violence.

The interaction of Hašek's ideas about power with Weber's illuminates the darker corners in both. Weber's concept of charismatic authority "rests on the affectual and personal devotion of the follower to the lord and his gifts of grace (charisma)" (Weber, "Legitimate Rule" 6). Weber has in mind mainly warrior-heroes and religious prophets, who command authority with their "magical abilities, revelations of heroism, power of mind and of speech" (Weber, "Legitimate Rule" 6). This is in contrast to rational authority, where a complex anonymized bureaucracy handles the administration of state, and legal outcomes are fully predictable. The basis of the charismatic authority's legitimacy is *recognition* of his power by the body politic. Obedience therefore belongs exclusively to the charismatic individual, and administration is carried out by his devoted followers or disciples. Charismatic administration is characterized by

spontaneity and irrationality. The Bugulma Tales chart the struggle to establish a state with legal legitimacy and modern bureaucracy, undermined by the chaotic and unreliable individuals entrusted with its administration. Jerochymov and other upper-echelon Red Army characters are in fact attempting to use the state's mechanisms of rational authority, such as their titles within the army and a multitude of government committees, to establish their own charismatic authority. A minor but interesting takeaway of the Bugulma Tales is that, as early as 1920, Hašek saw how the Soviet system, which was meant to replace the tsarist traditional authority with a Bolshevik rational authority, had the potential to be derailed by one or more charismatic individuals, bringing about yet another crisis of authority.

To be clear, there is no evidence that Hašek ever read Weber. In fact, descriptions of his reading habits rather suggest that he would have avoided such dense, serious writing. But in the fiction Hašek produced after his experiences in the World War and the Russian Civil War, the questions about the legitimizing of authority are paramount. The Bugulma Tales and *Osudy dobrého vojáka Švejka* both depict a world in which the legitimacy of the government and its various institutions, especially the military, cannot be taken for granted. Whereas *Osudy* assumes that the traditional Habsburg state has outlived its usefulness, in the Bugulma Tales, the Soviet state's would-be rational authority is suspect because it is just coming into being. The rivalry between Gašek and Jerochymov adds elements of chaos and illogic to the process of legitimizing the Soviet state's authority in two major ways. First, they are both minor figures on the same side of the larger conflict, the Russian Civil War. Second, neither is qualified to be in a position of authority – Gašek because he lacks training and experience, Jerochymov because he is unstable and irrational. The fight for control over Bugulma amounts to a small-scale crisis of authority which is resolved through creative improvisation as a means of asserting personal control. Only

those who successfully maneuver through the irregularity of the Red Army can rise through the ranks of that fledgling institution, leaving the reader with the sense that the army itself is irregular, unpredictable and improvised. Each military accomplishment, from arresting prisoners to staving off an inspection, inspires in the reader more concern than confidence. The stories as a whole do not provide commentary on Bolshevik ideology as much as Red Army administration. But the success of this type of unpredictable creativity, a form of charismatic authority, casts doubt on the legitimacy of the Red Army.

At the same time, the ambiguous figure of the author in and around these stories suggests authorship as an expression of charismatic authority. The triumph of improvisation within the stories mirrors the improvisational writing method of Hašek himself, issuing a challenge to the literary institutions of the First Republic that were hostile to the disreputable author. As his political offenses and the “vulgar” character of his fiction threatened to alienate him from the literary authorities of his day, Hašek could only hope to have his talents recognized by the reading public, achieving a sort of charismatic authority for himself. The time he spent in the Red Army at once disqualified him for participation in the literary culture of the Czechoslovak Republic and endowed him with the authority to report on the enigmatic Soviet state. Soviet Russia, with its seductive revolutionary politics, represented a threat to Czechoslovak democracy; the two states stood in opposition as competing models of authority. Hašek might embody the Soviet threat or repudiate it; no one could be sure. In his political affiliations as in his writing, he was constantly improvising.

Hašek developed his talent for improvisation as an artistic method through his early work on the pre-war Prague cabaret stage, where he performed with friends in barely-scripted skits and extemporized solo pieces. His prose-writing process was also improvisational, involving no

planning and very little editing. But for artists committed to improvisation, it's more than the absence of planning; it's the liberation of the conscious mind from restrictive norms and expectations. We see this in the automatic writing of the Dadaists and, later, surrealists. Hašek's commitment to improvisation has serious implications for our interpretation of the stories. For example, we need not assume that the final story "Before the Revolutionary Tribunal" was intended as a conclusion to the series. The inconclusive ending rather suggests that, if he'd had a mind to, Hašek could have produced further installments.²⁵ Charles Kraszewski who translated these texts as part of the 2017 Hašek anthology *The Secret History of My Sojourn in Russia*, proposes that all the stories Hašek wrote about his time in Russia, a total of 27 titles, make up the Bugulma Tales. To my mind, however, the designation "Bugulma Tales" should refer only to the nine stories explicitly set in Bugulma and following Gašek and/or Jerochymov. Additionally, I break with the critics and translators who refer to these texts as a "story cycle," since that term denotes more planning than the existing stories actually reflect. While it is undeniable that the stories are connected in terms of character and setting, and that together they produce a cumulative meaning, it is more accurate to designate the group of texts as a series of stories or an unfinished story cycle.

Improvisation is also thematically important. The characters of the Bugulma Tales who wield power, including Gašek, Jerochymov and the members of the military tribunal, all show an aptitude for adaptation and quick-thinking. The stories as a whole suggest that this type of improvisation is necessary but not sufficient for military and administrative success. In fact, though they repeatedly make crucial and creative split-second decisions, it is usually in the

²⁵ Parrott points out that Hašek collected advances from *Tribuna* for two stories that brought Švejk to Russia ("Švejk among the Bolsheviks" and "Švejk in Holy Russia") but never delivered the texts (*Bad Bohemian* 234). This motif was, however, picked up in the unauthorized sequel to *Osudy*, published by Karel Vaněk after Hašek's death.

pursuit of self-preservation, not military objectives. And although this quality is a strength for the characters who have power, the prevalence of improvisation suggests a weakness of the power structure overall. This is especially clear in light of Weber's definition of power as the ability of one group to force another group, through violence if necessary, into conforming to and serving its will. In these stories, the Red Army is wracked with infighting, chiefly between Gašek and Jerochymov, but other rivalries break out as well. The fight for power in Bugulma is not between the Red and White armies, but among members of the Red Army, who are constantly inventing new methods to stay ahead of the pack. As Gašek consolidates power in Bugulma, he sees other characters successfully improvise in their leadership roles and learns to do the same. He invents and activates rules and decrees as necessary, and thus achieves military, administrative and personal success. Though initially insecure about his lack of military training, he comes to realize that in the context of this army, that is neither unique nor particularly consequential. The unplanned and consequently ramshackle nature of the Red Army is an undercurrent throughout the stories. This appears in the constantly changing titles of officers, inadequate or contradictory communications from the top of the chain of command, and the ever-shifting ethnic and political composition of the army itself.

Hašek depicts the Red Army as a multi-ethnic, multi-national and multi-lingual body coming into being over the course of the stories. Though it figures to a lesser extent, the White Army also houses a mixture of nationalities, including Russian, Polish and Bashkir members. This heterogeneity repeatedly results in miscommunication and distrust both within the ranks and across enemy lines. (Interestingly, the narrator's nationality is an unimportant aspect of his character. Although Gašek reflects on his childhood in the Vinohrady neighborhood of Prague and military career in Bohemia, no other characters identify him as Czech until the final story.)

Many of the characters are hampered by being monolingual in a multi-lingual setting. As a Russian-speaking Czech, Gašek has to improvise to navigate the multi-lingual region; for example, he relies heavily on a Chuvash soldier in his entourage to translate for him when they travel through hostile Tatar villages.

In fact, the only figure who has command over multiple languages is the author. Hašek was a polyglot, and his work is marked by a smattering of German, Hungarian and Russian words, as well as the ability to depict native speakers of one of those languages attempting another. In the Bugulma Tales, Hašek uses Russian words to add to the “authenticity” of his first-hand account. Some Tatar words and one line of German poetry also appear, but Civil War-era Russian is the most important source of non-Czech vocabulary for these stories. Russian words transliterated into Czech almost always appear in instances of dialogue; they go unremarked by the characters and the narrator. Words like *molodci*, *svoloč* and *črezvyčajka* are all prime examples of Hašek’s expressive use of Russian. The appearance of multiple languages in a Czech text complicates the linguistic texture of the stories and problematizes their essential conceit: that while the stories are being narrated in Czech, they are implicitly “taking place” in Russian. The Russian-language vocabulary adds to the impression of Hašek’s authority on the subject of the Red Army, as well as reminding the reader that when two characters converse in Bugulma, they do so in Russian. Hašek has “translated” these stories for his Czech readers’ convenience, a premise he subtly references in the final story, “Before the Revolutionary Tribunal of the Eastern Front.”

Hašek’s Red Army is an institution characterized by a suspicion towards verbal communication, shifting sources of authority, competing exhibitions of power and a dangerously precarious balance of chaos and order. The characters who spout an exaggerated form of

Bolshevik rhetoric, including Jerochymov, strike the most ridiculous profiles in the book. Yet it is not their beliefs per se that Hašek mocks as much as the force of their conviction. Crucially, Jerochymov and other characters like him are rarely motivated by ideology, but by their own personal destructive, violent and vengeful agendas which they often adapt on the spot to correspond to military initiatives. In fact, this disjunction is part of Hašek's critique. Such characters fit seamlessly into the Red Army, and indeed, rise to the top of its ranks. The Red Army leadership and organization, Hašek suggests, is informed not by political consciousness, but by bloodthirstiness. In this way it is not different from other armies, but only harmful in a different way.

A few recognizable figures from the Russian Civil War are mentioned in Hašek's stories but unlike, for example, *Red Cavalry*, they do not appear as characters. From the White Army, Colonel Kappel is mentioned in "A Strategic Hitch" and "Bugulma's Glory Days," but though his troops are referenced in the context of a decisive battle, he never appears.²⁶ Top Soviet leaders are mentioned by name only twice in the entire series. The sole reference to Lenin is in the story "A Problem with the Prisoners" in the context of a fight between Jerochymov and the commander of the Petrograd cavalry. When Jerochymov denigrates a council made up of "*specialisté*" [specialists or experts], the Petrograd commander indignantly replies, "Lenin je specialist?" ["Is Lenin a specialist?"] (Hašek, *Velitelem města Bugulmy* 135). This argument has a historical basis. In 1918, facing a poorly trained Red Army, Trotsky called for the mobilization of former imperial officers in the capacity as technical "specialists" for the Red Army. While many expressed the same kind of suspicion as Jerochymov, the program was safeguarded thanks

²⁶ It's tempting to read into Hašek's reference to Kappel. An early Red Army commander, Kappel joined the Komuch's People's Army at Samara in June 1918, convinced that they would eventually triumph because of the fortitude of their allies – the Czechoslovak Legions (Swain, 169-170).

to Lenin's intervention (Bullock, 33). Jerochymov implies that by relying on former imperial officers, this program unavoidably has counter-revolutionary potential. People deemed "specialists" are therefore possible traitors and saboteurs. The Petrograd commander, in turn, takes umbrage at the fact that Jerochymov – by suggesting that the top positions are occupied by treacherous "specialists" – would dare to question the wisdom of Red Army, and indeed Soviet leadership. The word "specialist" has been turned inside out; rather than meaning someone whose authority is reliable, it now means someone whose motivations are suspect. And so, in an amazing sequence of semantic gymnastics, specialization becomes a dangerous quality. The only response that would satisfy the loyal Petrograd commander is that the leadership contains no specialists and is therefore reliable, although it's notable that the mention of Lenin puts a stop to the argument.

But Jerochymov's critique of the central authorities does not seem to be in any way systematic, ideological, or even well-informed. Rather, it's improvised. Throughout the series, Jerochymov relies on Red Army bodies, like the revolutionary tribunal, when they will suit his purposes and advance his immediate agenda, but he has no fundamental respect for the institution. In Weber's view, a bureaucratic institution is deemed reliable when it abides by predictable rules and protocol. Jerochymov's invocation of Red Army offices therefore suggests that it is not a functional bureaucracy, but rather something akin to the ad hoc bodies that are formed to prop up a charismatic authority.

The other reference to Soviet leadership is also in the context of the quarrel between the two commanders. Jerochymov wishes to denounce the Petrograd commander by sending a telegram to Trotsky in Moscow. Trotsky's hypothetical involvement in this case is based on his position as the real *vrchní velitel* [supreme commander], the People's Commissioner of Military

and Naval Affairs. But the symbolic weight of this invocation is to express the degree of Jerochymov's derangement, his lack of perspective. The reference to Lenin works similarly; he is invoked implicitly as a master ideologue to illustrate the extent of Jerochymov's irrationality. Hašek does not comment on Trotsky and Lenin as military or political leaders, but rather activates them as symbols in the service of developing Jerochymov's character and the nature of the Red Army.

In the remainder of this chapter, I will present my analysis of five stories from the series:²⁷ "In Strategic Trouble," "Commanding Officer, Town of Bugulma," "Adjutant to the Commanding Officer, Town of Bugulma," "Potemkin's Villages," and "Before the Revolutionary Tribunal of the Eastern Council." These stories highlight Hašek's experiment with authorship, the representation of improvisation in the context of the Red Army, and the struggle for authority. In and around the power struggle between Gašek and Jerochymov, the reader can discern Hašek's critique of the Red Army as an unprepared and unpredictable military institution in which unprepared and unpredictable people are rewarded with power. And yet the stories neither condemn nor champion the Red Army and its ideological underpinnings. More to the

²⁷ While I rely on Mark Corner's translation to provide the English-language text for readers of this dissertation, I make some adjustments in my discussion of the stories. Corner renders the characters Kajurov and Jerochymov as Kayurov and Yerokhimov, while retaining Hašek's Czech spelling of Russian place-names (Čistopol and Aibaševo). Because Czech spelling is more or less comprehensible to English-speakers, I use the original spelling of Hašek's characters' names in my writing, although this results in incongruity between my quotations from Corner and my own analysis. More significantly, Corner consistently translates Petrohrad as Petersburg. This may be a result of the Czech-language name for Saint Petersburg, which had been Petrohrad at least since it appeared in Jungmann's Dictionary in 1837. However, for stories set in Russia in October 1918, it is essential to preserve the historical information encompassed in the place-name: the city's name was changed from the Germanic Санкт-Петербург to the Slavic-sounding Петроград in 1914 (Howard, 62). It is, thus, historically and thematically significant that Gašek is dealing with none other than the Petrograd cavalry. Although the Czech spelling of the city did not shift to reflect this change, it is easy to represent this nuance in English translation. Therefore, when writing about the role of the Petrograd cavalry in the Bugulma Tales, I take the same approach that I take with Yerokhimov/Jerochymov; I reproduce Corner's word-choice when quoting his translation, but in my analysis, I use what I think is more accurate spelling and terminology.

point, Hašek does not, in these stories, explain or apologize for his enlistment in the Red Army, an act many in the Czechoslovak Republic considered treasonous. In his representation of Soviet Russia and, more importantly, of himself, Hašek refuses to satisfy his reader's desires, curiosity or expectations.

2. Analysis of stories

a. "V strategických nesnázích": The problem of the author in quasi-autobiography

Hašek's use of autobiography is nowhere more important than in the fourth story of the series, "V strategických nesnázích" ("In Strategic Trouble"). Uniquely in the series, Jerochymov is not even mentioned, and the reader sees Gašek interrogating his own authority without a foil. The story concerns Gašek's inability to fulfill an order from the revolutionary council of the eastern front because he can't understand it. The order reads: "The Light Artillery (16th Division) is on the march. Sledges must be prepared for transporting the division to the front" (47).²⁸ The confusion here is not linguistic; nothing indicates that Gašek, a non-native speaker of Russian, is encountering unfamiliar words. This is an important nuance, given the fact that later in this story, Gašek reflects on his former life in Bohemia. Rather, Gašek's confusion stems from his lack of military training. How many people make up an artillery division, and what does it take to prepare a sledge? Gašek is not prepared to carry out the directive, but to ask anyone for

²⁸ "16. division lehkého dělostřelectva na pochodu. Připravte saně k dopravení divisionu na pozici" (118). Bizarrely, the German word "division" appears in the Czech text. In Czech the word would normally be *divize*, Russian дивизия. It's possible that the German term became military jargon for Czechs who served in the Austrian army.

Henceforth quotations from the Corner translation that appear in the main body will be indicated by page number only. Occasionally I will provide my own English translations, in which case no page numbers will be given. In the footnotes, the page numbers refer to quotations taken from the 1966 Československý spisovatel edition.

clarification would reveal his ignorance and hence, his unsuitability for the post of *velitel*. He tries obliquely to get the information first from his Chuvash guards, then the mayor of Bugulma, then finally, the commander of the Petrograd regiment.

Because the Petrograd commander is capable of exposing Gašek's ignorance with serious repercussions, Gašek avoids asking for clarification directly. Instead, he tries to bury his plea for information in a seemingly casual conversation:

"It's a rum thing," I said, "how High Command is always changing the number of men in the light artillery divisions. With the Red Army finally taking shape, it is awkward to see that shape changing. You shouldn't happen to know, Comrade Commander, how many men there used to be in a division before the latest changes?"

He released phlegm before words: "we are cavalry men and that means we have nothing to do with artillery. Besides, I don't even know how many men I ought to have in my own regiment. The point is they never sent me any instructions on the matter. What they told me was to make up a regiment, so I set about recruiting men. One had a friend, the friend had another friend, and so the thing went on growing. When I've got a fair whack of them, I'll call them a brigade. What are a bunch of Cossacks compared to our brigades?" (50-51)²⁹

Gašek assumes an aloof pose in order to ask his comrade for the information that is essential to his carrying out the order, which allows him to maintain the aura of authority. However, the commander is just as ignorant as Gašek, only he feels no need to dissemble this fact. Coarsely and straightforwardly, he describes his experience of building the Red Army: it has come about spontaneously and without design, an improvised army.³⁰

²⁹ "‘Jest to zvláštní,’ řekl jsem, ‘že centr stále mění stav mužstva v divisionech lehkého dělostřelectva. Zejména nyní, když se organizuje rudá armáda, je to trapné. Nevíte náhodou, tovaryš komandýr, kolik mužů bylo dříve v divisionu?’"

Odpověděl: ‘My, kavaleristi, se přece nestaráme o dělostřelectvo. Já sám nevím, kolik mám mít mužů v pluku, poněvadž mně neposlali žádných direktiv. Dostal jsem rozkaz sestavit pluk, tak jsem ho sebral. Ten má kamaráda, ten také, a tak to rostlo. Až jich bude moc, nazvu to třeba brigádou. Kam proti nám kozáci’" (119).

³⁰ Ironically, the dynamic between Gašek and the Petrograd commander calls to mind an earlier literary representation of a Russian military conflict: Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. As Gary Saul Morson points out in an analysis of Pierre and Prince Andrei at Borodino, "The difference between a good and poor officer

The Petrograd commander's description is exaggerated and humorous, but not terribly far from the truth. Brest-Litovsk effectively disbanded the Russian Imperial Army. The following day, Trotsky became the chairman of the Supreme Military Council, tasked with designing a new army (Swain, 135). His insistence on a regular army, as opposed to militia groups, was meant to provide defense against imperial enemies, allow the Party to improve the domestic conditions and provide assistance in international revolutionary movements (Vourkoutiotis, 68). In addition to decommissioned officers from the Tsarist army, the военспецы [military specialists] discussed above, military leadership was drawn from civilian centers of Party activity or other forms of local leadership. Trotsky acknowledged that while commanders of this ilk may not always be in line with the regime's political objectives, they would be trusted and obeyed by their subordinates which, at least in the beginning, was more important (Vourkoutiatis, 69). In the early years of the Red Army, commanders who had actually gone to officers' school made up only 10% of the corps, while close to 44% had no formal military training whatsoever (Vourkoutiotis, 72). Gašek's desire to maintain the appearance of stability and authority has uncovered an essential truth about his army: he is not exceptional in his lack of preparedness, but only in his discomfort with it.

Two factors impede Gašek in his fact-finding mission and hence his ability to carry out the directive. First, he is careful not to be straightforward. Second, no matter how hypothetically he tries to phrase his question, nobody actually knows the answer. Meanwhile, in the time Gašek spends worrying over his own ignorance, the military situation becomes even more complicated. He receives a second telegram which reads:

Threats faced by our forces on frontline mean you appointed Commander of the Front.
Should enemy penetrate our positions on River Ik, withdraw our regiments to Klučevo-

in *War and Peace* is that the former knows that he cannot understand battle and knows how to behave in a situation of uncertainty" (88).

Bugulma line. Convene Extraordinary Committee for Defence of Town and defend till last man. Begin evacuations of town once enemy within fifty versts. Mobilise inhabitants under fifty-two and distribute weapons. Choose moment to blow up railway bridge over Ik and at Klučevo. Scout land using armoured train and blow up railway track.

[...]

Put hoisting and leading machinery to flames. Destroy whatever cannot take. Wait for reinforcements, see to billeting, make sure supplied. Organise rail transportation of ammunition to our positions. Publish magazine in Tartar and Russian to placate inhabitants. Appoint Committee of the Revolution. Failure to execute these orders or deviation from specific demands punishable in accordance with wartime regulations. (51-52)³¹

If the first telegram sent Gašek into a state of confusion, the second brings him to panic and despair. Gašek's crisis over the demands of his post, and worse yet, his promotion to Commander of the Front, as indicated in the second telegram, lead him to review his own military education, or rather, his failure to receive one.

Contemplating the telegrams, Gašek looks back over his military career, which reads like a comically exaggerated version of Hašek's. He emphasizes his lack of a proper training, and the defining role played by chance.

They ejected me from the officers' school of the 91st Infantry Regiment at the start of the war and later on ripped off my stripes as a one-year volunteer. While my former comrades-in-arms were being rewarded with titles like "cadet" and "ensign",³² enabling them to fall like flies on all fronts, I was parking my carcass in military detention centres at Budějovice and in Most nad Litavou. When they finally released me, intending to have me sent straight to the front with the march companies, I hid in a haystack and survived the departure of three of these units. After that I made out that I had epilepsy and that brought me close to being shot, a fate I avoided only by announcing of my own free will

³¹ "Vzhledem k povážlivé situaci na frontě jste jmenován velitelem fronty. V případě protržení našich posic na řece Iku stáhněte pluky na posici Klučevo-Bugulma. Organisuďte mimořádnou komisi na obranu města a vytrvejte do posledního muže. Evakuaci města začněte, bude-li nepřítel vzdálen padesát verst od města. Mobilisujte obyvatelstvo do 52 let a rozdejte zbraně. Vyhod'te do povětří železniční most na Iku i u Klučeva ve vhodné době. Pošlete pancéřový vlak na rozvědku a vyhod'te trať do povětří..."

...

"Zapalte elevator. Co se nedá vyvézt, zničte. Čekajte posily a postarejte se o ubytování vojsk a jich pravidelné zásobování. Organisuďte train a pravidelnou dopravu nábojů na posice. Přikročte k vydávání časopisu k uspokojení obyvatelstva v tatarském i ruském jazyce. Naznačte revoluční komitét. Nevyplnění nebo chyby trestají se podle zákonů válečné doby. Revoluční vojenský sovět východní fronty" (119-120).

³² Hašek uses the word *fähnrich*, a German officer candidate rank, from the older *Fahnenträger*, flag-bearer.

that I was ready to go to the front. From that very moment Fortune smiled on me and when, en route to Sambor, I managed to procure for Lieutenant Lukas an apartment with a charming Polish landlady and superb cooking thrown in, my reward was promotion to orderly officer.

Later on, somewhere beneath Sokal, lice attacked the battalion commander. I caught the lot one by one by rubbing mercury ointment into him on the spot in the trenches. For that I received the Grand Silver Medal for Gallantry. (47-48)³³

Many elements in this description are consistent with Hašek's biography, and some of the invented details appear later in *Osudy*. Soon after enlisting in the Austrian army, Hašek was expelled from the officers' school of the 91st infantry regiment (Frynta, 58). He was also stationed in both Budějovice and in Most nad Litavou, and earned a medal for bravery after a battle in the Sokal region of Galicia in today's Ukraine (Frynta, 66). Elements that the reader will find repeated in *Osudy* include the grotesque, performative acts of malingering (Part I, chapter 8: "Švejk the Malingerer") and hiding in a haystack only to discover others also hiding there (Part II, chapter 2, "Švejk's Budějovice Anabasis"). The Lieutenant Lukáš named in this excerpt seems to be an early version of the namesake of the indolent officer in *Osudy*, and Hašek's biographers point to Rudolf Lukáš who was commander of the battalion in Budějovice (Parrott, *The Bad Bohemian* 147).

This paragraph is a laboratory for Hašek's method of deploying autobiographical material. Here we see him mining his own experiences, pulling out and exaggerating what he

³³ "Vyhodili mne na začátku války z důstojnické školy 91. pěšího pluku, pak mně odpárali i ty jednorůčkové nášivky, a zatímco druzí moji bývalí kolegové dostávali tituly kadetů i fähnrichů a padali jako mouchy na všech frontách, seděl jsem zavřen v kasárenské base v Budějovicích i v Mostu nad Litavou, a když mne pustili na konec a chtěli odpravit s 'marškumpačkami' do pole, skrýval jsem se ve stohu a přežil tak tři 'marškumpačky'. Pak jsem simuloval, že mám padoucnici a byli by mne málem zastřelili, kdybych se nebyl dobrovolně přihlásil do pole. Od té chvíle se na mne štěstí usmálo, a když jsem na pochodu od Sambora obstaral pro pana nadporučíka Lukáše byt s takovou jednou roztomilou Polkou a znamenitou kuchyní, byl jsem povýšen na ordonance. Když později pod Sokalem se objevily u našeho 'batalionskomandanta' vši, vychytil jsem je, namazal svého představeného v zákopech rtuťovou masťou a dostal jsem velkou stříbrnou medaili za chrabrost" (118).

needed for his creative and critical ends. He emphasizes tension between the system of promotions and the actual experiences of a soldier trying to avoid being sent to the front. When Gašek notes that “my former comrades-in-arms were being rewarded with titles like ‘cadet’ and ‘ensign’, enabling them to fall like flies on all fronts,” he identifies the danger of advancing through the ranks, however desirable military conventions hold it to be. In his eyes, promotion is a siren’s song; the wisest and wildest recruits like himself will avoid this temptation, opting instead to keep a low profile and stay alive. Gašek denigrates the system of awarding medals for bravery, claiming that he won one for the obsequious and frankly simian behavior of picking lice off his commanding officer, whereas the author won a medal for his comportment in battle. The blending of episodes from Hašek’s life with new motifs for Gašek, many of which lingered in the author’s head until he included them in *Švejk*, is an experiment with autobiographical representation. Even more than his autobiography, Hašek plays with his reputation as a malingerer and deserter. When he defected, Hašek became the subject of *ad hominem* attacks in the Legionnaire press which accused him, among more political crimes, of lacking character (Parrott, *The Bad Bohemian* 189-190) and this passage seems to address that charge. And yet Hašek confesses to ostensibly cowardly acts only in the context of a critique of the army’s disregard for human life, shifting the focus from his own moral failings to the moral indefensibility of the military system.

In this paragraph, and later in the story when Gašek reflects on his childhood in Vinohrady, the reader learns for the first time that the Gašek character is Czech. He even gives the address where he lived with his mother: “4 Milešovská Street” (53),³⁴ a house in which Hašek really did briefly reside in 1906. However, this autobiographical detail is a red herring, as the rest

³⁴ “Milešovské ulici č.4 na Král. Vinohradech” (120).

of the reverie proves, as Gašek's life diverges from Hašek's. When bemoaning his fate as an ill-equipped military officer, Gašek makes an imaginary appeal to his late mother, wondering "Why didn't I follow the advice you gave me when I first fluffed my exams by becoming a Benedictine monk?" (53).³⁵ No biography of Hašek suggests that he ever considered a religious education. This notion can only be attributed to the invented biography of Gašek and in fact, it's a meaningful detail, as religion plays an important symbolic role in this story. In despair, Gašek meditates on an icon that hangs in the corner of his office. When during the night "it fell off the wall and smashed itself to smithereens" (53),³⁶ he takes it as a bad omen.

Uniquely in this story, religion is associated with power – both spiritual and semiotic. In other stories from the series, Gašek is derisive of religious figures and rituals. "Via Dolorosa" mocks nuns' vow of chastity while "Commander of the Town of Bugulma" includes an encounter with a squirrel-worshipping Tatar priest that ends when Gašek and the Chuvash guards make a sacrilegious squirrel soup. "A Strategic Hitch" contains the most autobiographical information of all the stories, yet with regards to religiosity, Gašek diverges from Hašek, who was consistently critical of religion throughout his life and work.³⁷ But religion not only differentiates Gašek from Hašek, it also distinguishes him from the other characters in the stories. Through his reference to the Benedictine order, Gašek alludes to his Catholic faith, a traditional denomination in Bohemia. But it is a Russian Orthodox custom to hang an icon in the corner. So even if Gašek recognizes some religious meaning in the falling icon, it also calls to mind his outsider status: he is a Catholic among the Orthodox. After it falls, the Chuvash guard

³⁵ "Proč jsem se raději nestal benediktinem, jak jsi chtěla, když jsem poprvé propadl v kvartě" (120).

³⁶ "spadla se stěny a rozbila se" (120).

³⁷ We see Hašek's allergy to religion in his publishing activities: while he contributed to newspapers across the political spectrum, he avoided those papers affiliated with Catholic parties, although the avoidance was likely mutual.

rebukes the icon, presumably an image of the Virgin Mary, wagging his finger at it and saying, “Svoloč jedna, padá a probudí člověka” [“Сволочь (scoundrel) woman, you fall and wake a person up,” 120]. This religious item thus becomes a barometer for belonging, hinting at the larger problem of whether Gašek belongs in Russia. The Chuvash guards may speak broken Russian, but in the encounter with the Tatar priest, Gašek learns that they are Orthodox, bringing them closer to the conventional definition of Russianness than Gašek. The icon also points to the traditional religious belief system which still commanded authority in Russia despite the Bolshevik attempt to dismantle it.

In reviewing his biography up to this point, Gašek connects his outsider status (as a Czech in Russia) to his lack of preparedness (as an untrained military leader). We see from his military biography that Gašek was drafted into the Austrian army and later expelled from their training program. He does not offer even a word of explanation about how he came to join the Red Army, but instead keeps the focus on his lack of training:

Throughout all this, however, no one initiated me into the mysteries of the art of war. I still don't know how many regiments make up a battalion or into how many companies you can divide a brigade, and in Bugulma, I was supposed to know how many sledges are needed to transport a division of light artillery.³⁸

In the space of one paragraph, Gašek moves from the Austrian Army to the Red Army; there is no mention of the Czechoslovak Legions. Moreover, the fact of his being in the Red Army is inserted without comment into the middle of a sentence. If Hašek's original readers thought that these stories would provide them with some explanation of the author's motivation for defecting from the Legions and joining the Red Army, here that expectation is maddeningly confounded. For the purposes of the story, *why* Gašek is in Russia is not as important as *how* Gašek is in

³⁸ Při tom však mne nikdo nezasvěcoval do tajů vojenského umění. Ještě dnes nevím, kolik pluků má batalion a na kolik rot se dělí brigáda, a v Bugulmě jsem měl vědět, kolik je saní třeba na dopravu divize lehkého dělostřelectva (118-119).

Russia. By omitting any reference to the Legions and glossing over Gašek's motivation for joining the Red Army in the context of the character meditating on his past, Hašek deftly shifts his reader's focus from the problematic author to the problem facing the character.

The second telegram names Gašek to the post *velitel fronty* [commander of the front], as opposed to his previous post, *velitel města* [commander of the city]. This promotion further distinguishes Gašek from Hašek. Hašek's highest title was commissar, a post that is not military but political, administrative and/or educational. In the Russian translation, first done by Yuri Molochkovskij in 1961, Gašek's title is *комендант*, and the subhead in the original Tribuna publication and the 1966 Československý spisovatel edition reads "Komendantom goroda Bugulmy." This promotion is another meaningful speech-act: the change in title, from *velitel města* to *velitel fronta* signifies a larger transformation, the new person that Gašek becomes in the context of the Civil War by taking on a military position. It is for this reason that Gašek looks to his autobiography – a work of fiction distinct from Hašek's autobiography – in the first place, to figure out how he landed in such an unlikely position of authority. Looking at a portrait of his mother and imagining a conversation with her, Gašek brings out the contrast between where he came from and where he is now:

Mama dear! Remember how years ago we lived together at number 4 Milešovská Street in Prague-Vinohrady. You never thought then that within fifteen years your poor little boy would have to withdraw regiments to the Klučevo-Bugulma line, blow up railway bridges over the River Ik and at Klučevo, blow up railway tracks, put hoisting and loading gear to the flames and hold out in defence of the town until the last man falls. (53)³⁹

³⁹ "Drahá matičko! Když jsem ještě před léty s tebou bydlil v Milešovské ulici č.4. na Král. Vinohradech, nikdy jsi si nepomyslela, že tvůj ubohý synáček po patnácti letech má stahovat pluky na posici Klučevo-Bugulma, má vyhazovat železniční most na Iku i Klučevu, tratě do povětří, zapálit elevátor a vytrvat do posledního muže při obraně města kromě jiných věcí" (120).

In this small section, Gašek's mother is the explicit narratee, even though he addresses her only in his imagination. But in fact, the entire series is implicitly addressed to the community of readers of which Gašek's mother would be a part – the Czechs reading these stories, some of them certainly asking the same question Gašek asks himself in this story: how on earth did an apolitical and cowardly Czech come to occupy such a high position within the Red Army?

The story ends without Gašek resolving the essential problem of his own ill-preparedness. But although he still hasn't learned how many regiments make up a battalion, he has learned something far more useful: success in the Red Army, and maybe any army, depends more on quick thinking than on training. Gašek improvises a solution, dispatching the Petrograd brigade to the front, and sending the following telegram to headquarters: "Stunning victory. Positions on Ik (River) overrun. Our attack from all sides. Cavalry mounting enemy rear. Heaps of prisoners" (55).⁴⁰ Everything Gašek writes in this telegram is untrue, but it solves his immediate problem of responding, at least in some way, to headquarters' demands. Where knowledge and training are lacking, improvisation and lying are necessary. This is not, however, the sort of quick-thinking one normally associates with military brilliance, but rather a hucksterish improvisation. The telegram is a work of fiction, the only purpose of which is to buy its author time. In this story, improvisation occurs in the context of Hašek's representation of his authorial self. In the rest of the stories, improvisation is an essential component of Red Army administration.

b. "Velitelem města Bugulmy": Improvised authority

I began with "In Strategic Trouble," although it appears in the middle of the series, because it is the most explicitly autobiographical of all the stories, and thus allows us to see how

⁴⁰ "Velké vítězství. Posice na řece Iku prorvány. Útočíme se všech stran. Kavalerie v týlu protivníka. Mnoho zajatých" (121).

Hašek experimented with authorial self-representation. I'll now turn my attention to the first story in the series, "Velitelem města Bugulmy" ["Commanding Officer, Town of Bugulma"], which, crucially yet unnoticed by other critics, is barely autobiographical at all. Here, the first-person narrator is anonymous. He is not identified as Commissar Gašek until the following installment. In fact, his anonymity is a marked feature of this story. He issues declarations, which are inserted into the story, ending with the word *podpis* [signature], in place of an actual name. During the climactic confrontation with Jerochymov, the narrator identifies himself only as "Velitel města" ["Commander of the city"], again omitting a name. Despite lacking a name, the narrator has a more or less stable identity, and indeed stability is his defining characteristic.

I do not suggest that Hašek intentionally unfolded the character and biography of his narrator in a specific sequence. Instead, I recognize improvisation as a crucial facet of his writing process and, in the Bugulma Tales, an important thematic concern as well. To what extent he planned the set of nine stories is unknown. In fact, the order of the stories could deviate from the traditional presentation which was determined by the original dates of publication. The five stories that typically appear in the middle of the series could be presented in any order without impacting the development of the plot or characters. And the ending of the ninth installment does not provide a definitive conclusion; the characters and situations could easily have been reiterated in further episodes. This is not unusual for Hašek, whose stories often end abruptly. A reader who knows Hašek's biography intimately might be able to draw out the factual details, for example relating to his appointment to Bugulma, but in the first story, the narrator has no obvious identifying traits that link him to the author.

Breaking from other critics, I do not treat the first iteration of this character as (quasi-) autobiographical. It's entirely possible that Hašek did not decide to model Gašek after himself

until he began writing the second story, and accounts of his writing process suggest that he wrote as close to the publication date as possible, reflecting tendency to improvise. All nine stories were published between January 3rd and March 13th, 1921, not on a regular weekly schedule but in quick enough succession that Hašek must have written them at his typical prodigious pace. For these reasons I suggest that the narrator-hero character may have developed for the author just as he does for the readers. By acknowledging this, we allow the narrator to take shape as a fictional character, unmoored by his biographical connection to the author.

The story begins with a single long sentence:

When at beginning of the month of October, 1918 I was informed by the revolutionary military council “of the left-bank group in Simbirsk” that I had been named commander of the city of Bugulma, I asked Chairman Kajurov: “Do you know for certain that Bugulma has been captured?”⁴¹

In addition to the temporal and geographic setting, this sentence establishes several key elements of the coming story: the suspect legitimacy of the authority, the importance of titles, and the inadequacy of the information network. The phrase “levoberežné gruppy v Simbirsku” [“of the ‘left-bank group in Simbirsk’”] is in quotation marks, perhaps because it is a Czech transliteration of a Russian phrase, although Russianisms are not marked elsewhere in the text.⁴² The quotation marks may also signify the narrator’s doubt of the military’s level of organization and by extension its ability to bestow authority, or simply that the narrator doesn’t know what the phrase designates. The word “gruppa” [группа] is an imprecise classification, especially in the highly ordered context of the Red Army with its various military and bureaucratic organizations. It is unclear what defines this group: political orientation, hometown, ambition, or

⁴¹ “Když mně počátkem měsíce října devatenáctisého osmnáctého roku bylo oznámeno revolučním vojenským sovětem ‘levoberežné gruppy v Simbirsku’, že jsem jmenován velitelem města Bugulmy, otázel jsem se předsedy Kajurova: ‘A víte to určitě, že Bugulmy jest již dobyto?’” (104).

⁴² As recently as mid-September 1918, the Simbirsk operation had successfully fought back Komuch soldiers. Kraszewski describes the left-bank group as a department of the Red 5th Army (114).

some other quality unknown even to the narrator. The “left-bank” refers to their being stationed on the west side of the Volga.

The narrator’s question about the current state of affairs in Bugulma – is it in our hands or the enemy’s hands? – is critical intelligence, but Kajurov’s response points to the unreliability of the information network. (The uncertainty around the state of Bugulma happens to be an autobiographical detail from Hašek’s posting to Bugulma (Parrot, *Bad Bohemian* 123)). Kajurov replies, “No specific information has been received. [...] I’d be surprised if it was in our hands right now, but by the time you get there I have no doubt it will be” (7).⁴³ Kajurov’s phrase “v našich rukách” [“in our hands”] links him, the chairman of the left-bank group, with the madcap Jerochymov, who, as we will see, uses the phrase “v mých rukách” [“in my hands”] whenever he talks about being in control. In fact, the entire region was largely in the control of the Red Army by mid-September (Sak, 83). But by showing early on that the flow of information is impeded along the chain of command, Hašek sets up the central conflict yet to come: the problem of two characters simultaneously appointed to the same post. This confusion initially appears as part of the comedic exposition, but as the stories progress, it becomes the linchpin of Hašek’s critique of the chaotic Red Army.

The most important notion in the opening paragraph is the appointment of the narrator as *velitel*. The phrase used here and repeated throughout the story is “*jmenován velitelem*,” literally “named commander.” Naming is a speech-act that endows him with power and transforms him from a member of the rank-and-file to an authority figure. But the source of the authority is the suspect “left-bank group in Simbirsk,” so a tension is already apparent: by what power is the narrator authorized, and what is the foundation of his legitimacy?

⁴³ “Zpráv bližších nemáme [...] velice pochybuji, že již nyní bude v našich rukách, ale než tam přijedete, doufám, že už zatím padne” (104).

After his conversation with Kajurov, the narrator embarks on a military march, and Hašek employs a parodic mode to which he will return in the chapter “Švejkova Budějovická anabáze” (“Švejk’s Budějovice anabasis”) in *Osudy*. Earlier, when the narrator asks the precise location of Bugulma, Kajurov responds, “look at a map. Do you think I’ve got nothing better to do than worry about where some wretched Bugulma is?” (7)⁴⁴ Kajurov’s ignorance has serious repercussions for the newly-appointed *velitel*. Without clear directions from the commanding officer to their destination, the narrator and his entourage are forced to roam through Tatarstan, which the reader realizes is an unnecessary waste of time and money. And indeed, they wander far afield. Bugulma lies roughly 385 kilometers due east of Simbirsk. But instead of traveling by land, the troops take a boat up the Volga to the Kama River, disembark at Chistopol northwest of Bugulma, then travel through a series of villages (Krachalga, Jelanovo, Moskovovo, Gulokovo and Aibashevo) to the north and east of Bugulma, before finally reaching their destination. All along the way, they ask local villagers for directions, but the information they receive is apparently faulty, since it does not help them right their course. Anecdotes in the different localities add humor, while the stops along the way are listed matter-of-factly and the navigational errors are not mentioned. Only by consulting a map does the reader realize how far in the wrong direction the soldiers have gone, an experience that mimics the characters’ own. The importance of this mission, and the extent to which the soldiers will be connected to their superior officers once they establish themselves in Bugulma, is from the very beginning called into question by Kajurov’s indifference to their journey.

⁴⁴ “podívejte se na mapu, myslíte, že já mám starosti jen o to, kde leží nějaká pitomá Bugulma.” (104)

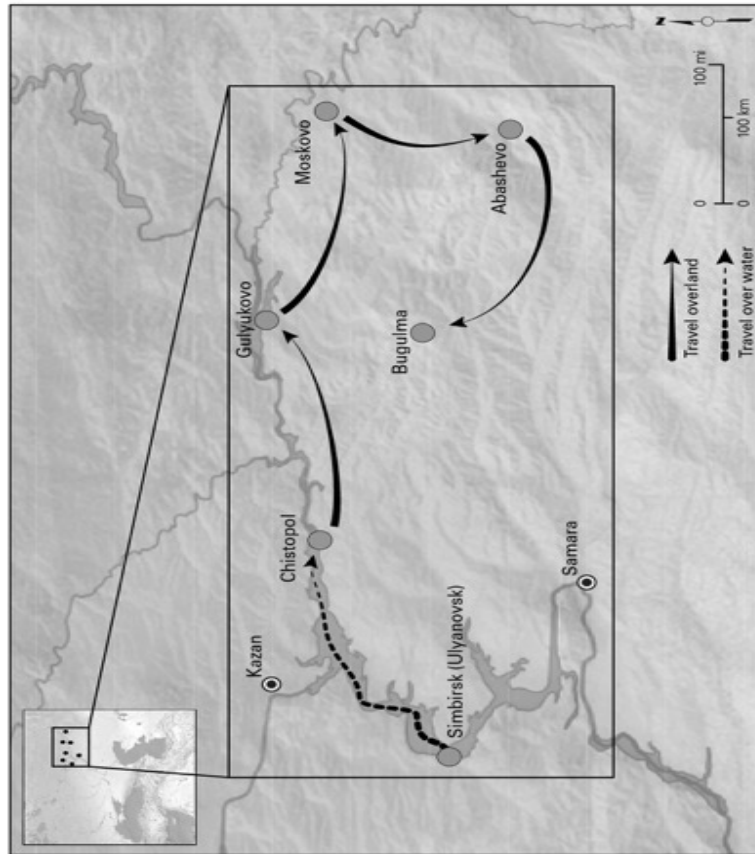


Figure 1: Map of the entourage's roundabout journey from Simbirsk to Bugulma. Created by Scott Walker, Digital Cartography Specialist, Harvard Map Collection, May 2018.

When the narrator and his entourage reach Bugulma, the city is in a state of *bezvládí* [anarchy], not in the sense of chaos, but rather the literal meaning of “without government.” And yet the atmosphere in Bugulma is surprisingly orderly. The White Army abandoned the city three days prior, and a frightened Red unit led by Jerochymov stands outside the city on the opposite side from which the narrator and his entourage enter. The townspeople have been assembled for two days, waiting to welcome a new leader with the traditional offering of bread and salt. Significantly, the townspeople are perfectly indifferent to the political orientation of the new leadership. Though in the middle of a civil war, and physically in between the Red and White camps, the people of Bugulma betray no allegiance to either cause. They have an undifferentiated desire for some form of governmental authority.

The narrator’s first act as *velitel* is to disarm the populace, both to quell any potential violent uprising, and to requisition weapons for the army. He posts a written order [*příkaz*] in which he writes, “It is not my wish to threaten anyone, but you will be aware of the fact that this is a town under siege” (16).⁴⁵ The narrator’s appeal, couched in language of friendship and gratitude, is designed to express his respect for the citizens and their ability to make reasoned decisions. And to underscore this point, he closes his order with an additional expression of lenience: “I might add that I was to have imposed a levy upon this town. However I hereby announce that no dues will have to be paid” (16).⁴⁶ Because in the opening scene Kajurov instructs the narrator to fund his operation by imposing taxes on the townspeople, this is technically an act of insubordination, but the narrator correctly guesses that a levy would lose him the support and cooperation of the townspeople; his obligations to the people of Bugulma

⁴⁵ “Nevyhrožuji nikomu, ale víte, že město je ve stavu obležení” (107).

⁴⁶ “Podotýkám ještě, že jsem měl uvalit na město kontribuci, a prohlašuji, že město žádné kontribuce platit nebude” (107).

are therefore at odds with his obligations to the Red Army leadership. The following day, a potentially violent and chaotic scene unfolds, as “the square was overflowing with armed men. Well over a thousand of them armed with rifles. Some were even dragging a machine gun along” (16).⁴⁷ Yet the day proceeds peacefully. The collection of arms stretches into the night, as the narrator takes extra time to shake each man’s hand and exchange “a few friendly words” (16).⁴⁸

During this time, Jerochymov “received an order from the Revolutionary Military Council in Simbirsk to occupy the town come what may and secure it as a base for the Soviet forces operating to the east of the town” (17).⁴⁹ Significantly, the Revolutionary Military Council in Simbirsk is the same larger body that appointed the narrator commander, but perhaps Jerochymov is not in with communication the suspect “left-bank group.” In any case, the council is clearly still in the dark as to whether the city has been captured. The confusion that began as a comedic set-up has become a situation rife with danger. The Tver regiment proceeds to “capture” the city after nightfall on the day of the general disarmament by firing shots into the air and placing the Chuvash night-watchmen under arrest. Revolver in hand, Jerochymov then enters the narrator’s office and bedroom where the following conversation takes place:

“What are you doing here?” asked the commander of the Tver regiment.⁵⁰

“I’m the commander of the city.”

“Of the White Army or the Soviet Army?”

“Of the Soviet, may I put my hands down?”

“You may, although I ask you to immediately hand over to me command of the city, in accordance with the rules of war, because I captured Bugulma.”

“But I was named to the post,” I protested.

“The devil take your namings. First you have to capture the city.”⁵¹

⁴⁷ “náměstí naplnilo se ozbrojeným lidem. Přišlo dobře přes tisíc lidí s vintovkami, někdo táhl i strojní pušku” (107).

⁴⁸ “řekl několik vlídných slov” (107).

⁴⁹ “dostali rozkaz ze Simbirska od revolučního vojenského sovětu stůj co stůj obsadit Bugulmu a pojistit tak bázi sovětským vojskům, operujícím východně od Bugulmy” (107)

⁵⁰ The word Jerochymov uses is “komandýr”; whereas *velitel* may be a governmental position, *komandýr* is strictly military.

⁵¹ ““Co jste zač,’ otázal se komandýr Tverského pluku.

This exchange repeats the main themes of the story established in the opening paragraph: the power of words versus the power of physical force, the ineffectiveness of the military information network, and the legitimation of authority. Jerochymov, despite his mandate from the general staff in Simbirsk, is in his own way attempting to establish authority charismatically rather than rationally, believing that his exploits as a warrior override the narrator's bureaucratic appointment. Jerochymov's claim to have "captured" the city is illogical, since it was already under Soviet control. Moreover, both Jerochymov and the narrator identify themselves by job title rather than name, as if their rankings have become their identity. Crucially, they came to these rankings by different means. The narrator considers himself the rightful *velitel* because the military soviet appointed him. But Jerochymov, another kind of commander, whom the same soviet ordered to capture the city, thinks that his military achievement guarantees him that post. Saying "The devil take your namings," Jerochymov dismisses the speech-act that transformed the narrator into the *velitel*.

But Jerochymov soon recognizes the symbolic power of naming, and harnessing it, improvises a way to make the narrator his subordinate, saying "já vás jmenuji svým adjutantem" ["I name you my adjutant"] (108). Not reliant on verbal negotiation, though, he adds, "If you don't agree, I'll have you shot within five minutes" (21).⁵² The reader will come to know this behavior as Jerochymov's *modus operandi*: a reasonable request followed by a disproportionate

'Velitel města.'

'Od bílých, nebo od sovětských vojsk?'

'Od sovětských, mohu dát ruce dolů?'

'Můžete, ale prosím vás, abyste mně ihned podle válečného práva předal velitelství města, neboť jsem dobyl Bugulmu.'

'Já jsem byl ale jmenován,' namítl jsem.

'Čerta s takovým jmenováním. Napřed to musíte dobýt'" (108).

⁵² "V případě, že nebudete s tím souhlasit, dám vás v pěti minutách zastřelit" (108).

threat of violence. It's an inversion of the narrator's first order to the Bugulma residents: "It is not my wish to threaten anyone" (16).

As the stories develop, the narrator, who will in the second story be identified as Gašek, uses written texts, including personal letters and official documents, to advance his agenda or protect himself. When written texts fail him, he relies on verbal negotiation and, occasionally, verbal trickery. In contrast, Jerochymov threatens physical violence. He repeatedly uses the physically grounded metonym "v mých rukách" ["in my hands"] to express his assumption of power. When he adapts to the circumstances of his conflict with Gašek, Jerochymov too utilizes verbal communication, but, as in this encounter, always with the threat of violence. Because he believes himself to be the rightful *velitel*, it follows that Jerochymov considers his recourse to violence to be, in a Weberian sense, "legitimate." As Gašek and Jerochymov come to better understand each other as foes, a synthesis is created between their two approaches to power: an improvisational method combining verbal trickery (in the form of confrontational dialogue as well as written texts) with the threat of violence to achieve political, personal and military objectives.

Even as this synthesis unfolds, and the rivals develop a strange, uneasy friendship, Jerochymov primarily functions as Gašek's foil. Whereas Gašek is orderly, language-oriented and sober, Jerochymov is unpredictable, oriented towards physical action and often drunk. Gašek's personality and comportment thus distinguish him from the author, and Jerochymov has a lot of the attributes that readers associate with Hašek. We might imagine a triangular relationship between Hašek, Gašek and Jerochymov represented in Freudian terms as ego, superego and id, respectively. But they also resemble each other, specifically in their reliance on improvisation. By highlighting the ubiquity of improvisation in the Red Army, Hašek subtly

reveals what he has learned about the supposedly threatening new Soviet state: that its greatest danger was to its own citizens.

c. “Adjutantem velitele města Bugulmy”: Literacy and legitimacy

Gašek and Jerochymov alternately manipulate each other to advance their own agendas. Gašek’s most complex manipulation of Jerochymov, which occurs in the story “Adjutant to the Commanding Officer, Town of Bugulma,” revolves around a campaign to increase literacy, a parody of the ликвидация безграмотности or ликбез campaign. Lenin placed strategic importance on the eradication of illiteracy: “to retain power, the party had to expand its base of support and win over the peasantry or at least gain their benevolent neutrality. One of the important obstacles to gaining support among the peasantry was illiteracy” (Kenez, 72). In 1920, Russia had only a 40% literacy rate, and numbers were even lower among the rural population (Kenez, 73). In his book *The Russian Reading Revolution*, historian Stephen Lovell argues that widespread illiteracy contributed to the Bolsheviks’ initial seizure of power, and that their subsequent efforts to increase literacy enabled them to maintain it insofar as they controlled the entire educational system. (Later, in the Stalinist era, authority was often represented through symbolically associating the dictator with the act of writing. As Katerina Clark shows in *Moscow, the Fourth Rome*, Stalin was the “author of authors” (89)). Illiteracy is a literary fact too. In *Red Cavalry*, the narrator Lyutov is one of the few characters who can read, and he sometimes uses this skill to help the Cossack and peasant Russian soldiers in his regiment, reading from the newspaper in the story “My First Goose,” and taking dictation in “A Letter.”

When Jerochymov names himself commander, he advances an agenda that shows his primitive grasp of Red Army objectives: he plans to have the mayor shot, take members of the bourgeoisie hostage until the end of the civil war, mobilize a mounted cavalry, and end free

trade. When they're on the topic of free trade, Gašek explains that most of the merchants in the region are illiterate muzhiks [мужики], so before they can be expected to understand and fulfill any of Jerochymov's orders, they must first be taught to read and write. This is an act of political misdirection. By convincing Jerochymov that literacy is essential to the fulfillment of even his most violent orders, Gašek in effect distracts the commander from the orders themselves and replaces them with his own agenda: initiating a small-scale ликбез campaign.

In their own ways, Jerochymov and Gašek are both attempting to establish norms consistent with Bolshevik agenda. Jerochymov has an inchoate notion that the bourgeoisie is the enemy, that improving the army is a top priority, and that free trade is anathema to communism. Gašek's representation of the literacy campaign, on the other hand, corresponds to Bolshevik goals only coincidentally; as I established in the analysis of the previous story, Gašek tends to act in accordance with his own instinct as a peace-maker rather than the demands of his office. Indeed, Gašek is so quick to suggest that the local people be taught to read and write, implying that Jerochymov's goals cannot be realized without first taking this step, it suggests that a literacy campaign is Gašek's original idea.

Because even in his role as the adjutant, Gašek can sway Jerochymov through argumentation, Gašek ultimately wields more power than the nominal commandant. Gašek's power, therefore, comes from his verbal negotiating skills. In contrast, Jerochymov's absurd implementation of the literacy campaign hinges on an extreme threat of violence. He issues an order stating:

To the whole Population of Bugulma, Town and Region
I order everyone in the town and surrounding area who has not yet learned to read and write to do so within the next three days. Anyone found to be illiterate after this time will be shot.

Commanding Officer of the town: Yerokhimov (30)⁵³

⁵³ "Všemu obyvatelstvu Bugulmy i újezda!

Of course, considering the widespread illiteracy, these public notices could not have been very effective, save for activating in the townspeople's minds the near-sacred status of the written word which is traditional in Russian culture. This is an example of what leads Kraszewski to characterize Jerochymov as "simply adorable in his clueless buffoonery" (37). But his propensity for violence should not be overlooked. Jerochymov goes on to describe the printing of the notice, which took place with the printer held at gunpoint:

He quakes, the svoloč [сволочь], quakes, reads, quakes a little more, and I fire a shot into the ceiling... And he printed it, printed it gloriously. To be able to read and write is essential! So you give an order, everyone can read, understand, and be happy.⁵⁴

Lenin believed that literacy had a civilizing effect (Lovell, 12), but Jerochymov's antics in this scene reveal that even in promoting literacy, he remains ruled by violent impulses. And although he and Gašek have agreed on a goal, their methods are still reflective of their opposing character traits. Even when Jerochymov uses the written word in the form of printed documents in an attempt to promote literacy, his method of enforcement is to threaten physical violence.

That evening, Gašek receives deputations of what he calls "mužici" (мужики; an affectionate Russian term for peasants or farmers) begging for mercy for their inability to learn to read within three days' time. Significantly, their grievance is administrative in nature, pertaining neither to the war nor the political transition; they appeal to Gašek because he is the more reasonable of the two authority figures. He assures them, "The order is invalid [...] and so is everything that durák [дурак] did, commander of the city Jerochymov."⁵⁵ Even as Gašek

Rozkazuji, aby všichni ti z celého města i újezda, kteří neumí číst a psát, naučili se tak během tří dnů. Kdo po té lhůtě bude uznán jako negramotný, bude zastřelen.

Velitel města: Jerochymov" (111).

⁵⁴ "Třese se svoloč, třese, čte, třese se ještě víc a já bác do stropu...A vytiskl, slavně vytiskl. Umět číst a psát hlavní věc! Pak vydáš příkaz, všichni čtou, rozumí se a jsou šťastni" (112).

⁵⁵ "“Příkaz je neplatný,” řekl jsem, ‘to všechno udělal ten durák, velitel města Jerochymov’" (113).

refers to Jerochymov as *velitel*, that title is overshadowed by another designation, the Russian word дупак. That night, Gašek inconspicuously reclaims his old position, that is to say, usurps it from Jerochymov, by posting another notice:

To all residents of Bugulma and the environs!
I hereby announce that I have dismissed the commander of the city, comrade Jerochymov, and have taken up the office again myself. With this his orders are made null and void: his Order No. 1 and Order No. 2, concerning likvidace bezgramotnosti within the course of three days.
Commander of the City: Gašek⁵⁶

The document contains false information. Gašek has done nothing to dismiss Jerochymov from this post, but the publication of the announcement, a speech-act, is intended to accomplish just that. Crucially, both notices are authored texts; they are signed, and it is only the status of the signatory, or author, that endows them with power.

It stands to reason that the still mostly illiterate townspeople rely on word-of-mouth to communicate the contents of these competing public notices, if they care enough to do so. But between Gašek and Jerochymov, the documents contribute to the escalation of their interpersonal conflict. Moreover, Bolshevik and Red Army objectives, such as the eradication of illiteracy, are activated only in the context of this personal power struggle. The rhetoric of revolutionary politics is reduced to jargon. Not only literacy but language itself is useful only to the extent that it advances the personal agenda of one of two rivals for power. Gašek's improvised mechanism for advancing his own agenda undermines Jerochymov's authority. At the same time, when Gašek reassumes power, he abandons the literacy project, showing one of two things: either that he was only temporarily committed to the goals of the Red Army and by extension the Bolshevik

⁵⁶ "Všemu obyvatelstvu Bugulmy i újezda!

Prohlašuji, že jsem sesadil velitele města, tovaryše Jerochymova, a nastoupil opět svůj úřad. Tím jsou neplatny jeho příkaz 1. i příkaz čís. 2., týkající se likvidace bezgramotnosti během tří dnů. Velitel města: Gašek" (113)

Party, or that Hašek's variation on a theme had reached its conclusion. Insofar as both Jerochymov and Gašek are representatives of the Red Army, their erratic behavior casts doubt on the legitimacy of the military itself. At the same time, because illiteracy is still widespread, the ability to write remains exceedingly rare. Authorship is of ambiguous potency in an illiterate society. Although Gašek subdues Jerochymov, he cannot deprive him of the authorial capacity. For all the shifting of titles, Jerochymov maintains power in two forms: his ability to write, and his ability to enforce his will through violence.

d. "Potemkinovy vesnice": Russification as mystification

The seventh story in the series, "Potemkinovy vesnice" ["Potemkin's Villages"] deals with a confrontation with authority managed through mystification. Its title points to the most famous Russian hoax, the Potemkin village, but the connection is not made until the end of the story. In fact, what the story presents is a reversal of a Potemkin village; here we have a Potemkin cemetery. Catherine the Great's journey down the Dnieper River in 1787 has "passed from history into legend" (Massie, 489), thanks to the speedy construction work initiated by Governor Potemkin in order to please the sovereign. In her biography of Catherine, Isabel de Madariaga insists that Potemkin organized Empress' journey so that she would dock at the sites of the greatest development. Though not based in historical fact, the Potemkin village, dubbed by de Madariaga a "malicious witticism" (371), became a useful emblem for an elaborate deception intended to hide an unpleasant truth, and this is the sense in which Hašek uses it. The enduring resonance of this emblem, transcending its historical and geopolitical specificity, speaks to the timeless universality of the phenomenon, the impression that it is sometimes easier or more expedient to create an intricate deception than to face the consequences of the truth. Hašek's story, however, presents an inversion of the legend as a comment on the destructive nature of the

Red Army. Moreover, references to Potemkin villages, as well as the echoes of Gogol's *Ревизор*, signal to the readers a literary "Russification." This story, more than any other from the series, is a parody of Russian fantastic literature.

This story and the two that follow, "A Problem with the Prisoners" and "Before the Revolutionary Tribunal of the Eastern Front," have an unmistakably Gogolian quality, as Gašek and Jerochymov are sent into a panic awaiting the arrival of a government inspector. In Gogol's classic 1836 play *Ревизор* (*The Government Inspector* or *Inspector General*), the pretentious inhabitants of a provincial Russian town learn that they are to be visited by a government inspector from St. Petersburg. When a good-for-nothing low-level civil servant Khlestakov happens to pass through town, he is mistaken for that inspector. Khlestakov welcomes their ministrations, as each local official vies to impress him. Hašek may or may not have had *Ревизор* in mind when he wrote these stories; there is some evidence to suggest that Hašek was a fan of Gogol's (Vlach, 239). If Hašek really wanted to draw out the connection, he could have referred to the coming official as the "revizor" in place of "investigator"; both words are used in Czech. Additionally, Hašek's fiction is richly intertextual, so he certainly could have name-dropped Gogol or a character from the play. In the absence of an overt reference, we may see affinity rather than influence. Hašek, like Gogol, satirizes the authority attached to bureaucratic offices and the mindless fawning it inspires.⁵⁷ Additionally, in Russia, the early 1920s was a golden age for Soviet satire, as authors like Mikhail Zoshchenko and Il'f and Petrov lampooned NEP-era norms. Amazingly though, Hašek's stories predate both the canonical Soviet satires and

⁵⁷ Of course, Gogol himself was not Russian but Ukrainian; by writing in Russian he facilitated the embrace of his works into that tradition. This autobiographical detail further links Gogol with Hašek during the latter's Russian phase.

the most important literary treatments of the Civil War, including *Red Cavalry* and Shklovsky's *Sentimental Journey*.

Gašek stages a one-man *Peвизор* by strategically using the coming of the inspector to distract Jerochymov who, many times throughout the stories, threatens or attempts to denounce him. In fact, Jerochymov has long hoped for a revolutionary tribunal to come to Bugulma, expecting that it will remove Gašek from office. In Jerochymov's eyes, Gašek has failed to fulfill Red Army objectives, such as requisitioning horses, imposing a levy on the townspeople, imprisoning counter-revolutionaries, and executing the mayor, priests and merchants. In fact, out of all the items on this list, only one of them corresponds to the orders issued to Gašek: imposing a levy. Otherwise, the list reflects Jerochymov's own agenda. The reader will recall that these are all the actions Jerochymov intended to take when he first declared himself *velitel* of the city. In the story "Adjutant to the Commanding Officer, Town of Bugulma," Jerochymov tells Gašek his plans:

"First of all," he intoned solemnly, "I shall order the mobilization of horses. Then I shall have the mayor of the town shot. I shall take ten hostages from the bourgeoisie and hold them in prison for the duration of the Civil War. After that I shall carry out a house-to-house search of the town and prohibit any independent trading. That's enough for one day. I'll think up something else for tomorrow." (23)⁵⁸

But Jerochymov has an abrupt (and unexplained) change of heart and decides to protect his friend from the coming tribunal, rather than denounce him. To solve the problem of the impending inspection, he comes up with a solution in the form of a mystification. He digs three graves and places a headstone above one which reads: "Interred here is the former rural police

⁵⁸ "'Předně,' odpověděl vážně a slavnostně, 'nařídím mobilisaci koní, potom dám zastřelit starostu města a z buržoasie vezmu deset rukojmí a odpravím do vězení do konce občanské války. Na to udělám všeobecný 'obisk' v městě a zakážu svobodný obchod. Pro první den bude toho dost a zítra si vymyslím něco jiného'" (109).

chief. He was shot in October 1918 as a counter-revolutionary” (82).⁵⁹ The other two headstones, following the same pattern, are designated for the local priest and mayor.⁶⁰ All three men are in fact unharmed; they are imprisoned in a nearby pigpen. The graves will be enough to show the inspectors, while the men supposedly destined for the graves need merely to be hidden from view.

At this point Gašek reports, “I looked at him in profile, his features reminded me of Potemkin,” and the story ends with the sentence, “I called to mind Potemkin’s villages.”⁶¹ This, however, is a frightening and macabre, yet still funny, reversal of the original Potemkin village myth, and the connection deserves to be unpacked. The original Potemkin village was an attempt to make an undeveloped area appear more lively. According to the legend, Potemkin’s portable villages only had to look convincing from a distance – they only had to bear the scrutiny of someone passing by on a barge. Jerochymov’s deception is exactly the opposite: he wants to make a normal, functioning town look *more* war-torn. He exaggerates the brutality of Gašek’s administration and the number of deaths. And the inspectors will be so close to the site of the mystification that they will be able to read the writing on the tombstone. There’s also a vertical inversion; whereas Potemkin built up, Jerochymov digs down. And while Potemkin’s villages were intended to be detachable and portable, a grave is immobile and permanent.

⁵⁹ “Zde je pochován zastřelený bývalý přístav. Byl zastřelen v říjnu 1918 jako kontrarevolucionář” (133).

⁶⁰ This is not the first time Jerochymov fabricates documents relating to someone’s execution. In the story “Bugulma’s Glory Days,” Jerochymov has two false but official-looking documents printed: the first announces the initiation of an investigation into Gašek’s crimes which are potentially punishable by death, the second announces the guilty verdict and impending execution. By catching Jerochymov still at the printing press, Gašek forestalls an attempt on his own life.

⁶¹ “Podíval jsem se na něho s profilu, jeho rysy mně připomínaly Potěmkina” and “Vzpomněl jsem si na Potěmkinovy vesnice” (both 133).

Although Potemkin's villages are not exactly a high-point in cultural achievement, Jerochymov's Potemkin cemetery is a travesty of Russian history. It suggests that the fulfillment of Red Army orders requires death and undoing, or the appearance thereof. Potemkin's mystification exposed the sovereign's vanity and superficiality in the drive for imperial expansion, while Jerochymov's exposes the Red Army's bloodthirstiness. In the context of the Red Army, the repurposing of Potemkin's mystification, which as a legend is charming in its silliness, brings out all of its dark and deadly implications. In his assessment of Gašek as *velitel*, Jerochymov interprets the Red Army's criteria for success as establishing authority through brutal methods. Like Gašek in "A Strategic Hitch," Jerochymov's quick-thinking buys him time to stave off exposure by higher Red Army authorities. At the same time, the ersatz graveyard effectively avoids senseless executions. His improvised Potemkin cemetery gives the impression that the Red Army's authority has been established, and it is wretched.

e. "Před revolučním tribunálem východní fronty": The death of the author

The Bugulma stories implicitly take place in Russian, even as they are written in Czech. This tension is highlighted just once in the entire series, by means of an authorial intrusion. In the final story, "Before the Revolutionary Tribunal of the Eastern Front," we see the Chuvash guards struggle with speaking Russian. The narrator recounts, "He told me that sledges had arrived with three people who were waving their credentials around at the guards downstairs. If you want an *exact translation* of his words, it would be: 'Three sledges, three people, heap papers downstairs, one two three papers'" (97, emphasis added).⁶² Hašek renders the Chuvash's speech so as to give the impression that it is ungrammatical, suggesting that the man is speaking

⁶² "Probudil mne jeden z mých Čuvašů, že přijely saně se třemi osobami, které ukazují dole na strážnici nějaké papíry. *Přesný překlad jeho slov byl*: 'Tři saně, tři lidi, dole plno papírů, jeden, dva, tři papíry' (139, emphasis added).

broken Russian that has, for the benefit of the reader, been translated into broken Czech. Up until this point, Hašek has not explicitly noted the language of the stories. The narrator's choice to frame his dialogue as a "translation" of the Chuvash's words draws attention to the fact that the story is being written, and read, in Czech. Even if it is in the service of faithfully rendering the Chuvash's speech-pattern, Hašek here underscores the linguistic diversity of the Red Army rank-and-file. The Russian words that appear throughout the stories add to the verbal texture and authenticity of Hašek's account, but the assumption that the entire work "takes place" in Russian is an essential fictional pretense. Only in this moment does Hašek, to borrow Shklovsky's phrase, lay bare the device.

In fact, this story begins with a multi-lingual cacophony. It opens with a German-language quote, "Schlechte Leute haben keine Lieder" ["Bad people have no songs"], which Gašek attributes to a "German poet" (87).⁶³ This is a slight misquotation; the original verse reads "Böse Menschen haben keine Lieder" and it comes from Johann Gottfried Seume, an eighteenth-century poet.⁶⁴ A romantic notion, it suggests that an inclination towards music or poetry reveals a person's essential decency. There is probably no meaning behind the fact that Hašek altered the quotation and omitted Seume's name; memoirs about the author reference his excellent memory while accounts of his writing process make no mention of him using books for reference (Langer, 17; Štěpánek, 17). What we have here is Hašek paraphrasing to the best of his memory.

⁶³ Corner leaves the German intact and inserts an English translation into the paragraph. It's a shame he did not take a similar approach with the Russian that peppers the text. He also smooths over Hašek's misquotation by writing "I think that's how the German poet completed his couplet" (97). The original reads simply, "napsal německý básník" (139). Funnily enough, the line appears accurately in *Osudy*; Marek quotes it in the chapter "Švejk's Budějovice Anabasis."

⁶⁴ Seume's biography reads like one of Hašek's characters: captured by Hessian soldiers as a young man, Seume was mobilized, deserted, and tramped around Europe serving as secretary to various high-ranking officers on different sides. He even had a brief stint in the Russian imperial army during the Polish insurrection of 1792 (*Deutsches Literatur-Lexikon*).

What's important is that Gašek mentions Seume's idea only in order to discredit it, albeit through a counterintuitive application. He explains that he spent the night singing Tatar ditties, making it impossible for anyone else to sleep. In recounting this incident, he casts himself a man who "has songs," but acted badly in singing them, and thus proving the German poet wrong. Gašek reproduces the "monotonous sounds [...] where every tune ends in an *el, el, bar, ale, el, bar, bar bar*" (97; italics in Corner's translation) of the "Tatar ditties."⁶⁵ This scene is a linguistic collage: a German poet invoked by a Czech officer, keeping Russian and Chuvash troops awake by singing Tatar songs. Such a *mélange* of languages and cultures is both intrinsic to Hašek's transnational biography, and an accurate depiction of the heterogeneous Red Army.

The authentic diversity and noisiness of the Red Army gives way to a scene of hushed conformity in the form of the revolutionary tribunal which finally comes to Bugulma. Although they represent a sort of judicial branch within the Red Army, a closer look at the composition of the three-person body shows that its members do not exactly have unimpeachable ideological backgrounds. Two of the three, Sorokin and Kalibanova, are former SRs, the political party that collaborated with the Czechoslovak Legions in opposition to the Bolsheviks and largely ruled over Siberia after the October Revolution. Sorokin, the chairman of the tribunal, is a former poet and student of philology.⁶⁶ Kalibanova has the distinction of being the only female character in the story cycle in a position of authority; indeed, the only other women are the nuns who appear in "Via Dolorosa." She is a medical student who knows all of Marx by heart, but during the proceedings she only repeats what others have already said. It is never explained how she and Sorokin came to switch from the SRs to the Bolshevik Party. But where heterogeneity occurs

⁶⁵ "monotonní melodie, končící: 'El, el, bar, ale, ele, bar, bar'" (139).

⁶⁶ The editor of the 1966 edition points out that this character is based on a friend of Hašek's from Ufa, who shares the same name and résumé.

naturally among the Red Army soldiers, in the upper echelons of leadership, the only acceptable identity is Bolshevik. This idea is supported when the third member of the tribunal, Agapov, makes menacing references to Gašek's identity as a Czech. He is the only character in the entire series to acknowledge that Gašek is Czech (the only other reference to Gašek's nationality appear, as I discussed, in his own internal monologue).

Agapov is committed to Bolshevism because of the harsh treatment he received at the hands of the rich, and the general wickedness he observed under the old order. Kosík describes him as a figure of pure violence who is destined to defeat both Gašek and Jerochymov for control over Bugulma, personifying the degeneration of the revolution (93). Hašek paints a saddening portrait of this character who is motivated by hatred and an undifferentiated desire for revenge:

He had worked as a clerk for a Moscow lawyer who once provided sanctuary for the White General Kalenin when he was in hiding. The lawyer was, in Agapov's words, the worst villain in the world, because he paid him no more than fifteen roubles per month. This was only a third of what he gave to the waiter in the Hermitage as a tip when the man brought him a slice of salmon, asking in return merely that the man would let him spit in his face.

His whole appearance highlighted the fact that all the events preceding the fall of Tsarism had turned him into something cruel and implacable, a hard and terrible human being. He had settled accounts long beforehand with those who paid him those miserable fifteen roubles. He was a man doing battle with phantoms of the past, bathing his surroundings wherever he went in the dull glow of suspicion and making out the forms of traitors unknown. (100)⁶⁷

⁶⁷ "Sloužil písařem u jednoho moskevského advokáta, u kterého se kdysi skrýval generál Kalenin. Advokát byl po jeho slovech největší padouch na světě, poněvadž mu platil 15 rublů měsíčně. Třikrát tolik dal v Ermitáži číšníkovi spropitného, když mu přinesl porci semchy, vyžádal si, aby mu mohl plivnout do obličeje.

Z celého pohledu bylo vidět, že vše to, co předcházelo pádu carismu, učinilo z něho krutého člověka, neúprosného, tvrdého a hrozného, který dávno vyúčtoval s těmi, kteří mu platili těch bídných 15 rublů, a který zápasí s těmi stíny minulosti všude, kam přijde, a který přenáší svá podezření na okolí a stále myslí na nějaké neznámé zrádce" (140).

The depiction of Agapov is the most sobering moment in the entire story cycle. Robert Pynsent suggests that Agapov's name comes from the Greek word "agape" meaning Christian love, rendering ironic his exaggerated spirit of hatred (212).⁶⁸ Agapov's lust for vengeance is not limited to the people who wronged him, or to the structure of social classes that Marxism-Leninism proposes as an explanation for injustice. To Agapov, a man perverted by cruelty, no one is safe from suspicion. Gašek says that of the three, Agapov was "nejradikálnějšího názoru" ["of the most radical opinion"] (140). But his radical orientation is not political or ideological; it is essentially emotional. As the representative of the prosecution, Agapov has the power to sentence to death anyone accused of crimes against the state. As an embittered and vengeful man, he has the desire to do just that. And yet, Gašek develops a strange fondness for Agapov, explaining, "If I have cherished the memory of Comrade Agapov to this day, it is because I admired his plain talking and openness" (104).⁶⁹

Despite the committee's mandate for swift action, Gašek insists that Jerochymov be brought in to testify, trusting that Jerochymov will prove himself to be disreputable and thus discredit the denunciation. Sure enough, the Tver commander arrives completely intoxicated, and admits to having sent the incriminating telegram in the same state; this proves that he is unreliable, and worse yet, in violation of the prohibition against alcohol.⁷⁰ When Agapov proposes executing Jerochymov for the crime of drunkenness, Gašek manages to talk the tribunal down to a verbal punishment: Jerochymov will be severely warned never to do anything like this

⁶⁸ Pynsent argues that both Agapov and Kalibanova are Jews, and the entire tribunal is a parody of supposed Judeo-bolshevism (211-213).

⁶⁹ "Vzpomínám-li ještě dnes na tovaryše Agapova, mám ho rád pro jeho přímou, otevřenou" (141).

⁷⁰ Technically, alcohol consumption had been illegal in Russia since 1914, a law the Bolsheviks kept on the books when they assumed power (Transchel, 69). Some biographers point to this to explain Hašek's foray into sobriety during this period of his life, although I am skeptical as to whether this explains it entirely.

again. The story series abruptly concludes here, but the reader can well imagine a continuation. After all, six of the previous stories end with Jerochymov similarly defused, and each time, his ceasefire with Gašek turns out to have been only temporary.

Agapov's hyperbolic anger signals parody; Gašek describes him as being "krásný v svém nadšení" ["beautiful in his enthusiasm"] (142). Agapov represents Hašek's most severe indictment of the Red Army, and he has much in common with Jerochymov. Both are driven by passion and given to violence, and their service to the Red Army does not stem from ideological conviction, but rather suits their mercurial and destructive personalities. At the same time, both Agapov and Jerochymov are depicted with sympathy and humor, and Gašek has real affection for them. Over the course of their many confrontations, Gašek and Jerochymov develop a genuine if unusual friendship; despite denunciations, usurpations and even attempted assassinations, they always step in at the last minute to save each other. The stories resist both simple moralizing and political explanation; if some of Hašek's readers, considering him a communist author, are looking for a panegyric to Soviet Russia, characters like Agapov and Jerochymov will complicate their assumptions about his political orientation. On the other hand, if other readers seek an apology or a repudiation of the Red Army and Bolshevik communism, they will be disappointed to discover in these stories a more nuanced portrait of conflicting loyalties, identities and human urges.

A significant encounter between Gašek and Agapov hinges on a detail from Hašek's autobiography: his Czech nationality. "When, in the course of our conversation, the subject of my being Czech came up, Agapov's comment was: 'However much you feed a wolf, he keeps his eyes fixed on the forest'" (101).⁷¹ Agapov's statement evokes a Russian proverb, but in fact it

⁷¹ "Když během rozhovoru přišla řeč na to, že jsem Čech, poznamenal Agapov: 'Jak bys vlka nekrmil, vždy do lesa hledí'" (140).

is Hašek's invention, a testament to his ear for natural speech patterns even in languages that were not native to him. The implication is that a foreigner cannot be trusted with matters so close to the heart of the Russian nation. Agapov's doubts about Gašek's loyalty may reflect recent developments – the Czechoslovak Legions had recently concluded a series of battles against the Red Army in the area around Bugulma, and the Czechoslovak Republic had been established on October 28, 1918, right around the time this story takes place. Agapov declaims this invented proverb twice: once during their initial conversation, and again during their friendly farewell. The repetition underscores the importance of this aspect of Gašek's character, an apparent disconnect between his national identity and his political loyalty. And of course, this is one of the few obvious similarities between Gašek and Hašek.

Why does Hašek bring his autobiography to bear on this moment in the text? Gašek's identity as a Czech has, up to this point, not been remarked on or perhaps even known by any other character. But now, for the first time, Gašek is in real mortal danger, facing the possibility of execution by the revolutionary tribunal. When he is exonerated, the accusation and liability for capital punishment is transferred to Jerochymov, a character who has many of the characteristics commonly associated with Hašek including, crucially for this episode, drunkenness. The sudden reminder that Gašek is Czech points conspicuously back to the author, precisely at a moment when the character is on the brink of being sentenced to death. In the other instance when Gašek's Czechness was evoked, he was similarly in danger; "In Strategic Trouble" found Gašek terrified that he would be exposed as unqualified for his post. Hašek inserts this aspect of himself, his national identity, into the story only when his quasi-autobiographical character is on the verge of death or at least demotion. It's an authorial intrusion that staves off annihilation, the

very opposite of authorial self-effacement that conventionally accompanies the creation of a fictional world.

It may be that when Hašek thought about fictionalizing his death, his own reputation was at the forefront of his mind. What did the reading public expect from Hašek's death, how would they memorialize him, and what forms would the memorialization take if he were to die in Russia? Ironically, Agapov may be giving voice to Hašek's imagined reader: the Czech trying to make sense of his countryman's choice to stay in Russia and fight in the Red Army rather than return home. The element of autobiography, then, directs the reader to an information network external to the story: the rumor mill. In the last story in the series, Hašek shifts the focus back to himself as an author. The reader, having consumed a steady stream of news and rumors about the author, may have heard that Hašek had been executed by a revolutionary tribunal in Russia. If so, she probably formed a judgment on whether or not that was a fitting end. When Hašek returned to Prague from Russia, moreover, he feared the punishment that awaited him in the Czechoslovak courts for the crimes of desertion and bigamy, although ultimately, he was never indicted. In other words, Hašek's readers and the broader Czech public assumed the authority to determine the author's guilt or innocence. In the final story, Hašek invites the reader to join the revolutionary tribunal, and judge him.

But in the end, by relying on each other as foils, both Gašek and Jerochymov escape punishment. And this is where we see most clearly the logic of Hašek's division of his own attributes between two opposing characters. The reader sits in judgment of Hašek, but why should he be punished? Because he is a Czech who joined the Red Army like Gašek, or because he is an unpredictable drunk like Jerochymov? Both characteristics earn the suspicion of the tribunal, a tribunal the reader is meant to understand as unnecessarily severe. James Phelan and

Peter J. Rabinowitz use the term “literature of self-justification” to describe “works by authors who are trying to present selves that counter widespread criticism of their actions” (32). The Bugulma Tales do something similar. Here, the author presents not one but two versions of himself that respond to criticism of his actions with a challenge. The Revolutionary Tribunal of the Eastern Front is authorized not only to criticize, but to judge and punish. Is that an authority that you, reader, would assume?

3. Conclusion

The Bugulma Tales were not the first instance of the author’s death in Russia being narrated, or at least threatened, in a work of fiction. Various rumors of Hašek’s death had circulated in Prague ever since he enlisted in the Austrian army in 1915, and more than once, erroneous obituaries were published in Czech newspapers. When Hašek returned to Prague in 1920, he got his hands on Jaroslav Kolman Cassius’ harsh premature obituary, the one titled “Zrádce” [“Traitor”] (Pytlík, *Bibliografie* 270). In response, Hašek wrote “Jak jsem se setkal s autorem svého nekrologu” (“How I Met the Author of My Own Obituary”), a comic revenge fantasy transparently directed at Kolman Cassius that was published in *Tribuna* in 1921, a few weeks before the first of the Bugulma Tales. In that text, the narrator tracks down the obituarist at a wine-bar and terrorizes him, pretending to be a ghost. It’s an entertaining, over-the-top text in the spirit of Hašek’s pre-war fiction, much of which was based on anecdotes from his funny, over-the-top life, and it plays explicitly with his reputation. Although satisfying to read, the text does not have the same complexity with regards to authorial self-representation as the Bugulma Tales. The humor derives from the premise of a not-quite-chance encounter between an indiscreet obituarist and the not-quite-dead person he dragged through the mud. Both “How I

Met the Author of My Own Obituary” and the Bugulma Tales deal with the Czech public making sense of Hašek’s time in Russia, but in the Bugulma Tales, the quasi-autobiographical essence of Commissar Gašek in the Bugulma Tales is far more subtle and intentionally complicated than we see in most of Hašek’s work.

Hašek’s embedding of autobiographical stories into his fiction always relies on his reader recognizing them as the stuff of legend. In the Bugulma Tales, though, he seems to be in part responding to the demands that friends as well as publishers were issuing, to satisfy their curiosity about Russia under the Bolsheviks. The strange form these stories take allows Hašek to refuse these requests while appearing to fulfill them; as we shall see when we look at *Osudy*, Hašek and his characters treat storytelling as a world apart in which offensive or upsetting ideas can be encoded into a form that defies censorship or punishment. By presenting his ideas in the form of fiction rather than journalism, he evades the responsibilities of transparency and truth-telling. But at the same time, he activates his own legend, creating an unmistakable, if ambiguous, version of himself as the protagonist, thus reminding the reader of his authority to speak on the topics of Soviet Russia, their Civil War, and himself.

The Bugulma Tales are partially autobiographical, but their primary interest is not as a source of information about Hašek’s life. The seemingly autobiographical narrator invites readers, especially those to whom these texts were originally delivered in the pages of the *Tribuna*, to connect the main character with what they think they know about the author’s biography, much of which, it turns out, is the unauthorized version. Hence Hašek split his own personality between Gašek and Jerochymov. The autobiographical signposts are erected only in order to frustrate the reader’s desire to contain Hašek as a single, comprehensible entity. When Hašek returned from Russia, he was met with the public’s wish to put him into one or another

box – communist or republican, soldier or deserter, patriot or traitor. This need for classification is an attempt to exercise authority, to limit the multiplicities that were intrinsic to his improvisational writing style, and to his lifestyle. Through the Bugulma Tales, Hašek reclaims authority by bringing his reader into a space of unavoidable ambiguity. At stake in a battle for administrative control over this small Russian town is the nature of the relationship between the ruler and the ruled, not in terms of politics but literature. The Bugulma Tales are the defiant gesture of an author refusing to be defined either by the state or by his readers.

CHAPTER TWO

Authorship as a Challenge to Authority: Storytelling in *Osudy dobrého vojáka Švejka*

What I claim is to live to the full the contradiction of my time, which may well make sarcasm the condition of truth. –Roland Barthes

Humbly report, I don't think at all, because that's forbidden to soldiers on duty. –Josef Švejk

1. Introduction

The next two chapters consider the relationship between authority and self-expression in Hašek's chef-d'œuvre, *Osudy dobrého vojáka Švejka za světové války* [*The Fates of the Good Soldier Švejk in the World War*]. In this chapter, I unpack Hašek's depiction of Prague at the outbreak of the World War as a zone in which self-expression is restricted to the point of impossibility. The characters presented sympathetically, even heroically, find alternative means of expression that challenge the oppressive authority of the imperial and military regime. I argue that these alternative modes comprise a form of non-normative authorship. In thinking about authorship, I consider both verbal and literary acts of narrativizing, describing, critiquing and parodying; acts that are productive, inventive and intentional. Through these activities, characters construct alternate realities which provide relief from and resistance to the exacting and in many ways absurd imperial order. This chapter focuses on storytelling, which serves a variety of functions in the world of the novel, including explanation, entertainment, passing time, forestalling responsibilities, and forming social bonds. The latter function is the most recurrent in the novel, the least studied and, as I will show, the most important. The preponderance of storytelling in the novel amounts to a meta-literary commentary on the power and plasticity of authorship as a means of reclaiming authority.

Storytelling and self-creation are related to each other and to the Hašek legend in a crucial way: both of these activities constitute a non-written corpus. Hašek's cultivation of a persona was a conscious practice, and one of the main mechanisms for creating and promoting this persona was oral storytelling; I will return to this topic in Chapter 4. Hašek's own storytelling was celebrated during his lifetime, and stories about him, during his lifetime and after his death, carried the legend until they were formalized in memoir literature. To this day, fans of Hašek's writing delight in telling anecdotes about him. This kind of oral storytelling was typical for a number of social milieus where Hašek spent time and which he recreates in his novel: working-class pubs, jail, and the army. Hašek had a clearly formulated conception of the meaning, function and power of oral storytelling. In the novel, then, Švejk's storytelling needs to be unpacked to reveal Hašek's ideas about social interaction, self-expression and non-institutional literary production. Moreover, Švejk is merely the most prominent of many storytellers who appear in the novel. Storytellers overwhelmingly populate the world of the novel.

In *Osudy*, Hašek presents the tension between authorship and authority as a problem of self-expression. As Švejk moves through civilian society in Prague and the ranks of the Austrian army, opportunities for self-expression are severely restricted. Each character's opportunity for expression is determined by his social status and professional role;⁷² rebels and social outcasts are forced to adopt alternative, often extreme, forms of self-expression and social maneuvering. Indeed, the artistic experiment Hašek unfolds in *Osudy* is an embrace of his own literary,

⁷² All the major characters of *Osudy* are male. Veronika Ambros notes that spaces such as prisons and police stations, and of course the war itself are all "overwhelmingly male dominated" (233) Yet the fact that female characters are limited to cleaning women, unfaithful wives and prostitutes is an observation worthy of its own in-depth study.

political and social outsider status, and an inviting catalogue of alternative methods of self-expression.

In terms of actual power, writers, storytellers and characters who intentionally and radically refashion the narrative and themselves can do little to upset the systems of authority put in place by the monarchy and military. But the force of these characters' activities is in their refusal to adhere to those systems. Authorship becomes a defiant act of taking authority on oneself. This is what Foucault, in "What is an Author?", describes as "the great danger with which fiction threatens our world" (158); it makes possible a plurality of meanings, whereas stability depends on singularity. To an equal extent, Hašek's authorship presented a challenge to the authority of the literary critical community of its day. When first published, *Osudy* was the ultimate expression of defiance: defiance of the legacy of the World War, of the myth of the Czechoslovak Republic, and of literary convention.

Osudy is an unfinished novel in four volumes, traditionally published with cartoonish pen-and-ink drawings by Hašek's friend and collaborator Josef Lada. Hašek wrote it between early 1921 and New Year's Eve 1923, dictating sections until just days before his premature death. The novel follows the adventures of Josef Švejk, an enigmatic recruit who had previously been discharged from the Austrian army after a board certification of idiocy, a diagnosis which simultaneously inhibits and liberates him. The narrator speaks mainly in the third-person and has limited omniscience. Though it warrants a larger discussion, I will note only briefly that the book is not universally considered a novel. Hašek's biographer Emmanuel Frynta, for example, wonders whether this is an entirely appropriate designation. Composed of picaresque episodes and written in a multiplicity linguistic registers, the text lacks a central conflict and the protagonist's psychology is unfathomable. On the other hand, we may consider *Osudy* a novel

precisely because of this stylistic disunity, after Bakhtin's definition of the novel as "a diversity of social speech types (sometimes even diversity of languages) and a diversity of individual voices, artistically organized" (262). In my opinion, the book is a novel with compositional techniques in line with post-World War One European modernism, including cultural quotation and structural and psychological fragmentation.

The first volume, "Behind the Lines," begins at the outbreak of the World War and takes place in Prague. With fifteen short chapters that narrate self-contained episodes, it is the most structurally cohesive part of the novel. In it, Švejk repeatedly clashes with local enforcers of imperial authority around his unusually enthusiastic reaction to the war. First, he is arrested by the undercover police officer Bretschneider for making supposedly treasonous remarks, after which he undergoes a series of medical and psychiatric evaluations. Released from jail, he is immediately arrested again, this time on charges of inciting a riot. After being released a second time, Švejk receives call-up papers and begins the process of reporting for duty. His first post is assistant to Otto Katz, an army chaplain who is a drunk, a liar, a gambler and, most outrageously, a Jew who has "converted" and entered the Catholic clergy as a way of avoiding military service. In a game of cards, Katz loses Švejk to Lieutenant Lukáš, a disorganized, philandering officer. The first volume ends rather abruptly with an epilogue signed by the author in which Hašek responds to critical scorn about the extremely vernacular language of the text, although his defensive position may be somewhat anticipatory.⁷³ He also comments on the fate of some of the characters who will not appear in the subsequent volumes.

⁷³ Because the first chapters were published serially in chapbooks known as *sešity* [notebooks], and because Hašek's reputation was severely damaged by his desertion from the Czechoslovak Legions, *Osudy* began to garner bad press even before the first volume was even published in its entirety.

Volume two is misleadingly titled “At the Front.” In fact, it follows the eastward transport of Švejk and the rest of his regiment to the front, a destination they never reach. In these chapters we are introduced to the personnel of the 91st regiment. At this point in the book, a parade of major and minor characters begin to appear for varying lengths of time. I will describe only those that figure in my research. The top-ranking officer is the aging Lieutenant Dub, ridiculous in his self-importance. Švejk, still in the service of Lukáš, spends most of his time with other low-ranking soldiers like himself. These include the violent and garrulous Vodička, the gluttonous Baloun, and the ambitious Cadet Biegler. The most significant, both in the novel and in my research, is Marek, a one-year volunteer who shares Švejk’s penchant for tomfoolery, and who is often read as an alter-ego of Hašek. My analysis of the novel’s irreverent treatment of history in the next chapter focuses in part on the authorial activities of Marek. These characters interact with Švejk over the course of their train journey, and many scenes inside train cars are devoted to storytelling. Adventures also ensue during stops in small Czech cities and other outposts of the Austrian empire. Although social life within the army is a major concern of the book, the most famous episode from this volume, “Švejk’s Budějovice Anabasis,” follows Švejk on his own. After pulling an emergency brake, Švejk is kicked off the train and thus separated from his regiment on their way to the Czech city Budějovice. He decides to pursue them on foot, insisting he’ll get there eventually, even though everyone he meets assures him that he’s going the wrong way.

The third and fourth volumes, “The Glorious Licking” and “The Glorious Licking Continued” follow the company through Hungary to Galicia. Plot becomes increasingly unimportant as even the episodic narrative gives way almost entirely to dialogue. Whereas Švejk is the exclusive narrative focus of the first two volumes, he is occasionally absent in the second

half of the novel, which allows other characters to come to the forefront. Only the first volume is composed of many short chapters; the chapters became longer and fewer as the novel progresses. Whereas volume one has fifteen chapters, volume two has five, three has four, and the unfinished fourth volume has two complete chapters and one incomplete chapter. The shift in structural approach probably has more to do with a change in Hašek's writing process than intentional design of the work; volumes two through four were written by dictation as the author suffered increasingly poor health.

These volumes are largely overlooked by critics and can be skipped by casual Hašek fans when they read *Osudy*. In the classroom, often only the first volume, or excerpts from it, is assigned. There is, however, one extremely memorable and provocative episode that begins at the very end of the third volume and continues into the fourth. Walking near a lake in a small Ukrainian town, Švejk spots an escaped Russian prisoner of war enjoying a bath. The terrified Russian takes off running, leaving behind his uniform, which Švejk decides to don. Švejk is immediately mistaken for the escaped prisoner and taken into custody by Hungarian officers of the Austrian army. During interrogation, it is discovered that Švejk is Czech. Because no one believes that a Czech soldier would put on a Russian uniform "just to see how it feels," as Švejk insists he has done, he is accused of espionage. This episode is considered to be Hašek's comment on the public response to his two-year stint as a commissar in Soviet Russia. In *Osudy*, Hašek reduces the entire controversy to an insignificant misunderstanding, casting aspersions on his critics – personal as well as literary – and military conventions.

Osudy was initially dismissed by the literary establishment, both because of its literary unconventionality and because of the implicit challenge to normative First Republic values, namely the valorization of the Czechoslovak Legions. Literature produced by veterans of the

Czechoslovak Legions ranged across genres of fiction and non-fiction. Notable titles include works by Rudolf Medek including the poetry collection *Lví srdce* [*Lion's Heart*, 1919], the epic novel *Anabase* [*Anabasis*, 1927] and the historical drama *Plukovník Švec* [*Colonel Švec*, 1928]. Other important works of legionnaire literature include the *Železný vlk* [*The Iron Wolf*], a collection of short stories written between 1917 and 1919, and the drama *Jízdní hlídka* [*Mounted Patrol*, 1935] both by Hašek's friend František Langer, as well as two volumes of *Legionářské povídky* [*Legionnaires stories*, 1928 and 1936] by Josef Kopta, whom I cited in the previous chapter as the author of an early insightful review of the Bugulma Tales. Legionnaire literature helped articulate and cement the legacy of the army, which became a foundational myth for the First Republic.⁷⁴ Medek's *Plukovník Švec* is an instructive example. The play dramatizes a historical episode, the suicide of its title character. Švec's death in August 1918 was part of a crisis in the mission and identity of the Legions, his suicide a desperate reaction to his soldiers' refusal to follow his orders to relinquish their weapons in the face of the increasingly formidable Red Army. In Medek's text, Švec's death is presented as the noble sacrifice of a whole-hearted patriot, and his memory becomes an inspiration to the legionnaires.⁷⁵

Hašek, already a well-known personality when he enlisted in and subsequently deserted from the Legions, was in many ways a fly in the ointment of these would-be heroes even before the publication of *Osudy*. But the annoyance persisted with *Osudy*, a novel about the Czech war experience that depicts unwilling and hapless soldiers, ignominious officers and a high degree of cooperation with the Austrian military. The novel does nothing to glorify the Legions. There are

⁷⁴ See Andrea Orzoff's *Battle for the Castle: The Myth of Czechoslovakia in Europe: 1914-1948*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

⁷⁵ A 2018 production of *Plukovník Švec* directed by Jiří Havelka for the Národní divadlo [National Theater] in Prague combines Medek's text with the multi-media practices of documentary theater to reconsider the episode and the historiography of the Legions.

a number of oblique references, and the lengthiest discussion of the Legions is parodic, a treatment I will discuss in the following chapter. Perhaps the worst offense to the heroes of the First Republic is in the afterlife of the book: *Osudy* was immediately embraced by the Czech readership. And today, Švejk is certainly better known, not only to Czech readers but worldwide, than Švec.⁷⁶

Hašek's deviation from the official version of the war is formal as well as conceptual. Other legionnaire authors relied on traditional forms associated with military narratives: poetry, drama, and nineteenth-century-style novels. *Osudy*, in contrast, uses modernist principles and coarse vernacular language. In spite of the novel's political inexpediency, it quickly became popular with the general readership. Throughout the 1920s the early champions of *Osudy*, including Ivan Olbracht, Max Brod and Bohumil Mathesius, wrote articles praising the novel and urging critics to take it seriously. Olbracht, who admired novel's "geniální idiotství" ["brilliant idiocy"], argued that Hašek had written the single best book about the Czech experience of the war. Later criticism, of which I will mention only a few examples, focuses more on the structure and themes of the novel, critics no longer responsible for rehabilitating the author. For example, Emanuel Frynta argued that the pastiche of languages, jargons, inserted texts and genres produces a distinctly modernist artistic unity, a literary collage. His discussion of the generic model of the pub story is useful for my conception of storytelling in the novel, but I diverge from him in several important ways. Sylvie Richterová, writing in 1986, proposed that the concept of *blbost* [idiocy] is the thematic key to the whole novel. Švejk is the only character who calls himself a *blb*, which invites all characters around him to project and reveal their own *blbost*.

⁷⁶ Precluding the possibility that Švejk's name is a parody of Švec is the fact that *Osudy* is the fourth vehicle for Švejk. The character first appeared live in cabaret sketches, then in print in the humor magazine *Karikatury* in 1911. The novella *Dobrý voják Švejk v zajetí* [*The Good Soldier Švejk in Captivity*] was published in 1917.

Švejk's *blbost* allows him to destroy the practical function of language, and this, Richterová suggests, is Hašek's ultimate achievement.

Other critics point to the importance of play in the novel. In a 1984 article, Hana Arie-Gaifman writes that the novel is an experiment in ludic play that undermines assumptions about narration, genre, meaning and reality. Milan Jankovič proceeds from Arie-Gaifman's findings and focuses on language, finding that Švejk's monologues, characterized by improvisation, linguistic variety and unexpected associations, represent narration-as-play. Švejk's *tvorivost* [creativity] emerges in his speech rather than his actions, and this itself is a parody of the epic genre. In "The Great War as a monstrous carnival: Jaroslav Hašek's *Švejk*," Veronika Ambros likens Švejk's storytelling to that of Scheherazade in *1,001 Nights*. Finally, in his 2000 book *The Deserts of Bohemia*, Peter Steiner proposes the Greek anti-authoritarian kynik philosopher Diogenes as a model for Švejk. Kynicism is a philosophy that champion outrageous social behavior and has a dog as its emblem. The synchronicities between Diogenes and Švejk could be intentional, although it's important to remember that the author eschewed self-aware erudition. But even if Steiner's findings are essentially coincidences, the lens of kynik philosophy, with its emphasis on subversive ludic demonstrations and linguistic play, and embrace of the dog, provides a productive approach to *Osudy*. After all, Švejk "lived by selling dogs – ugly, mongrel monstrosities whose pedigrees he forged" (Hašek 1973, 3).⁷⁷

⁷⁷ "Živil se prodejem psů, ošklivých nečistokrevných oblud, kterým padělal rodokmeny." (I: 9). Henceforth in this chapter and the one that follows, quotations from the Cecil Parrott's English translation that appear in the body of the text will be indicated by page number only. I have reproduced Parrott's vocabulary, orthography and punctuation without alteration. Occasionally I supply my own translation; in those instances, no page numbers accompany the English. In my footnotes, I provide the original Czech text with Roman numeral referring to the *díl* or volume followed by a colon and the page number from the definitive 1953 Státní nakladatelství edition. In that and many other editions, one book contains volumes I and II, and the pagination starts over in the second book, which contains volumes III and IV.

Two critics who advance theories about Hašek's representation of authority are Lubomír Doležel and Přemysl Blažiček. Doležel's work from 2008 touches on the line between Hašek's biography and his creative output, and representations of authority in his work. He argues Hašek's life was a process of constructing comedy out of potentially tragic episodes. In his analysis of *Osudy*, of which he proposes that the Bugulma Tales are essentially an early version, Doležel discusses the "deontic system" of the novel. Deontic logic is the branch of philosophy that analyzes systems of obligation and permission. According to Doležel, the characters of *Osudy* are defined by their permissions and obligations, a system Švejk undermines through ludic play. This strategy, Doležel shows, is not intended to challenge authority, but to expose the characters who represent it. Blažiček's 1991 Švejk monograph proposes that because Švejk lacks psychology, it is unproductive to analyze him as a character. Rather, the most illuminating approaches to *Osudy* are on the levels of theme and structure. For the purposes of my research into Hašek's depiction of authority, Blažiček's most important chapter is "Státní moc" ["State power"], in which Blažiček argues that the Austro-Hungarian state is the true antagonist of the novel. He shows that the novel is essentially a series of confrontations between the world of the powerless, to which Švejk belongs, and the world of the representatives of state power.

In my own analysis of the novel, I propose a new framework for conceptualizing the alternative forms of expression that stand as subversive creative activities in the face of imperial power. Hašek depicts a society in which artless self-expression and communication are impeded, forcing people to contrive alternative forms. I argue that the novel champions characters whose creative activities simultaneously conform to and reveal the oppressive system, thereby defying the authorities that seek to order their lives. Hašek's depiction of the oppressive imperial regime in Prague at the outbreak of the war is an exaggerated portrait of imperial administration, a

situation where Czech subjects of the crown are denied free and authentic self-expression. Words are not taken at face value, and all communication is suspect. The result of this is a stifled society. In a world where deception and treachery are supposed to be ubiquitous, truth-telling loses its purpose. The atypically heroic characters such as Švejk find non-normative and counter-intuitive methods for self-expression that do not rely on traditional truth values or conventional literary forms.

2. The stifling of self-expression

Osudy represents a world undergoing a crisis in authority. Hašek portrays the Austrian Empire as a governmental authority at the sunset of its existence, which is part of his overall critique of the imperial war machine and the political mythology of the empire as a whole. The a priori premise that its Czech subjects did not respect its legitimacy allows Hašek to construct comic situations rich in irony, sarcasm and absurdity. The monarchy's assumptions about its own power is at odds with its inability to inspire respect. In the first part of the novel, Hašek depicts the regime as a bloated, backwards bureaucracy. In his essay "The Three Types of Legitimate Rule," Max Weber describes the mechanisms of bureaucracy as a marker for an efficient, rational and legitimate modern state (although he acknowledged that the process of rationalization tends towards dehumanization in a way we might term Kafkaesque). Obedience to such a state is based on a cultivated sense of duty and is constantly and automatically renewed in the presence of reliable civic administration. On the other hand, traditional authority, such as monarchy, derives ultimately from a collective belief in the sacredness and venerability of its institutions. Hašek's conception of the Dual Monarchy is of a doubly illegitimate state – baseless

in its claims to traditional authority and ineffective in its functioning as a legal authority. Hašek goes even further, suggesting that representatives of the monarchy are aware of their own incompetence, which forces them to persecute and punish even those who express obedience, assuming them to be insincere.

We begin our analysis with an examination of the opening scene in the novel, a conversation between Švejk and his housekeeper Mrs. Müller, focusing on the representation of the monarchy:

“And so they’ve killed our Ferdinand,” said the charwoman to Mr Švejk, who had left military service years before, after having been finally certified by an army medical board as an imbecile, and now lived by selling dogs – ugly, mongrel monstrosities whose pedigrees he forged.

“Which Ferdinand, Mrs Müller?” he asked, going on with the massaging. I know two Ferdinands. One is a messenger at Průša’s, the chemist’s, and once by mistake he drank a bottle of hair oil there. And the other is Ferdinand Kokoška who collects dog manure. Neither of them is any loss.” (3-4)⁷⁸

The housekeeper’s pronouncement, in Czech “Tak *nám* zabili Ferdinanda,” literally “they killed Ferdinand *to us*” (emphasis added), shows that she understands the assassination in terms of the collective of which she is a part. Her use of the dative may express a sense of being inconvenienced or mildly offended. Later in the conversation, Švejk also shows personal investment in the empire; as he and Mrs. Müller discuss the assassination, Švejk declares, “*we* never ought to have taken Bosnia and Herzegovina” (4, emphasis added).⁷⁹ This suggests a

⁷⁸ “‘Tak nám zabili Ferdinanda,’ řekla posluhovačka panu Švejkovi, který opustiv před léty vojenskou službu, když byl definitivně prohlášen vojenskou lékařskou komisí za blba, živil se prodejem psů, ošklivých nečistokrevných oblud, kterým padělal rodokmeny. Kromě tohoto zaměstnání byl stížen revmatismem a mazal si právě kolena opodeldokem.

“‘Kerýho Ferdinanda, paní Müllerová?’” otázal se Švejk, nepřestávaje si masírovat kolena, “já znám dva Ferdinandy. Jednoho, ten je sluhou u drogisty Průši a vypil mu tam jednou omylem láhev nějakého mazání na vlasy, a potom znám ještě Ferdinanda Kokošku, co sbírá ty psí hovínka. Vobou není žádná škoda” (I:9)

⁷⁹ “My holt jsme jim tu Bosnu a Hercegovinu neměli brát” (I:10).

communal partaking in the fortunes of the empire. Mrs. Müller's use of the third-person plural for the verb "*zabili*" [they killed] is also telling. The killers are indistinct, but many. Gavrilo Princip and the Black Hand never come up either in this conversation or later, when supposed suspects are interrogated by the police.⁸⁰ Mrs. Müller and Švejk talk about the assassination as if it were a piece of neighborhood gossip.

The other important aspect of this exchange is the irreverence shown by Švejk in his response. To him, the name Ferdinand is not immediately associated with the house of Habsburg, but rather with unseemly figures from the neighborhood. Drawing on Bakhtin, Veronika Ambros describes this as a carnivalesque reversal: in this moment Švejk equates the archduke to the common riffraff who happen to share his name (Ambros, 231). In the following scene, the bartender Palivec will make a similar "mistake" in a conversation with Bretschneider, the plainclothes officer trying to entrap him in slander. In fact the exact same pattern is repeated; Bretschneider uses grammar which reveals his investment in a collective sense of responsibility to the late Archduke, and the Czech Palivec responds by switching the subject away from the imperial family altogether: "'It's a fine thing they've done to us at Sarajevo,' said Bretschneider with a faint hope. 'Which Sarajevo?' asked Palivec. 'Do you mean the wine cellar at Nusle?'" (6-7).⁸¹ Palivec has good reason for this conversational sleight-of-hand – he knows that Bretschneider is trying to ensnare him, whereas Švejk's deflection has no clear motive or explanation, especially in the context of a private conversation with a close acquaintance. But whether intentional or not, Švejk's response to the news expresses disregard for the monarchy. By not immediately calling to mind the assassination, a tragedy for the imperial family and

⁸⁰ In fact, Princip was imprisoned and eventually died in Terezín, a Bohemian prison complex later used by the Nazis as a concentration camp.

⁸¹ "'Ty nám to pěkně v tom Sarajevu vyvedli,' se slabou nadějí ozval se Bretschneider. 'V jakým Sarajevu?' otázal se Palivec, 'v tej nuselskej vinárně?'" (I:13).

supposedly its subjects, Švejk denigrates the person of the archduke, equating him to a moronic messenger and a collector of excrement. Švejk's final assessment, that the killing of such men does not constitute a great loss, sets up an implicit comparison: is the death of Ferdinand necessarily such a *škoda* [loss or pity] to the people of Prague?

Contrary to Švejk and Mrs. Müller's trivialization of the assassination, representatives of the regime use it to justify an authoritarian crackdown. We first encounter this phenomenon in Bretschneider, and it is fully developed once the narrative shifts to the city jail, which is full of people arrested on overblown accusations of involvement with the assassination. Bretschneider's method is to sit in pubs, enjoining other patrons into friendly conversation and then using the topic of the assassination to inveigle them into denigrating the monarchy. This approach works beautifully with Švejk, who eagerly shares his predictions of war, as well as cataloging "the usual sort of observations people make about His Imperial Majesty when they're tight" (12).⁸² When Švejk lists those observations, he implies that he is not expressing his own opinions but merely repeating what he has heard others say. This is a form of oral storytelling that allows Švejk to assume the role of a disinterested narrator without personal responsibility for the content of his narrative. It is not Švejk disparaging the monarch; the offense is located in the dialogue of "characters" in his story. However, because of the highly sensitive political climate, or perhaps because of police department quotas for arrests made, even such storytelling become a punishable offense. Bretschneider arrests Švejk for "several criminal offences, including the crime of high treason" (13).⁸³

The bartender Palivec is far more guarded, yet in the time of high alert, he too gets arrested by Bretschneider in what has become one of the most famous episodes from the novel.

⁸² "obyčejná urážka císaře pána, jaká se dělá ve vožralství" (I:18).

⁸³ "několika trestných činů, mezi kterými hraje roli i zločin velezrády" (I:19).

Entering the bar, Bretschneider notices that a mirror hangs where previously there had been a portrait of the Emperor, ubiquitous in the Habsburg lands.⁸⁴ Palivec explains that he moved the portrait to the basement because “flies used to shit on it... You know, somebody might be so free as to pass a remark about it and then there could be unpleasantness” (8).⁸⁵ Palivec’s removal of the portrait was an attempt to avoid a compromising situation; by respecting the portrait, Palivec shows that he knows the rules around expressing imperial loyalty, or *Kaiserstreue*, and adheres to them as best he can.⁸⁶ When Bretschneider arrests Palivec along with Švejk, he says it is “Because you said the flies shitted on His Imperial Majesty” (14).⁸⁷ The portrait thus functions as a symbol of the Emperor himself, and Palivec’s narrative explanation of the fate of the portrait, to Bretschneider’s mind, reenacts the offense.

The absurd methods used by police on the streets of Prague are abundantly clear in the jail. One by one, the incarcerated men explain to Švejk that they have been arrested “‘Because of Sarajevo.’ ‘Because of Ferdinand.’ ‘Because of the murder of his Imperial Highness’” (16),⁸⁸ and so on. In every case, the supposed crime is similar to Švejk’s and Bretschneider’s offenses: anecdotes, off-color remarks, and displaying anything short of complete loyalty to the monarch. In the majority of cases, the crime is a verbal expression, such as a comment made in conversation with an undercover police officer. One man has been arrested for requesting that a

⁸⁴ Hugh LeCaine Agnew sees in this a metaphor for the obliteration of historical memory following the establishment of the First Republic, as the removal of all Habsburg ornamentation was replaced with “a mirror in which the Czechs could only see their own reflection” (86).

⁸⁵ “sraly na něj mouchy, tak jsem ho dal na půdu. To víte, ještě by si někdo mohl dovolit nějakou poznámku a mohly by být z toho nepříjemnosti” (I:13).

⁸⁶ Expressing his obedience by not hanging the requisite sign, Palivec is an ironic precursor to the greengrocer in “The Power of the Powerless,” Václav Havel’s classic 1978 essay on the semiotics of obedience in a post-totalitarian society. Havel describes a greengrocer who must express obedience to the communist regime by hanging a sign with the Marxian slogan, “Workers of the world, unite!” In both cases, the content of the wall-hanging is only a visible manifestation of the decision-making process that leads a person living in an oppressive society to hang, or not to hang.

⁸⁷ “Za to, že jste řekl, že sraly mouchy na císaře pána” (I:20).

⁸⁸ “‘Kvůli Sarajevu!’ — ‘Kvůli Ferdinandovi!’ — ‘Kvůli té vraždě na panu arcivévodovi!’” (I:23).

Czech nationalist song be played in a pub. Another has been arrested despite, or rather because of, his refusal to read newspapers; pressed by a plainclothes policeman for his opinion about the murder in Sarajevo, which he does not realize refers to the assassination of an archduke, he exclaims, “If at any time anywhere they kill anybody it only serves him right. Why is he such a bloody careless fool to let himself get killed?”⁸⁹ As in Švejk’s and Mrs. Müller’s conversation in the beginning of the novel, this man reduces the Archduke’s assassination to inconsequential claptrap. But context is everything: Švejk and Mrs. Müller spoke in private, as friends. The same kinds of comments, though expressing apathy more than antipathy, become criminal when made in public.

Indeed, none of the actions landing people in jail have any real seditious intent or effect. Hašek is showing the ubiquity of suspicion and disproportionate severity of law enforcement in the face of a populace that is, at best, indifferent. The final example of the uninformed man shows that even ignorance is no defense. The only permissible reaction to the news of the assassination may be the formulation of Švejk’s housekeeper: “nám zabili Ferdinanda.”

The atmosphere of fear and surveillance that reigns in Prague is intended to root out any potentially seditious elements. The narrator describes it thus:

The spirit of alien authority pervaded the building of the police headquarter – an authority which was ascertaining how enthusiastic the population were for the war. With the exception of a few people who were ready to admit that they were sons of a nation which had to bleed for interests completely alien to it, police headquarter presented the finest collection of bureaucratic beasts of prey, to whom gaols and gallows were the only means of defending the existence of the twisted claws of the law. (44)⁹⁰

⁸⁹ “Jestli někdy někde někoho zabijou, dobře mu tak, proč je trouba a tak neopatrný, že se dá zabít” (I:24). The word here translated as “fool” is not *blb* but *trouba*, it literally means “oven,” and it can be an affectionate way of calling someone a blockhead.

⁹⁰ „Budovou policejního ředitelství vanul duch cizí autority, která zjišťovala, jak dalece je obyvatelstvo nadšeno pro válku. Kromě několika výjimek, lidí, kteří nezapřeli, že jsou synové národa, který má vykrváct za zájmy jemu úplně cizí, policejní ředitelství představovalo nejkrásnější skupinu byrokratických dravců, kteří měli smysl jedině pro žalář a šibenici, aby uhájili existenci zakroucených paragrafů” (I:52).

The narrator, here as elsewhere in the novel, has a distinctive voice that is insightful and direct. The use of nationalistic language – “synové národa” [“sons of a nation”] – creates a binary opposition between those empowered by state institutions and those oppressed by them. More perceptive, if no less categorical, is his characterization of police operations. This quotation is the opening of a chapter titled “Švejk Home Again after having Broken through the Vicious Circle,” and it is a description of the vicious circle itself: the acknowledgment that this is a perverted rule of law, unfair and irrational in its demands, which can therefore only be enforced through perverted methods. The repetition of the word “cizí” [“foreign,” translated by Parrott as the more sinister-sounding “alien”] serves to connect the imperial state with the police officers, themselves Czechs, employed as low-level enforcers of imperial demands. This is not to suggest that the antagonistic police officers are themselves victims of the system. On the contrary, their characterization as “skupinu byrokratických dravců” [“collection of bureaucratic beasts of prey”] suggests that they are naturally suited for this line of work. And that characterization is itself paradoxical; the man-made and fundamentally rational essence of bureaucracy in theory is antithetical to the brutal law of nature. In this analogy, the “sons of a nation which had to bleed for interests completely alien to it,” the Czechs, are prey. The bureaucracy, which, according to Weber, is at least intended to ensure transparency and legality, instead exists to enshrine the monarchy’s predatory behavior. Hašek suggests that the system of bureaucratic administration is fundamentally dehumanizing and rapacious.

The need to divide people into two categories – those who are ready to serve the monarchy and those who are not – puts Švejk into a class of his own. His unique behavior, patriotic but still suspect, recalls the Greek *idio*, the root of idiosyncrasy, idiom and idiot, the

English word usually used to translate Hašek's designation of Švejk, *blb*.⁹¹ We recall that Švejk's original arrest by Bretschneider is for slanderous remarks against the monarch and some fabricated charge of high treason. At the police station he happily signs a confession, the contents of which do not appear in the text, and then tells his cell-mates, "I've just admitted that I might have murdered the Archduke Ferdinand" (22).⁹² Because the reader never sees the text of the confession, and Švejk was never accused of the assassination, his declaration to his cellmates is puzzling. He is lying to someone, but whom – the authority figures or the other accused men in the cell? – and why? Švejk and the other men in jail have come to understand that it is impossible to tell the truth without facing severe consequences. Throughout the rest of the novel, Švejk lies for a variety of reasons, including avoiding danger, annoying authority figures, and amusing himself. He also lies for profit; Švejk makes his living from forging dog pedigrees, which illustrates his understanding that proper form can obscure improper content. In that intentional act of deception, Švejk uses falsified written documents to pass off inferior product, which is an important indicator of Švejk's mode of engaging with others. Švejk's supply can always meet his customer's demand, regardless of his actual stock. His acts of forgery, like other lies he tells, are carefully planned and executed so as to satisfy the desires of the people with whom he deals.

Despite Švejk's proclivity for fabrication, his public declarations of loyalty to the monarch and expressions of enthusiasm for the war are more straightforward, and far more consequential, than his supposedly treasonous acts. "God save our Emperor Franz Joseph! We shall win this war!" (43)⁹³ — this is the most scandalous public statement that Švejk makes in

⁹¹ Thanks to Professor Bill Todd for pointing me towards this etymology.

⁹² "Právě jsem se přiznal, že jsem asi zabil arcivévodu Ferdinanda" (I:30).

⁹³ "Císaři Františkovi Josefovi nazdar! Tuhle vojnu vyhrajem" (I:51).

Prague. It is delivered to a crowd that had gathered around a posted proclamation of the war as Švejk, under the escort of a law officer, makes his way to police headquarters. Shouting it out on a crowded street leads to his indictment on grounds of inciting revolt. Under interrogation, Švejk explains:

I couldn't hang back...I was so angry when I saw how they were all reading this proclamation and none of them were expressing any joy. There were no shouts of "God Save our Emperor," no hurrahs, nothing at all, inspector. It was just as if they didn't care. An old soldier of the 91st regiment like me couldn't go on looking at it and so I shouted out those words. And I believe that had you been in my place you'd have done exactly the same as I did. If there's a war it must be won and people must call out "God Save Our Emperor." No one will talk me out of that! (45)⁹⁴

We must pause over this paradoxical encounter, because this is the same chapter that begins by describing the police officers' task of "ascertaining how enthusiastic the population were for the war" (44). Švejk is after all doing exactly what the monarchy and its law enforcement want.

Granted, a critique is hidden in Švejk's explanation of his outburst; the idea that a proclamation of war should provoke expressions of *radost* [joy] cuts to the heart of Hašek's criticism of the military's disregard for human life. For another thing, he points out the general apathy towards the war. But the disconnect between ruler and ruled is so vast that even a display of enthusiasm and loyalty, unambiguous in its expression if not its explication, is compromised by the deep mutual suspicion and mistrust. The police officer interrogating Švejk clarifies that the context of Švejk's pronouncement changes its meaning: "you know very well that you were under police escort and that a patriotic pronouncement like that could and must have been regarded by the

⁹⁴ "Já nemoh zahálet [...] já jsem se rozčilil, když jsem viděl, že všichni čtou ten manifest o vojně a nejevějí žádnou radost. Žádný volání slávy, žádný hurrá, vůbec nic, pane rado. Tak jako kdyby se jich to vůbec netýkalo. A tu já, starý voják od jednadevadesátýho regimentu, nemoh jsem se na to dívat, a tak jsem vykřikl ty věty, a já si myslím, že kdybyste vy byl na mém místě, že byste to udělal zrovna jako já. Když je válka, musí se vyhrát a musí se volat sláva císaři pánu, to mně nikdo nevymluví" (I:53).

public as ironic rather than serious” (45).⁹⁵ This explanation suggests a presumption of distrust so strong that even an unambiguous statement is assumed to mean its own opposite. Moreover, the distrust is not limited to the predatory police; this officer projects it onto the witnesses at the scene.

In this he may not be mistaken. In a later scene, when Švejk has received call-up papers and outfitted himself for service, he rides through Wenceslas Square shouting “To Belgrade! To Belgrade!” (58; repeated on 61).⁹⁶ The sight of him riding in a wheelchair (theoretically because of his rheumatism), brandishing crutches and wearing an army cap and flowers in his button-hole, attracts a growing crowd, which a police officer sees fit to disband by taking Švejk into custody. The officer is disappointed to learn that Švejk truly has been called up for service, and that this seems to be an authentic expression of enthusiasm rather than a seditious display, along the lines of a suggestion that Austria is a crippled power hurtling foolishly towards war. And yet when Švejk and his police escort leave the scene, “a solemn-looking gentleman informed the crowd around that it was a ‘dissenter’ they were leading off” (61).⁹⁷ It seems beyond imagining, to both the subjects of the crown and its administrators, that a Czech would so enthusiastically report for service; something other than loyalty is sought to explain Švejk’s behavior – subversion, say, or idiocy.

In both of these examples, words and actions are taken to mean something quite contrary to their literal, or most obvious, meaning. Švejk’s expressions of *Kaisertreue* are presumed to be sardonic, even rebellious. But at the same time, displays of supposed disrespect for the

⁹⁵ “vás vedl policejní strážník, takže takový vlastenecký projev mohl a musel účinkovat na obecenstvo spíše ironicky než vážně” (I:53-54).

⁹⁶ “Na Bělehrad, na Bělehrad!” (I:66; repeated on 71). This scene takes place around the statue of Field Marshal Radetzky, the greatest Austrian military leader of the modern era. Judson points out that after the establishment of the republic, this monument was draped in black and transported out of Prague (434).

⁹⁷ “sděloval nějaký vážný pán lidem kolem, že vedou ‘desentéra’” (I:71).

monarchy, including expressions of Czech or Serbian nationalism, are punishable offenses. Evidence of indifference or hostile attitudes result in arrest, and from jail there is a direct pipeline to the military. On the other hand, displays of enthusiasm or support for the war effort have the same conclusion, but in a counter-intuitive way. If enthusiasm is first met with suspicion, as in Švejk's case, then it too is punished. Švejk is twice interrogated about his declaration of support for the monarch; later it will become the key piece of information used to discredit him in a psychiatric evaluation. And it is not only through official channels that this system of punishment for enthusiasm is enforced. When Švejk rides through town shouting "To Belgrade!", his enthusiasm takes another victim:

At Wenceslas Square the crowd around Švejk's bathchair had grown by several hundreds and at the corner of Krakovská street they beat up a student in a German cap who had shouted out to Švejk:

'Heil! Nieder mit den Serben!' (59)⁹⁸

This act of mob violence reveals the pervasiveness of mistrust, and the validity of the police officers' suspicion. Interestingly, the violence is incited by an exclamation not for the monarch per se, but against Serbia. In the Czech original, the victim is referred to as a *buršák*, a member of a German student society [*Burschenschaft*]; his *cereviska*, a red cap that was part of the *Burschenschaft* uniform, denotes as much. Thus, his *Kaisertreue* is proclaimed by his clothing before he even opens his mouth. In the court of public opinion, therefore, he is already guilty, and the punishment is corporal. The law of the streets is no less perverted than what is being enforced in police headquarters.

⁹⁸ Na Václavském náměstí vzrostl zástup kolem vozíku se Švejkem na několik set hlav a na rohu Krakovské ulice byl jím zbit nějaký buršák, který v cerevisce křičel k Švejkovi: "Heil! Nieder mit den Serben!" [German: Hail! Down with the Serbs!] (I:69).

This, then, is Hašek's portrait of Prague at the sunset of the empire and the dawn of the war. It is a world where loyalty to the monarch is enforced, and expressions of dissent are severely punished. Antipathy and indifference are tantamount to disloyalty. And yet, for that very reason, allegiance is given begrudgingly if at all. When enthusiasm is expressed, it is met with resentment and suspicion. Once the possibility of war appears, which it does in the very first words of the novel, subjects of the crown have only two choices: military service, or punishment on the home front. The authority of the monarchy may not be respected, but it is inescapable.

3. Storytelling as exit strategy

What is at stake in the restriction of self-expression in *Osudy*? In the civilian world, retreating to the private sphere offers some refuge from the social codes that govern political communication. But once war breaks out, this distance and that sphere shrinks. Suddenly every *tauglich* [German: able-bodied] man is at risk of having not only his speech but his physical movement restricted as well, and his physical safety is no longer ensured. "Recruitment" in this novel is a nefarious program in which state institutions including prisons and hospitals serve as feeders for the military. Institutional control results in a loss of multiple liberties of which self-expression turns out to be the only one a person can reclaim. When movement, dress, diet and indeed survival cease to be personal matters, when the body is the property of the state, verbal self-expression, however restricted, becomes the sole means of maintaining at least some form of autonomy. Even under the strictest institutional control, the indestructible drive for communication engenders alternative modes and codes of self-expression.

Under these circumstances, oral storytelling in certain contexts suggests itself as an act of ungovernable self-expression. Švejk is a rampant storyteller, and this authorial activity is, to many critics, his defining habit. Jindřich Chaloupecký argues that Švejk has no consistent

character traits, and points out that no description of his physical appearance or even age is given. Therefore Švejk's "character" is the sum of his stories; he is a figure made up of narration itself (187). Veronika Ambros suggests that Švejk is similar to Scheherazade, the storyteller who staves off mortal danger by distracting, entertaining and mystifying her murderous husband. Stalling for time is a very important function of Švejk's storytelling when he enters the army. Švejk often tells stories to his superior officers, especially when they issue him orders or inquire as to whether they've been fulfilled. In these instances, Švejk's storytelling does indeed buy him time from obligation, punishment, and deployment to the battlefield. But Švejk's storytelling differs from Scheherazade's in significant ways. First of all, Scheherazade is a seductive storyteller, her tales intended to draw in her audience the king. Only the king's desire for her to continue her narration ensures Scheherazade's survival. Ambros correctly notes that when Švejk tells stories as a survival technique, it has the opposite effect. His superior officers, namely Lukáš and Dub, are annoyed both by his habit of telling stories and the content of the stories themselves. They desire peace from Švejk's incessant prattling, and if he stays out of jail or away from the front, it's only because the authority-figures are too irritated to continue dealing with him. Scheherazade's stories are all linked; each night ends with a "cliff-hanger." Švejk's stories, on the other hand, are digressive nearly to the point of incoherence.

Aside from this, there is another hugely important feature of Švejk's storytelling that Ambros doesn't mention: Švejk's audience is not always composed of authority-figures. She correctly notes that the "novel's fictional world is inhabited by characters who constantly talk, whatever the situation," contributing "embedded stories" that make up a huge proportion of the text (233). But her insightful analysis of Švejk's storytelling applies only to him, and only when he is dealing with commanding officers. In fact, storytelling happens just as often among groups

of peers. Peer-groups coalesce in this novel not by age or social class but rather relation to authority, so that a group of prisoners, hospital patients or soldiers creates a group regardless of the various backgrounds of the individuals. In scenes throughout the novel, two or more characters find themselves confined together because of a shared fate, such as imprisonment or army service, and it is in these settings that the majority of storytelling in the novel occurs. And while Švejk is a distinguished storyteller, he is not the only one. What remains under-theorized is the extent to which the entire novel is composed of small, self-contained stories.

In his book *Hašek, Creator of Schweik*, Emmanuel Frynta writes about the influence of the pub story on the structure of the novel. Frynta characterizes the pub story as a type of folk genre, an orally delivered “anecdotal tale concerned with the environment, the way it most frequently occurs in public house entertainment” (98).⁹⁹ Frynta’s discussion of pub stories illuminates both the distinguishing features of the genre and its popularity in late Habsburg Prague, where it became “a very specific form of expression of its own, as a sensitive feeler vis-à-vis an ‘alienated world’ of authority and as a ready instrument of collective understanding” (102). Pub stories take place in a sort of eternal present-tense; the plots are topical and transitory. Guarantees of authenticity are an important rhetorical device; the storyteller need not be the subject of his own tale, but he knows the guy, or knows someone who knows him. Characters and places are identified with precision, creating the impression of verifiability. This does not, however, preclude grotesque distortion. On the contrary, the realistic foundation is purposely set in order to create a more surprising absurd punchline (Frynta, 99).

⁹⁹ Hašek’s propensity to use real Prague bars as settings in *Osudy* and other texts has given rise to the now vital Švejk-themed restaurant industry. The first restaurant to be marketed in connection with Švejk is the first one mentioned in the novel: U Kalicha.

While the accomplished teller of pub stories comes across as a master improviser, he may be more like a bard, drawing from a larger repertoire, sometimes adapting a well-rehearsed tale to suit his present circumstances. A pub story itself, according to Frynta, cannot stand on its own, but rather serves as an Aesopian comment on the setting and circumstances of its present telling. The meaning of the story is therefore activated by the context in which and the audience to whom it is told. The genre is named for its association with pubs as sites of socializing and casual storytelling; however Frynta points out that the stories are just as often told in spaces where groups face “common danger, common disorder” (99) such as prison and the military. Frynta argues that for Czech soldiers in the Austrian army, pub stories were the preferred mode of expressing discontent (102).

Frynta’s analysis of the pub story as a generic template and Czech cultural phenomenon is invaluable, and it serves his overall argument that the novel is essentially a collage of different types of texts representing both generic and linguistic milieus. Still, he does not propose an overall model for storytelling as such. Bakhtin posits that “low” genres such as anecdotes and folk songs oppose the centralizing tendency of literary language. A pub story similarly is “parodic and aimed sharply and polemically against the official languages of its time” (Bakhtin, 273). Drawing on the work of Bakhtin, Frynta, Ambros and others, I will present an in-depth examination of storytelling in the novel overall, especially with regards to social dynamics and meta-literary commentary. When, why and how does storytelling occur? A significant portion of the novel is given over to stories unrelated to the central narrative. Is the World War, then, only a framing narrative to the inner workings of Hašek’s novel?

On the one hand, concerning the structure of the novel, the World War *is* a framing narrative, but such that the frame is as important as the picture it surrounds. Just like the Black

Death in *The Decameron*,¹⁰⁰ the World War provides a setting both gruesome and paralyzing. It is the “common danger, common disorder” that Frynta describes. Confined because of gruesome circumstances, storytellers in the prisons, medical institutions and military can only respond with equally gruesome tales. On the other hand, the World War crystallizes the communication mores of late Habsburg Prague. Heightened sensitivity around military intelligence as well as acute awareness of rank further limit already restricted communicative behaviors. By imbuing his most ambitious project with elements of this oral genre, Hašek embraced the outsider status he occupied in the social and literary milieus of the First Republic.

In this section, I will unpack the meaning and methods of the novel’s storytellers, of which Švejk is *primus inter pares*. Significantly, all the storytelling characters are low-class or low-ranking. In scenes where these men are gathered, stories told among peers become cultural capital: they establish trust by demonstrating the teller’s *bona fides* as disenfranchised or peripheral figures. It is therefore important to recognize that Švejk’s storytelling is not a habit that necessarily distinguishes him from other characters. On the contrary, it unites him with those whose camaraderie he values.

Because the stories are meant to be delivered orally, they are written using vernacular diction as befits the storyteller. Vernacular Czech as it appears in the novel has two components. First, it encompasses “obscene” language, including curse words and descriptions of bodily functions, which ruffled the feathers of Hašek’s earliest critics. An anonymous review published in *Knihkupecký oznamovatel* [*Booksellers’ Review*] in April 1921, for example, suggested that wherever Hašek transcribed a coarse character’s dialogue, he should instead have simply referred to the character as a *sprosták* [“foul-mouth”]. As it is written, the reviewer questions whether the

¹⁰⁰ A 1968 collection of selected Hašek short stories was published under the title *Dekameron humoru a satiry* [*Decameron of Humor and Satire*].

novel is at all suitable for “čtenáře mladší – a dívky?” [“younger readers – and girls?”]. Second, Prague spoken Czech includes some distinctive linguistic phenomena.¹⁰¹ For example, the letter “v” may be affixed to words beginning with “o,” the final “l” in past-tense masculine verbs is dropped, and the long vowel “ý” is replaced with “ej.” In addition to the stories, vernacular Czech is often used in the dialogue of low-class characters, including Švejk, such as in the following example:

Vernacular	Standard
“‘Dovoluji si vás upozornit, pane <u>obrlajtnant</u> ,’ řekl starostlivě Švejk, ‘že na toho psa musíte <u>bejt vopatrnej</u> , aby vám <u>neutek</u> . <u>Vono</u> se mu třeba může zastesknout po starým domově a von by <u>moh</u> vzít roha, kdybyste ho odvázal ze šňůry’” (I:223).	“‘Dovoluji si vás upozornit, pane obrlajtnante,’ řekl starostlivě Švejk, ‘že na toho psa musíte <u>být opatrný</u> , aby vám <u>neutekl</u> . <u>Ono</u> se mu třeba může zastesknout po <u>starém</u> domově a von by <u>mohl</u> vzít roha, kdybyste ho odvázal ze šňůry.’”

Such vocal habits are often heard in spoken Czech but do not appear in literary Czech. When it comes to phonetic transcription, Hašek is on a par with Mark Twain. Regrettably, Parrott’s English translation smooths over the meaningful roughness of these speech patterns, making Švejk sound almost refined.¹⁰² In Parrott’s translation, this excerpt reads: “‘I take the liberty of warning you sir,’ said Švejk solicitously, ‘that you must be careful with that dog in case it runs away. It may perhaps be homesick for its old home and take to its heels if you let it off the lead’” (203). This captures the precise meaning of Švejk’s speech but does not impart the quality of his speaking habits and what they say about his disregard for codes of rank. A more expressive

¹⁰¹ See Charles Townsend’s *A Description of Spoken Prague Czech*, Columbus: Slavica Publishers, Inc. 1990. The phenomena mentioned here are discussed on pages 36, 31, and 46, respectively.

¹⁰² In the introduction to his translation, Parrott, a knighted British diplomat and scholar, reflects on “the impossibility of reproducing [Švejk’s speech] in English.” He writes, “The use of common Czech in Bohemia and Moravia is by no means confined to the uneducated. The Czechs are a democratic people and when they get together and let their hair down, whether they are educated or not, they speak a more or less common vernacular. This cannot be adequately rendered in English, since the only thinkable equivalent would be dialect or bad English. Either would be false and out of place in this context” (xx).

rendering might be something like, “I gotta warn you Mr. Senior Lieutenant,” said Švejk carefully, ‘that you gotta look out for this dog so it doesn’t run off. This little guy might miss his old home and he could bolt if you take off his leash.’” (In fact, the dog is a “flight risk” because Švejk knowingly acquired him from a dog-napper.)

Švejk’s stories can be divided into two categories: autobiographical stories, and stories about people he has known. The autobiographical stories usually have to do with his earlier army service, and this category expands as the novel goes on. Throughout the novel, he tells stories from his pre-war tour of duty with the regiment that discharged him for idiocy. Beginning in the second volume, he begins adding stories about his recent service as batman to Chaplain Katz. The stories he tells about Katz, however, are not summaries of episodes from earlier in the novel, so the reader never knows whether Švejk has invented them. At one point, when Švejk and a group of other soldiers are sitting on a stalled military train, “Švejk began to relate his experiences with Chaplain Otto Katz in such detail and in such an interesting way that they did not notice that the train had started” (319).¹⁰³ In this instance, we see one of the main functions of storytelling in the novel: a group of peers whose movement is restricted, seeking nothing more than to pass the time.

Švejk also gives detailed narrative explanations of his latest activities; these are among the stories he tells Lieutenant Lukáš. This occurs, for example, in a village outside Budapest where Švejk is written up for stealing a chicken from local civilians. The report states that “Infantryman Švejk, Josef, having taken possession of a hen which was running behind the house of the married couple István [...] and having been stopped by the owner, who tried to take the hen away from him, obstructed the owner of the hen, István, in this and hit him across the right

¹⁰³ “A Švejk počal vypravovat své zkušenosti s polním kurátem Otto Katzem tak podrobně a zajímavě, že ani nepozorovali, že se vlak hnul.” (II.344).

eye” (545).¹⁰⁴ When Lukáš takes Švejk to task for the infraction, Švejk responds with a long, detailed account of how he came to acquire the chicken. He frames it in terms of his loyalty to the monarchy, then stresses his commitment to fulfill Lukáš’s orders, and his eagerness to deliver a proper chicken soup:

Yes, humbly report, sir, chicken soup. I’ve bought some onions and five dekas of noodles. Here it all is, sir. In this pocket I’ve got the onions and in the other the noodles. We’ve got salt in the office and pepper as well. Nothing else was needed but to buy a hen. And so I went behind the station to Isatarcsa. It’s actually a village, not like a town at all, in spite of it being written in the first street Isatarcsa *town*. I went through one street with gardens, then a second, a third, a fourth, a fifth, a sixth, a seventh, an eighth, a ninth, a tenth, an eleventh until finally in the thirteenth street at the very end, behind a house where the meadows begin, a flock of hens was walking about and feeding. I went and picked out the biggest and heaviest one. Please look at it, sir, it’s pure fat. You don’t need to feel it. You can see at one glance that they must have stuffed it with grain. And so I took it quite openly in the presence of the population, who shouted something at me in Hungarian. I held the hen by the legs and asked one or two people in Czech and German who the hen belonged to, so that I could buy it from them, and suddenly a man and a woman rushed out of that house at the end and the man began swearing at me first in Hungarian and then in German, saying I had robbed him of a hen in broad daylight. (548-549)¹⁰⁵

Švejk’s speech isn’t pure narrative; it includes dialogic digressions and descriptive details. He then goes on to detail the hen’s escape attempt, the shouting of the owner and his wife, the arrival of the local police and finally his arrest. As in the excerpt above, his narration is richly

¹⁰⁴ “Pěšák Švejk Josef, zmocniv se slepice pobíhající za domkem manželů Istvánových v Išatarča v rajóně velitelství nádraží a náležející István manželům [...] a zadržen jsa majitelem, který mu slepici odebrati chtěl, zabránil tomu, udeřiv majitele Istvána slepicí přes pravé oko” (III:110-111).

¹⁰⁵ “Ano, poslušně hlásím, pane obrlajtnant, polívku ze slepice, koupil jsem cibuli a pět deka nudlí. Zde je to prosím všechno. Zde je 93 v té kapse cibule a v této jsou nudle. Sůl máme v kanceláři a pepř taky. Nezbyvalo již nic jiného než koupit slepici. Šel jsem tedy za nádražím do Išatarči. Je to vlastně vesnice, jako by to nebylo žádný město, ačkoliv je tam napsáno v první ulici Išatarča vároš. Projdu jednu ulici se zahrádkami, druhou, třetí, čtvrtou, pátou, šestou, sedmou, osmou, devátou, desátou, jedenáctou, až v třinácté ulici na samém konci, kde za jedním domkem už začínaly trávníky, páslo se a procházelo stádo slepic. Šel jsem k nim a vybral jsem tu největší, nejtěžší, račte se na ni podívat, pane obrlajtnant, je to samý sádlo, nemusí se ani vohledávat a pozná se to hned na první pohled, že jí museli sypat hodně zrní. Vzal jsem ji tedy, zcela veřejně, u přítomnosti obyvatelstva, které na mne cosi maďarsky křičelo, držím ji za nohy a ptám se několika lidí, česky i německy, komu patří ta slepice, abych ji mohl od něho koupit, když vtom vyběhne z toho domku na kraji muž s ženou a počne mně napřed nadávat maďarsky a pak německy, že jsem mu ukradl za bílého dne slepici.” (III:114).

detailed, but he never mentions hitting the owner of the chicken in the eye. Because the reader is not privy to Švejk's thoughts, we do not know whether this is an intentional omission. In any case, by the time Švejk gets to talking about his interrogation, Lukáš is thoroughly annoyed:

“Švejk, my orders are that you and your hen are to clear out or I'll knock you on the head with it, you bloody idiot...”

“As you order, sir, but humbly report I couldn't find any celery or carrots either! I'll put pota...”

Švejk did not have time to say 'toes' but flew out of the staff carriage together with his hen. (550)¹⁰⁶

In this encounter, and many others like it, Švejk does indeed manipulate Lukáš in a way that evokes Scheherazade's manipulation of her husband the king. Švejk's storytelling buys him time, so that details become capital. Lukáš has a love-hate relationship with Švejk's stories, experiencing frustration but also appreciating Švejk's distinctive narrative style. He reflects on the power of Švejk's storytelling: “I ought to have given him a few on the jaw, but instead I've been gossiping with him as though he were a friend” (476). Therefore, in this context also, Švejk's stories forge a social bond, creating a friendship that, in this case, defies rank. But again, the Scheherazade paradigm holds only for those contexts where military or social rank defines the power relationship. When Švejk is among peers, storytelling has different functions entirely.

Švejk's stories range in length. Some are quite short, consisting of between one and three sentences. I think of these as “mini-stories.” A typical Švejk short story is a single long paragraph, roughly half a page of text, although very long paragraphs often include two or more mini-stories. And then there are longer stories which are spread out over multiple pages. Richly detailed and action-packed, these long stories usually include internal dialogue, even whole

¹⁰⁶ “‘Švejk, já vám poručím, abyste už zmizel i se slepicí, nebo vám ji otluču o hlavu, blbče jeden...’ ‘Dle rozkazu, pane obřajtnant, ale celer jsem, poslušně hlásím, nenašel, mrkev také ne! Dám bram...’ Švejk nadořekl ,bor‘ a vyletěl i se slepicí před štábní vagón.” (III:116).

reproduced conversations. The basic plot concerns a man getting into an extreme and desperate situation, and through a combination of bad luck, crass acquaintances and difficult circumstances, winding up worse off than he started.

None of these storytelling habits are unique to Švejk. As we shall see when we discuss communal storytelling, other characters who indulge in storytelling share these tendencies, all of which, as Frynta shows, are modelled on the typical Czech pub story. Švejk does, however, have a few distinguishing characteristics as a storyteller. First of all, he often amends a moral, usually illogical or counter-intuitive, to longer stories. Second, Švejk is the only character whose storytelling is commented on by others. Lukáš often expresses his irritation with Švejk's incessant narration; so, occasionally, does Lieutenant Dub. At one point, when Švejk's friend, peer and fellow storyteller Vodička gets annoyed, he expresses himself through a tale about someone with a similar storytelling habit: "'Jesus Mary,' cried Vodička in a fury. 'I can't stand it any longer. Why he tells all this bloody nonsense I can't understand. Yesterday at the investigation we had just the same sort of a fellow...'"¹⁰⁷ (382). Here, storytelling becomes the vehicle for critiquing excessive storytelling.

Finally, two kinds of mini-stories are unique to Švejk. First of all, Švejk has a habit of "quoting" adages from characters who neither appear nor are ever mentioned again. A typical example is: "If anything ever happened, it was pure coincidence, nothing but a dispensation of God, as old Vaníček from Pelhřimov used to say when he had served his thirty-sixth sentence" (350).¹⁰⁸ As far as the reader knows, the sources of these quotations are fictional characters, although we allow for the possibility that these are in-jokes, Hašek attributing real or invented

¹⁰⁷ "'Ježíšmarjá,' rozčilil se Vodička, 'já už to nevydržím. Proč tohle všechno povídá, to nepochopuju. To byl včera s náma u vejslechu zrovna takovej člověk'" (II:411).

¹⁰⁸ "jestli se něco stalo, to byla náhoda, pouhý řízení boží, jako říkal starej Vaníček z Pelhřimova, když si vodbejval šestatřicátý trest" (IV:376).

quotes to own friends and acquaintances. Occasionally though, the sources of the quotations are recognizable, and humor comes from the improbability of attribution. For example, when Švejk tells a potentially cuckolded officer “I’m up to the ears in love with your wife, as Vrchlický used to say,” (368),¹⁰⁹ he attributes a sentiment that is both base and banal to a celebrated Czech lyric poet. While I categorize these invented quotations as mini-stories, I note that Bakhtin viewed aphorisms as a genre unto itself. When incorporated into a novel, he argued, aphorisms contribute to the text’s heteroglossia or multi-voicedness (322).

Švejk also tells a particular brand of mini-story when he lies. Many of Švejk’s stories are unverifiable, so the reader never knows whether Švejk is improvising and inventing a story or relating an anecdote from his memory/repertoire. And yet there are many occasions when Švejk makes statements that the reader knows to be untrue. These lies, often having to do with his relation to real and imagined people, are relatively inconsequential. For example, in the sanitarium Švejk is visited by a baroness who read in the newspaper about his public display of enthusiasm; when the doctor questions him about the nature of their relationship, Švejk claims to be her long-lost stepson (74). At various times, Švejk claims many people as his brother: Otto Katz (109), a butcher from Protivín (193), a lance-corporal responsible for arresting him (275) and a schoolmaster who, Švejk tells Lieutenant Dub, passed the officers’ exam (526, referenced again on 741). The final entry in this list is the only one that could possibly be true; no other evidence directly contradicts it. But of course, by this point, Švejk has told so many different versions of this lie that the idea of him having a brother is a red flag. In any case, because Švejk has no stable biography, the reader knows nothing about his past or family except what he

¹⁰⁹ “Já jsem do vaší paní zamilovanej až po uši, jak říkal Vrchlický” (II:396).

unhelpfully states during an early medical examination: “my papa was Mr Švejk and my mamma was Mrs Svejek” (24-25).¹¹⁰

These lies have two main effects. First, they establish Švejk as unreliable. Because the reader knows for certain that Švejk lies flippantly, she has reason to question the authenticity of *all* the stories he tells. The verifiable lies are signposts, not to any other character but directly to the reader, about Švejk’s untrustworthiness. Cumulatively, these lies, and the possibility that all of Švejk’s stories are invented, also have a larger purpose, one which has to do with the very nature of authenticity. As consumers of stories, both written and oral, our expectations for fact and fiction are radically different. But this novel, like the legends associated with Hašek, reveal that those expectations are triggered by assumptions. When a story is told to us, whether by an idiotic forger of dog pedigrees or a military historian, we never really know where it falls on the spectrum from fact to fiction. Our readiness to believe a story derives from a combination of our own prior knowledge of the subject, and the reputation of the storyteller. The parodic attitude towards history that runs throughout the novel, which I unpack in the next chapter, further problematizes the reader’s assumptions of judging the accuracy of information by the authority of its source.

Let’s take a close look at an archetypal Švejk story, one that is told in the context of a peer-group. The scene is preceded by a conversation that takes place in the officers’ club, where the news has just been received that Italy has declared war on Austria-Hungary; this puts the scene somewhere around late May 1915. Whereas the officers trade high-minded speeches about the certain victory of Austria-Hungary, the soldiers waiting in a train car take a more pragmatic view of their newly antagonistic relationship with Italy. To illustrate ideas of betrayal and

¹¹⁰ “můj tatínek byl Švejk a maminka paní Švejková” (I:32).

hostility, they tell stories about untrustworthy merchants from their hometowns who, like Italy, agree to do business with one party, and then deceitfully make an agreement with a supposed rival. First Švejk mentions three greengrocers in Prague who were constantly making and breaking alliances to try to gain advantage, then the gluttonous soldier Baloun describes a heifer he was contracted to buy, which was unexpectedly sold to a butcher. Throughout the novel it is typical for characters discussing matters of state and empire to create analogies with neighborhood gossip. Like parables, these analogies simplify complicated concepts to make them relatable and accessible. But, as in the opening conversation between Švejk and Mrs. Müller, they also function as disparagement, reducing consequential international maneuvers to the level of prattle.

The quarter-master Vaněk's response to the news about Italy is more apropos, but no less pedestrian. In his civilian life, he imported rotten lemons from Italy for juice to sell at his shop. "Now it would mean the end of the transport of lemons from Italy to Kralupy. There was no doubt that the war with Italy would bring various surprises, because Austria would want to take her revenge" (515).¹¹¹ For Vaněk too, then, the movements of nations is understandable only in its specific application to his life. Švejk's response to Vaněk contains all elements that define him as a storyteller.¹¹²

'It's easy to say "take her revenge",' Švejk said with a smile. 'A chap thinks he's going to take his revenge, but in the end it's the fellow he's chosen as the instrument of his vengeance who pays for it. When I lived at Vinohrady, a house-porter lived on the ground floor and provided board for a petty official in a bank. This official went to a pub in Kramerius Street and had a quarrel there once with a gentleman who had an institute for the analysis of urine at Vinohrady. That gentleman never thought of or spoke of anything else except that institute and all the time carried about with him little test-tubes for urine. These he thrust under people's noses, urging them to make water and have their

¹¹¹ "Teď bude konec s dopravou citrónů z Itálie do Kralup. Není pochyby, že válka s Itálií přinese různá překvapení, poněvadž se bude chtít Rakousko pomstít" (III:81).

¹¹² Incidentally, the editors of the 2000 reprint of Cecil Parrott's translation must have considered this an archetypal story too; Josef Lada's illustration of it was used for the cover.

urine analysed, because the happiness of the man and his family depended on it and it was so cheap that it cost only six crowns. All the guests who came to the pub, as well as the landlord and his wife, had their urine analysed. Only that petty official still resisted, although the gentleman continually followed him to the urinal and when he came out said to him anxiously: "I don't know, Mr Skorkovský, but somehow I'm not very happy about your urine. You'd better make water into the test-tube, before it's too late!" Finally he persuaded him to do so. It cost that petty official six crowns and the gentleman made him suffer for it, as did all the people in the pub, not excluding the landlord whose business he ruined, because with every analysis he produced he always enclosed a report which stated that it was a very serious case, that no one in that state should drink anything but water; they shouldn't smoke, they shouldn't get married and they should eat only vegetables. And so that petty official, like all the rest, got furious with him and chose the house-porter as the instrument of his vengeance, because he knew he was a really nasty customer. And so one day he told the gentleman who carried out the urine analyses that the house-porter had not been feeling well for some time and asked him to go and see him next day at seven o'clock and test his urine. And so he went there. The house-porter was still sleeping when the gentleman woke him up and said to him in a friendly way: "My respects, Mr Málek. I wish you a good morning. Here's a test-tube for you, please. Be so kind and make water into it and my charge is six crowns." And what a shindy there was! The house-porter jumped out of bed in his pants, seized the gentleman by the throat and threw him at the cupboard so that he inlaid him in it! And when he pulled him out of the cupboard again he seized a knout, went out as he was in his pants and chased him down Čelakovská Street with the gentleman yelling just like when you tread on the tail of a dog. In Havlíček Avenue the gentleman jumped on to a tram and the house-porter was caught by a policeman, fought with him and because he was only in his pants and everything was peeping out, they threw him into the cart for drunks and carried him off to the police station. When he was in the cart he went on roaring like a bull: "You bastards, I'll teach you to analyse my urine." He was in jug for six months for public violence and for insulting the police. Afterwards when the sentence was pronounced he committed the further offence of insulting the Ruling House, and it's very likely that he's still in jug today. And this is why I say that if ever a chap wants to take his revenge on anybody it's always the innocent party who pays for it" (515-516).¹¹³

¹¹³ "“Vono se řekne,” usmál se Švejk, ‘pomstít se. Někdo myslí, že se pomstí, a nakonec to vodnese ten, koho si jako takovej člověk vybral za nástroj svý pomsty. Když jsem bydlel před lety na Vinohradech, tak tam bydlel v přízemí domovník a u toho na bytě byl jeden takovej malej ouředníček z ňáký banky, a ten chodil do jednoho výčepu v Krameriově ulici a pohádal se tam jednou s jedním pánem, kerej měl takovej ňákej ústav na Vinohradech pro analýzu moče. Ten pán vůbec na nic jinýho nemyslel a vo ničem jiném nemluvil a nosíval samé flaštičky s močí, každému to cpal pod nos, aby se taky vymočil a dal si prohlídnout moč, protože na takový prohlídce záleží štěstí člověka, rodiny a je to taky laciný, stojí to šest korun. Všichni, co chodili do výčepu, i hostinský a hostinská, dali si moč analyzovat, jenom ten úředníček se ještě držel, ačkoliv ten pán za ním lez pořád do pisoáru, když šel ven, a vždycky mu starostlivě 66 říkal: ‘Já nevím, pane Skorkovský, mně se ta vaše moč nějak nelíbí, vymočte se do lahvičky, dřív než bude pozdě!’ Konečně ho přemluvil. Stálo to úředníčka šest korun a ten pán mu ten rozbor jak náležitě vosladil, jako to už udělal těm všem ve výčepu, nevyjímaje ani hostinskýho, kterému kazil živnost, poněvadž takovej rozbor vždycky provázal říkáním, že je to moc vážnej případ, že nikdo nesmí nic pít kromě vody, že nesmí kouřit, že se nesmí ženit a že má jíst jen samou zeleninu. Tak ten úředníček měl na něho jako všichni strašnej vztek a zvolil si domovníka za nástroj svý pomsty, poněvadž znal domovníka

The moral that Švejk uses to bookend his narrative is striking: “if ever a chap wants to take his revenge on anybody it’s always the innocent party who pays for it.” It’s also surprising; subverting the expectation that vengeance can backfire against the actor, Švejk points out the danger for the unwitting instrument of revenge. If the reader is of the mind that Švejk’s stories are true, then we might say that Vaněk’s story triggers a memory. On the other hand, if we believe that Švejk improvises his stories, then the idea of revenge is his prompt, and the story Švejk tells in response is pure invention. Both explanations are possible. Either way, Švejk’s application of that moral to this story is basically arbitrary; any number of lessons might be drawn from the story of an over-eager neighborhood urine collector. Moreover, while the idea of revenge is resonant, Švejk’s story, like the comments that precede it, is not otherwise analogous to the situation with Austria and Italy.

The tale contains a number of other elements that are characteristic of Švejk’s storytelling. It’s delivered in vernacular Czech; the phonic substitutions are seen, for example, in the final line: “to vodnese nevinnej člověk” (standard Czech would be “to odnese nevinný člověk”). The prominence of geographic details, such as neighborhoods and street names, creates a very definite sense of setting, highlighting the pub culture and pub story culture of Prague.

jako surovce. Tak jednou tomu pánovi, co prováděl tu analýzu moči, povídá, že ten domovník už se necejtí zdrav nějakej čas a že ho prosí, aby si zejtra ráno k sedmej hodině přišel k němu pro moč, že si ji dá prozkoumat. A von tam šel. Domovník ještě spal, když ho ten pán vzbudil a povídal mu přátelsky: ‘Moje úcta, pane Málek, dobré jitro přeji. Tady prosím lahvička, račte se vymočít a dostanu šest korun.’ Ale to bylo boží dopuštění potom, jak ten domovník vyskočil v ka’atech z postele, jak toho pána chyt za krk, jak s ním praštil vo almaru, až ho do ní zafasoval! Když ho vytáh z almary, popad bejkovec a už ho hnál dolů v ka’atech Čelakovskýho ulicí, a ten ječel, jako když šlápneš psovi na vocas, a na Havlíčkově třídě skočil do elektriky, a domovníka chyt strážník, sepral se s ním, a poněvadž byl domovník v ka’atech a všechno mu lezlo ven, tak ho kvůli takovému pohoršení hodili do košatinky a vodvezli na policii, a von ještě z košatinky řval jako tur: ‘Vy pacholci, já vám ukážu mně analyzovat moč.’ Seděl šest měsíců pro veřejný násilí a pro urážku stráže, a potom ještě po vyhlášení rozsudku dopustil se urážky panovnickýho domu, tak snad sedí ještě dnes, a proto říkám, chtít se někomu pomstít, že to vodnese nevinnej člověk” (III:81-82).

Three general settings are used in this story which are very typical for Švejk: a bar, the courthouse, and jail. In fact, it is typical for the characters of Švejk's stories, and indeed Švejk himself, to travel between these three institutions in that order. The story hinges on a product of a lower bodily function, making it grotesque on the order of Rabelais. But the taboo of publicly talking about, indeed looking at and dealing with, bodily excretions is compounded by placing it in the realm of medical science. This creates a send-up of science, especially when it is revealed to be fundamentally profit-driven basis ("because the happiness of the man and his family depended on it and it was so cheap that it cost only six crowns"). There is the element of violence, when the house-porter slams the gentleman against the cupboard and then chases him with a whip. Finally, there is the ironic twist-ending, in which the unsuspecting house-porter is the only character to get punished for the whole ordeal, which provides the rationale for Švejk's incongruous moral.

When we recognize these as the characteristic elements, we realize that Švejk's stories have another model: Hašek's short stories. Of course, the oral pub story model looms over Hašek's entire oeuvre. But it's important to recognize the extent to which Švejk's stories resemble Hašek's written texts. An instructive example is the story "Korupční aféra magistrátního praktikanta Bachůry," translated by Alan Menhennet as "The Bachura Scandal," which was originally published in the humor magazine *Kopřivy* [*Nettles*] in 1914 under the pseudonym Antonín Kočka [Anthony She-cat]. In that story, the self-satisfied petty official Bachůra shuts down a bar in Prague's lesser quarter because the dark and windowless bathroom doesn't meet city regulations. One day Bachůra gets a bout of diarrhea and rushes to a public toilet to relieve himself, only to find that he doesn't have the six kreutzers it costs to use the facilities. The bathroom attendant turns out to be the sister of the bar-owner Bachůra has put out

of business, and once Bachůra promises that the bar can re-open, she lets him enter for free. Thus because of his bodily needs, and as a sort of divine punishment for his fixation with a public toilet, Bachůra's reputation is compromised. He is fired from his job and essentially driven mad. Only four pages long, the story is more memorable for its plot than any linguistic or literary flourishes, giving it an oral quality. And details about bodily functions, disparagement of public institutions, geographic specificity and the importance of the bar setting all make it similar to a story Švejk might tell.

Hašek's improvisational writing process partially accounts for the oral quality of his written texts. But although Hašek was known to write and sell his stories within a single day and spend his earnings that night, it does him a disservice to mistake his method for pure pragmatism. Endowing Švejk with the gift of storytelling is the apotheosis of Hašek's method. Hašek translated oral genres into written texts, losing none of the flow, dynamism or vitality. With their inclusion of such "vulgar" elements as vernacular speech, pub settings, bodily humor and petty violence, Hašek's, and Švejk's, stories teem with the real life of the streets, an effect not always achieved in "realist" or "naturalist" literature. These anecdotes and the language used to tell them distinguish *Osudy* from legionnaire literature as well as nineteenth-century realist novels. And yet, with his reproduction of natural speech patterns and conversational convention, he produces literature that more closely resembles the real lived experience of his peers during the war.

As noted above, most of the storytellers are characters from the periphery of society; Chalupecký called this novel "peripheral literature for peripheral people" (217). The storytellers are soldiers, thieves, and scapegraces, and they usually tell their stories in group settings. In these instances, the stories function as social capital, illustrating their credibility as trustworthy peers

from the underworld. In the first volume of the novel before Švejk enters the army, he participates in two important scenes of group storytelling, first at police headquarters, then in the sanitarium at the garrison prison. First, when Bretschneider brings Švejk to police headquarters, he sees that all the prisoners are there for the same reason – “‘Because of Sarajevo.’ ‘Because of Ferdinand.’ ‘Because of the murder of His Imperial Highness.’ ‘For Ferdinand.’ ‘Because they did away with His Imperial Highness at Sarajevo’” (16).¹¹⁴ Like Švejk, and Palivec who arrives shortly thereafter, everyone has been arrested on some specious charge of treason. The cohesion of the group is based on this shared fate. There is one man in the cell who remains aloof, the only one guilty of a real crime: “The sixth, who was avoiding the company of the other five, said he did not want to have anything to do with them, in case any suspicion should fall on him. He was only detained here for attempted robbery with murder on a farmer Giles from Holic” (16).¹¹⁵ The other inmates cement their bond through storytelling.

As soon as Švejk arrives in a jail cell, he “sat down at the table with the conspirators, who were recounting for at least the tenth time how they had got there” (16).¹¹⁶ There are six men in the cell, which means that each tells his story not only when a new prisoner arrives – that would make only seven repetitions including the scene that Švejk participates in – but continuously. This storytelling, therefore, has multiple functions. First, it has an obvious informative and communicative component, very often appearing as part of a self-introduction. At the same time, storytelling functions as a form of entertainment, as we shall see when we examine social storytelling in the army. Enclosed to a confined space, in this case because of their incarceration,

¹¹⁴ “‘Kvůli Sarajevu!’ — ‘Kvůli Ferdinandovi!’ — ‘Kvůli té vraždě na panu arcivévodovi!’ — ‘Pro Ferdinanda!’ — ‘Za to, že pana arcivévodu odpravili v Sarajevu!’” (I:23).

¹¹⁵ “Šestý, který se těch pěti stranil, řekl, že s nimi nechce nic mít, aby na něho nepadlo nijaké podezření, on že tu sedí jen pro pokus loupežné vraždy na pantátovi z Holic” (I:23).

¹¹⁶ “sedl do společnosti spiklenců u stolu, kteří si už podesáté vyprávěli, jak se do toho dostali” (I:23).

storytelling is the only opportunity for imaginative or creative activity. The constant repetition, however, suggests yet another purpose. Here, storytelling may also have an introspective function as a means of processing the absurd circumstances. Thus storytelling benefits the teller as much as, or more than, the listener.

The arrival of Palivec in the jail illustrates how stories are used as cultural capital:

Švejk explained to him that all of them belonged to the same party arrested because of the Archduke. [...]

Palivec took umbrage at this and said that he was not here for any pip-squeak of an Archduke but because of His Imperial Majesty. And because the others began to show interest he told them how his flies had defiled His Imperial Majesty. (19)¹¹⁷

Apart from this scene, Palivec is characterized as tight-lipped and careful, all too aware of the dangers of the imperial secret police. But after he is arrested, he sees that his discretion was futile. Once Palivec enters the cycle of law enforcement and punishment, he becomes as talkative as the other inmates. The story of his crime now functions as his entrée to the peer-group forming in this cell, and his incarceration paradoxically liberates him to start speaking freely. Outside the jail men walk free, but every free man is a potential criminal. Inside the jail are men already branded as criminals; their movement is restricted but their self-expression is limited only by their own powers of narration. Although the surveillance work of the police is accomplished by making arrests, within the cells there is no supervision, giving rise to discourse free from constraints.

This same ironic pattern will be repeated in the sanitarium hut and in the army. It never goes so far as addressing the critiques to the authority-figures outright. Instead, storytelling

¹¹⁷ “Švejk mu vysvětlil, že všichni [...] patří k jich společnosti kvůli arcivévodovi. Pan Palivec se urazil a řekl, že zde není kvůli nějakému pitomému arcivévodovi, ale kvůli císaři pánu. A poněvadž to ostatní počalo zajímat, vypravoval jim to, jak mouchy mu znečistily císaře pána“ (I:23).

happens behind closed doors, in spaces where the only people who enter are those who have already been disempowered. Ambros suggests that storytelling transforms the atmosphere in these spaces into that of a big pub. She writes, “The closed public spaces stimulate narration; they also show that reality is no less absurd than the narrated events” (234). Storytelling is both the last refuge and the first opportunity for speaking openly. In these spaces there exists a relative freedom for self-expression which is unattainable anywhere else, a shared, coded language that expresses the injustice of their arrest.

We see the same mechanism in the chapter “Švejk the Malingerer,” when our hero is sent to the hospital within the garrison. It’s run by Dr. Grünstein, a sadist who suspects all of his patients of malingering to avoid military service. He systematically subjects all those in his care to horrific “medical treatments,” including starvation, dispensation of quinine, stomach-pumping and enemas, in order to push them into a confession of health and ergo fitness for service. In fact, Dr. Grünstein is correct: the men in the garrison sanitarium are all lying about their ailments. In the presence of the doctor, they swear to the unfortunate authenticity of their ailments. But in the bay of hospital beds, a space the doctor enters only once a day, they speak freely. In that very restricted space, the malingerers speak openly to each other and share trade secrets, such as how best to feign rabies, or where one can have limbs broken to order. It is a space in which they tell can safely stories of their own accomplishments in the arena of self-harm, as well as recounting the performances of others who have passed through the sanitarium. Obviously, self-harm is not an end in itself; it is a means to avoiding military service. The malingerers’ narratives obliquely express their unwillingness to join the Austrian army. When Švejk, an authentic rheumatic, enters this space, two fellow patients tell this story:

“We even had a fellow here who was deaf and dumb. For a fortnight they wrapped him up every half-hour in a cold wet sheet and every day they gave him an enema and

pumped his stomach. All the nurses thought he'd won through and would go home, when the doctor prescribed him an emetic. It could have torn him in half so he lost courage. 'I can't go on being deaf and dumb,' he said. 'My speech and hearing have returned.' All the patients urged him not to ruin himself but he insisted that he could hear and speak just like other people. And he reported to this effect at the doctor's visit next morning."

"He kept it up for quite a long time," remarked a man, who was pretending to have one leg four inches shorter than the other. "Not like that chap who shammed a stroke. All they had to do was give him three doses of quinine, one enema and a day's fasting. He confessed and by the time they started pumping out his stomach there wasn't a trace left of his stroke. The chap who held out longest of all was the one who had been bitten by a mad dog. He bit, he howled – it's true he could do it splendidly – but he just couldn't manage to foam at the mouth. We did our best to help him. Several times we tickled him for a whole hour before the doctor's visit until he had convulsions and got blue all over, but the foam wouldn't come and didn't in fact come at all. It was really terrifying. When he gave in one morning at the doctor's visit we were quite sorry for him. He stood by his bed erect as a candle, saluted and said: 'Humbly report, sir, the dog I was bitten by may not have been mad after all.' The doctor gave him such a queer look that he began to tremble all over and went on: 'Humbly report, sir, I wasn't bitten by a dog at all. It was I who bit myself in the arm.' After that confession they put him under investigation for self-mutilation on the charge that he had tried to bite off his arm to get out of going to the front." (63-64).¹¹⁸

The stories from the sanitarium are marked by grotesque imagery and absurd scenarios. They differ from the jail stories not only in length and degree of disgusting detail, but also in subject-matter. In jail, where everyone was incarcerated only briefly and largely by chance, each man

¹¹⁸ "Byl zde dokonce jeden hluchoněmý, čtrnáct dní ho balili každou půl hodiny do prostěradla namočeného ve studené vodě, každý den mu dávali klystýr a pumpovali žaludek. Už všichni sanitáři mysleli, že to vyhrál a že půjde domů, když mu tu předepsal doktor něco pro dávení. Mohlo ho to ztrhat, a tu on zmalomyslněl. 'Nemohu,' povídá, 'déle dělat hluchoněmého, vrátila se mně řeč i sluch.' Marodi všichni mu domlouvali, aby se nehubil, ale on stál na svém, že slyší a mluví jako ostatní. A také to tak i hlásil ráno při vizitě."

'Držel se dost dlouho,' poznamenal muž, simulující, že má jednu nohu kratší o celý decimetr, 'ne jako ten, co simuloval, že ho ranila mrtvice. Stačily tři chininy, jeden klystýr a jednodenní půst. Přiznal se, a než došlo k pumpování žaludku, nebylo po mrtvici ani památky. Nejdéle se zde držel ten, co byl pokousán vzteklým psem. Kousal, vyl, to je pravda, to uměl znamenitě, ale nemoh nijak dostat dohromady tu pěnu u huby. Pomáhali jsme mu, jak jsme mohli. Lechtali jsme ho kolikrát po celou hodinu do vizity, až dostal křeče a zmodral nám, ale pěna u huby se nedostavovala a také nedostavila. Bylo to něco hrozného. Když se vzdával takhle ráno při vizitě, tak nám ho bylo líto. Postavil se u postele jako svíčka, zasalutoval a řekl: 'Poslušně hlásím, pane obrarct, že asi ten pes, který mne kous, nebyl vzteklej.' Obrarct se na něho podíval tak nějak divně, že pokousaný se počal třást na celém těle a pokračoval: 'Poslušně hlásím, pane obrarct, že mne vůbec žádnéj pes nekous, to jsem se já sám kous do ruky.' Po tom přiznání ho vyšetřovali pro sebezohavení, že si chtěl ukousnout ruku, aby nemusel do pole." (I:73-74).

told the simple story of his own arrest. In the hospital, in contrast, each patient stays as long as possible. Everyone who passes through those doors does so intentionally and brings the story of what he did to gain entry. Moreover, the story necessarily develops the longer he stays. Those admitted into this hospital end up forming an exclusive society which is perpetuated when they tell their own stories and the stories of previous patients.

Here the social bond is forged not only through telling the stories but participating in them as well. As the examples cited above illustrate, a spirit of camaraderie reigns in the sick bay which we will also see in the army. The patients are united in their goal of avoiding military service, and they help each other through verbal encouragement and whatever physical means they have at their disposal. The story of the man pretending to be deaf and dumb shows how the nurses also sympathize with the patients' desire to avoid service, even if they stop short of actually helping. So, when these malingerers tell the stories of the former patients, it is with an air of admiration. Their antics buy them entry into this space, and then are preserved in an ironic form of institutional memory through storytelling. These stories subvert typical ideas about war heroism. Here, the heroes are not the men who valiantly go to war, but those who endure physical harm and psychological distress, both self-imposed and externally applied, to avoid the battlefield. A mere description of this phenomenon provided by the narrator would be enough to illustrate this harmful reaction to the outbreak of war. But the commentary on camaraderie and heroism, ideals which are conventionally associated with military service, comes out through the malingerers' storytelling. Embedded in this reversal of norms is Hašek's meta-commentary: the association of those values with military service is a dangerous and destructive myth.

Indeed, the highest density of communal storytelling scenes occurs during Švejk's military service. This is to be expected, as the portion of the novel that deals with Švejk's

civilian life is only the first hundred out of approximately 750 pages of text. And yet, the chapters devoted to military life are largely taken up with scenes that lack action: no battles, no occupations of cities, not even any military exercises. What we get instead is an epic of waiting. Volume two, “At the Front,” is almost exclusively taken up with the soldiers’ transport. More than two hundred pages of text detail the soldiers’ time on trains or in camp, and there is very little to do in these spaces except wait for orders and information. What they mostly do is tell each other stories. In this way Hašek achieves an incredible act of narrative misdirection. Although these chapters depict a small group of men sitting still, doing nothing physical, these scenes feel dynamic, full of conflict and surprise. Like *The Decameron*, the action is almost entirely confined to the stories the men tell.

In this context, Švejk’s storytelling is typical. Other major characters who tell stories include the one-year volunteer Marek, the insatiable Baloun whose stories are invariably about food, and Vodička the sapper.¹¹⁹ Whenever Švejk ventures away from his company, for example in the Budějovice anabasis chapter, he meets enthusiastic civilian storytellers. Some storytellers relate anecdotes from their own past, some repeat stories about people they’ve known, and some do both. We may consider figures from these stories to be characters in the novel; after all, most of them have names and biographies and many are the subjects of Lada’s illustrations. In that case, *Osudy* has an even longer *dramatis personae* than that other sprawling military novel, *War and Peace*.

The sapper Vodička is reputed to have been one of Hašek’s favorite characters. Hašek’s clerk Kliment Štěpánek recalls that while dictating scenes involving Vodička, Hašek would sometimes laugh so hard, he needed to take a break and collect himself (18). Hašek even offered

¹¹⁹ A sapper is a soldier responsible for construction work, like laying tracks and building trenches.

to play the role of Vodička in Karel Noll's stage adaptation of *Osudy* (Parrott, *Bad Bohemian* 258). Our framework for the function of storytelling in the novel illuminates why Vodička was, for Hašek, an exemplary character. Vodička is a friend of Švejk's from Prague; they reconnect in Királyhida (German: Bruckneudorf, a town in eastern Austria). The background of their relationship is never explained, but they easily slide into a familiar routine of telling stories, including reminiscences of their shared past and anecdotes from their experiences in the war. In addition to being an enthusiastic storyteller, Vodička is also a striking character, behaving audaciously in the stories he tells and in the adventure he embarks on with Švejk in Királyhida. Indeed, most of Vodička's stories are about his own antics, which are marked by violence, alcohol, sex and general hooliganism. Like Marek, Vodička shares two activities with Švejk: mischief-making and telling stories about mischief-making.

In a show of loyalty, Vodička volunteers to accompany Švejk on his way to perform a delicate task for Lieutenant Lukáš: delivering a letter of proposition to another man's wife. On the way, Vodička proves his bona fides with stories of his own fearlessness in the face of danger. As they approach the address, Švejk tries to subdue his friend, reminding him that this should be a more discreet undertaking than the barroom brawls of Vodička's stories. Švejk's approach to Vodička is evidence of his ability to adopt different modes of behavior to suit the task at hand. When paired with Vodička, it is advantageous for Švejk to exercise control and decorum. Although the two are peers, Švejk becomes the Sancho Panza to Vodička's Quixote.

"Please consider carefully that we mustn't make any scandal. I'm responsible for this. Besides, it's a question of a lady."

"I'll sock the lady one as well, Švejk. It makes no difference to me. You still don't know old Vodička. Once in Záběhlce in The Island of Roses some bitch didn't want to dance with me because I had a swollen jaw, she said. It's true that I did have a swollen jaw, because I'd just come there from a dance-party in Hostivař, but just imagine getting an

insult of that kind from that whore. ‘Well, here’s one for you too, noble lady,’ I said, ‘so that you shan’t complain.’

“When I socked her one she pulled down the whole table in the garden with all the glasses where she was sitting with her papa and mamma and two brothers. But I wasn’t afraid of the whole Island of Roses; I had friends there from Vršovice and they helped me. We beat up about five families, children as well. It must have been hard all the long way to Michle and after that it was in the newspapers too about that garden party, which was held by a charity association of the citizens of some town or other. And so, as I say, as other people have helped me, so I always help any friend of mine if anything should happen to him. I won’t desert you, God help me, I won’t. You don’t know these Hungarian bastards... You can’t surely push me off when we’re seeing each other again after so many years and in circumstances like this into the bargain” (365).¹²⁰

Predictably, the errand goes awry. Lukáš’s rival, the husband of the woman he desires, intercepts his letter, and pugnacious Vodička does nothing to deescalate the situation. Švejk tries to protect Lukáš by claiming authorship of the letter, and the husband attacks him. In the ensuing brawl, Vodička displays the violent and confrontational nature which his stories illustrate. The tussle spirals when Švejk and Vodička are thrown into the street: “old Sapper Vodička fought like a lion against some Honvéds and Honvéd hussars who had rallied to their fellow-countryman [...] At his side there fought several Czech soldiers from various regiments who were just passing by in the street” (370).¹²¹

¹²⁰ ‘Rozvaž si jenom to, že nesmíme udělat žádnéj skandál. Já jsem za to zodpovědněj. Jedná se přece vo ženskou.’

‘Plácnu taky ženskou, Švejku, mně je to jedno, to ještě neznáš starýho Vodičku. Jednou v Záběhlicích na Růžovým ostrově nechtěla se mnou jít jedna taková maškara tančit, že prej mám voteklou hubu. Měl jsem pravda hubu vopuchlou, poněvadž jsem právě přišel z jedný taneční zábavy v Hostivaři, ale považ si tu urážku vod tý běhny. ‘Tak tu máte taky jednu, velectěná slečno,’ řek jsem, ‘aby vám to nebylo líto.’ Jak jsem jí tu jednu utrh, povalila celej stůl na zahradě i se sklenicema, za kterým seděla s tatínkem a s maminkou a s dvěma bratry. Ale nebál jsem se celýho Růžovýho ostrova. Byli tam známí z Vršovic a ty mně pomohli. Ztrískali jsme asi pět rodin i s dětma. Muselo to bejt slyšet až do Michle a potom to taky bylo v novinách o tej zahradní zábavě toho dobročinnýho spolku nějakých rodáků nějakýho města. A proto jak říkám, jak mně 328 jiní pomohli, tak i já vždycky každému kamarádovi pomůžu, když má k něčemu dojít. Za živýho boha se vod tebe nehnu. Ty Maďary neznáš... To mně přece nemůžeš udělat, abys mě vod sebe vodstrkoval, když se vidíme po tolika létech, a ještě za jakejch okolností!’” (II:393).

¹²¹ “starý sapér Vodička jako lev proti několika honvédům a honvéd-husarům, kteří se zastali svého krajana. [...] Jemu po boku bojovalo několik českých vojáků od různých regimentů, kteří právě šli ulicí” (II:399). Honvéds are soldiers in the Hungarian Imperial Army.

There is a strong implication that, although Vodička invited himself along on this errand, in fact Švejk master-minded the ensuing debacle for the pure joy of troublemaking. The question of Švejk's intentionality, however, does not affect our appraisal of the role of storytelling. In this episode, Hašek uses storytelling to develop the character of Vodička, his relationship with Švejk, and the inevitable outcome of their sally. These stories – vulgar, obscene and violent – are also a humor bonanza. Vodička's storytelling may have the same effect on the reader that they had on Hašek: making us laugh to the point of distraction. Hilarity is an end in itself, but here, it also masks Hašek's subtle narrative achievement. Storytelling is how Švejk and Vodička relate to each other, and it foreshadows how the adventure in Kráľyhida will turn out. This episode is sure to make it into their respective repertoires.

We have seen that quite a few characters are accomplished storytellers, and that the habit of storytelling serves to unite rather than separate. Still, in a world full of storytellers, Švejk is exceptional. On the one hand, this is a result of the particularities of his storytelling, including his lies, aphorisms and unexpected morals. On the other hand, it's the sheer quantity of his tales. The reader is treated to more of Švejk's stories than anyone else's for the simple reason that we travel with him for the greater part of the novel.

And yet, there is an important but overlooked storyteller who occupies even more pages than Švejk: the narrator. The novel's narrator is an enigmatic presence. He generally appears as a partially omniscient third-person narrator (limited insofar as Švejk largely lacks an internal monologue). His Czech is standard, not vernacular, although his vocabulary includes some "obscene" descriptors. Most interestingly, on a few occasions, only about five in the entire novel, he lapses into the first-person. In one such instance, during a meditation on officers' orderlies, he says "U 91. pluku znal jsem jich několik" ["In the 91st regiment I knew a few of them" (I:179)]

This reveals two important facts. First, past-tense verbs have a gender marker in Czech, so the phrase “znal jsem” [“I knew”] establishes that the narrator is male. Second, he has military experience. Like Švejk, and Hašek, the narrator served in the 91st regiment.

The most puzzling instance of first-person narration occurs in the chapter “Švejk in a Transport of Russian Prisoners,” after the hero has dressed himself in a Russian uniform. While Major Wolf, the Austrian officer interrogating Švejk, tries to divine his intentions, the narrator hints at the establishment of the Czechoslovak Legions:

It had been ascertained that some deserters from Czech regiments, forgetting their oath, were joining the ranks of the Russian army and were now working for the enemy, affording him above all useful espionage services.

The Austrian Ministry of the Interior was still in the dark about whether a military organization of Czech deserters on the Russian front existed or not. Nothing definite was yet known about revolutionary organizations abroad and it was only in August that the battalion commanders on the line Sokal-Milijatin-Bubnów received the confidential report that the former Austrian professor Masaryk had fled abroad, where he was carrying out propaganda against Austria. A stupid ass from the division appended to it the following order: “If captured he should at once be brought to division staff!”

I hereby bring this to the attention of President Masaryk, so that he may know what pitfalls and traps were laid for him between Sokal, Milijatin and Bubnów. (679-680)

Parrott notes that the final paragraph, which he calls a “‘personal message’ from Hašek to President Masaryk” (680) is omitted in most editions. Indeed, it does not appear in the 1953 Státní nakladatelství [State Publishing House] edition which is considered definitive. But Parrott is wrong to attribute this note to the author. Strictly speaking, “the author” appears in connection only with the foreword and the epilogue. This first-person pronoun here refers expressly to the narrator. Still, the narration is intentionally ambiguous on multiple levels. First of all, “Czech regiments, forgetting their oath [...] joining the ranks of the Russian army and [...] working for the enemy” refers to the nucleus of the Czechoslovak Legions. Yet it simultaneously evokes Hašek’s “treasonous” service in the Red Army. This implies that valor and villainy are assigned

arbitrarily, an idea further supported by the unusual characterization of Masaryk as a “former Austrian professor.”

The reader is justifiably tempted to conflate the author with the narrator. But the narrator of *Osudy* is not exactly a dramatized version of the author, as for example, the narrator of *Bugulma Tales* is. Nor is he developed enough as an autonomous character to be considered a posited author in the sense Bakhtin uses the term, referring to works like Pushkin’s *Tales of Belkin*.¹²² This figure, lacking a name and biography, is rather a man without qualities. He does however have opinions, passing judgment on the hypocrisies of the Austrian state and war machine. He parrots and parodies the rhetoric of military history, a device I will unpack in the subsequent chapter. Because the slips into the first person are infrequent and not patterned, they are probably less intentional than his far more common habit of storytelling. This may seem self-evident; all narrators are by definition storytellers. But for this narrator, the scope is not limited to the story of *Osudy dobrého vojáka Švejka za světové války*. His chief function is to fill in sections of narrative and explanation that advance the plot of the novel. But remarkably, like Švejk and the other characters who engage in storytelling, the narrator sometimes tells stories that are not apropos to the plot. They are illustrative, not narrative.

This tendency is not unique to Hašek. Seymour Chatman points out, “Narrators of novels routinely digress to describe or argue” (10). Chatman argues that while narrative tends to structurally predominate in novelistic discourse, argumentation and description are equally important text-types; all three coexist and occasionally operate at each other’s service. While narrator of *Osudy* consistently provides narrative text to move the plot along, he often represents a critical viewpoint through argumentative commentary. His descriptions, especially of

¹²² A nuanced conception of a comprehensive posited author-figure may, however, be a useful approach to Hašek’s oeuvre.

characters, often have far greater detail than is necessary to construct the scenario, fleshing out new characters even when they do not remain long in the action. Colonel Kraus, for example, is a very minor character. He is implicated in a single episode that lasts about fifteen pages of text and he himself is present for only the final five pages of that section. Kraus is the owner of a dog that Švejk has had stolen and presented to Lieutenant Lukáš, the source of the example of vernacular Czech cited earlier. Lukáš, unaware that he is walking a purloined pet, is apprehended and strongly reprimanded by Kraus. After this, Kraus is never mentioned again. And yet, the narrator spends two and a half pages developing his character through small anecdotes and descriptive declarations. “Colonel Bedřich Kraus, who bore the additional title of von Zillergut after some village in Salzburg region which his ancestors had completely ransacked already in the eighteenth century, was a most venerable nitwit.”¹²³ This sentence contains as much information as the narrator’s introduction of Švejk, “who had left military service years before, after having been finally certified by an army medical board as an imbecile, and now lived by selling dogs – ugly, mongrel monstrosities whose pedigrees he forged” (3). We further learn that Colonel Kraus “had lost half his left ear, which had been cut off in his youth by a rival in a fight for the pure purposes of establishing the fact that Bedřich Kraus von Zillergut was a complete moron” (202).¹²⁴ None of these details are the least bit relevant to the episode at hand, except perhaps that Lukáš appears even more foolish when he is reprimanded by such a disreputable figure. Information about Kraus’ backstory and character do nothing to advance the plot even of this short, contained episode. The narrator is just being garrulous.

¹²³ “Plukovník Bedřich Kraus, mající též přídomek von Zillergut, po nějaké vesničce v Solnohradech, kterou jeho předkové prožrali již ve století osmnáctém, byl úctyhodným pitomcem” (I:220).

¹²⁴ “Scházela mu polovička levého ucha, kterou mu usekl jeho protivník za mládí v souboji kvůli prostému konstatování pravdy, že Bedřich Kraus von Zillergut je prapitomý chlap” (I:221-222).

In the chapter “Švejk Batman to Lieutenant Lukáš,” the narrator comments at length on the institution of officers’ attendants. He references Alexander the Great, the sixteenth century Spanish general the Duke of Almagro, and Don Quixote, and proposes a theory about slave mentality that even Nietzsche would find convincing. And in the very middle, he digresses to tell this story:

I once saw a captured batman who had gone on foot with others from Dubno to Darnica beyond Kiev. Besides his own haversack he had with him the haversack of his superior officer who had escaped capture, five handcases of different shape and size, two blankets and a pillow, apart from another piece of luggage which he carried on his head. He complained that the Cossacks had stolen two of his cases.

I shall never forget that man who dragged himself in this way across the whole of Ukraine. He was a walking removal van, and I can never understand how he was able to carry off this luggage and drag it for so many hundreds of kilometres and then go with it as far as Tashkent, look after it and die of spotted typhus on it in a prison camp. (164-5)¹²⁵

Again, we may refer to Hašek’s biography for some explanation, as the narrator once more uses first-person, and the author also spent time in a typhus-stricken Ukrainian prison camp (Parrott, *Bad Bohemian* 162). But as with Švejk’s stories, it makes little difference whether the narrator is improvising or remembering, because the important effect is stylistic. The inclusion of this story gives the narrator’s discourse an oral quality, making it at once concrete, relatable, and dynamic. Just at the moment when the narration is at risk of becoming overly literary or even scholarly, a pub story is inserted – beyond the conventional bounds of dialogue – as a sort of narrative leavening agent. The tone once again becomes conversational, the text vital. The narrator

¹²⁵ “Viděl jsem jednoho zajatého důstojnického sluhu, který od Dubna šel s druhými pěšky až do Dárnice za Kyjevem. Měl s sebou kromě svého baťochu a baťochu svého důstojníka, který před zajetím utekl, ještě pět ručních kufříků různého tvaru, dvě pokrývky a polštář, kromě nějakého zavazadla, které nesl na hlavě. Stěžoval si, že mu kozáci dva kufry ukradli. Nikdy nezapomenu toho člověka, který se tak mořil s tím celou Ukrajinou. Byl to živý špeditérský vůz a nemohu si vysvětlit, jak to mohl unést a táhnout kolik set kilometrů a potom jeti s tím až do Taškentu, opatrovat to a umřít na svých zavazadlech na skvrnitý tyf v zajateckém táboře” (II:181).

transgresses his literary boundaries and by doing so, makes the reader an active participant in the discourse.

Here we might advance and clarify Frynta's insights concerning the narrator. Like me, Frynta sees an autobiographical dimension to the narrator, but he focuses on Hašek's journalistic experience. Frynta likens the narrator to a reporter whose text is purely utilitarian; he merely supplies the information necessary to move the story along. This supports Frynta's overall argument that the book is primarily a collage of different stories and styles. The narrator's voice, he writes "obviously does not make any demands on the reader's attention" (80). But as I have shown, the reader is greatly rewarded for paying attention to the narrator's voice. Alternating between humor and righteous indignation, the narrator's voice is intimate with the reader, inviting and never condescending. It's the voice of a person, a man, with military experience and a flair for storytelling. Maybe he doesn't have a definite biography, but then again, neither does Švejk. Among characters in the novel, storytelling establishes equality and fraternity. Through his storytelling, the narrator forges the same bond with the reader.

4. Conclusion

The narrator's storytelling habits complicate the division between the embedded stories and the framing narrative. His digressions infuse the narration itself with dynamism, turning the text into a dialogue, the reader into an active listener. Bakhtin writes, "Authorial speech, the speeches of narrators, inserted genres, the speech of characters are merely those fundamental compositional unities with whose help heteroglossia can enter the novel" (263). This narrator's voice whispers directly into the reader's ear. Just as the prisoners, malingerers and soldiers bond through storytelling, so does the reader become the narrator's interlocutor, co-conspirator, and

friend. Moreover, the narrator occupies an ambiguous position between the characters and the author, and the author as such is not static. Volume one begins with a preface attributed to “The Author” and ends with a meta-literary epilogue signed “Jaroslav Hašek.” Where, then, is the boundary between character and creator, between subject and object? In fact, the novel detonates these distinctions by endowing otherwise disempowered figures with the capacity of authorship.

With its hundreds of fleeting characters, discursive conflicts, and garrulous narrator, the novel cumulatively puts forward an entire universe of storytelling, one which its pages can barely contain. The narrated world of the novel, Prague and the Austrian army at the start of World War One, is strictly codified with regards to communication and self-expression. When figures on the periphery of this society seek an escape, they find it in a world of their own making. The parallel world of storytelling is polyphonic and encompasses endless possibilities. The real world of the novel is a world of stories. Once we realize this, we understand the extent to which storytellers are the architects of this world. The lower-class characters who populate *Osudy* are involuntarily conscripted and incarcerated by the state authorities that order their lives, but storytelling remains a realm where they can wander. The novel thus argues for the liberating power of authorship, a creative drive which is indestructible.

CHAPTER THREE

History as Fodder, or, You Can't Spell Slaughter Without Laughter

Study the historian before you begin to study the facts. – E. H. Carr

Historiography is literary criticism practiced by other means. – Gary Saul Morson

1. Introduction

Threaded throughout *The Fates of the Good Soldier Švejk in the World War* are parodies of non-fiction texts, such as journalism and propaganda, and the two are intentionally sometimes indistinguishable. As discussed in the previous chapter, the novel is replete with autobiographical references and many characters are based on people Hašek encountered in his service. This pastiche of different genres is no coincidence, because the entire novel advances the argument that the line between fiction and non-fiction is far from definite, and that moreover, anything purporting to be non-fiction should immediately trigger our skepticism. Fiction, the novel argues, is at least honest about its untruthfulness.

The type of non-fiction that features most prominently is history, as Hašek infuses his novel with elements of historical discourse in order to reveal the fictive components that underlie the discipline. History's unspoken artifice, Hašek argues, distracts us from questions about the historian's agenda and investment in state power. In the world of the novel, oral storytelling is the narrative form of choice for the powerless, while historiography is associated with the legitimation and maintenance of authority. Historiography in this novel is associated with two types of manipulation: manipulation of historical data, and, more dangerously, manipulation of the reading public. Throughout the novel Hašek experiments with various means of fictionalizing historiography and proposes this subversive activity as an empowering creative method of

reclaiming critical reasoning for writer and reader alike. Whereas history tends to deceive and hence disempower the reader, the relationship between novelist and fiction-reader, specifically between Hašek and the reader of *Osudy*, is mutually constitutive and empowering.

On the relationship between history and fiction as literary genres, Hayden White writes:

It is sometimes said that the aim of the historian is to explain the past by “finding,” “identifying,” or “uncovering” the “stories” that lie buried in chronicles; and that the difference between “history” and “fiction” resides in the fact that the historian “finds” his stories, whereas the fiction writer “invents” his. This conception of the historian’s task, however, obscures the extent to which “invention” also plays a part in the historian’s operations. The same event can serve as a different kind of element of many different historical stories, depending on the role it is assigned in a specific motific characterization of the set to which it belongs. The death of the king may be a beginning, an ending, or simply a transitional event in three different stories. In the chronicle, this event is simply “there” as an element of a series; it does not “function” as a story element. The historian arranges the events in the chronicle into a hierarchy of significance by assigning events different functions as story elements in such a way as to disclose the formal coherence of the whole set of events considered as a comprehensible process with a discernible beginning, middle, and end. (White 1973, 6-7)

The historian’s task, then, is not to accurately record events of the past, but to make a convincing argument about those events by organizing and presenting chosen elements in the form of a coherent narrative. E.H. Carr, in the lecture series *What is History?*, also stresses the historian’s selection of elements out of a set of historical data, a process which is necessarily interpretative. He points out that by the end of the eighteenth century, revolutionary advances in science spurred historians to seek more rigorous methodology, hence the reconceiving of history from a literary genre to a social science (Carr, 50). But the idea that at the core of history is a set of facts independent from human interpretation is, according to Carr, a “preposterous fallacy” (6).

Of course, this fallacy was a central concern not only for philosophers of history but also modernist fiction writers like Hašek. While epic poems had traditionally been considered ancient works of history, it was in the Romantic era that

the term “literature” became more closely associated with poetry, or at least with poetic and figurative writing, and [...] took on the meaning of a corpus of privileged or sacred texts, a treasure in which value, truth, and beauty had been piously stored, and which could be opposed to the empirical world of historical reality and, even, to some extent, to historiography as the faithful record of that reality. (Grossman, 5)

When it comes to non-fiction writing, a distinction must be made here between “truth,” which reflects a value judgment or moral system, and “fact,” which does not. Carr writes that the concept of truth “straddles the world of fact and the world of value and is made up of elements of both” (125). Hašek’s critique of historiography, however, stems from his conviction that the discourse of history is inevitably shaped not by a will to truth but a will to power.

Hašek came of age in an era following a great public debate about the limits of the Romanticist historical imagination for Czech culture: the “spor o rukopisy” [“debate about manuscripts”] referenced in the introduction to this dissertation. When first published in 1817 and 1818, Hanka’s and Linda’s forgeries were believed to be medieval manuscripts and embraced as cornerstones of Czech culture. The manuscripts were a product of the National Awakening, the multi-faceted project anchored by Romantic notions of nationhood that sought simultaneously to celebrate and legitimize Czech culture through language and literature both new and old. Although questions of the manuscripts’ authenticity had been raised from their first appearance, they were not definitively debunked until 1883, the year of Hašek’s birth, in the journal *Athenaeum* under the editorial direction of then-sociology professor Masaryk. Special issues of *Athenaeum* featured articles on the manuscripts by experts in linguistics, literary aesthetics, chemistry and paleography, the study of ancient and historical handwriting. Masaryk was primarily interested in establishing empirical reasoning as the bedrock of all Czech scholarship, including studies of literature and history, believing that the uncritical popularity of

these fraudulent manuscripts was a national embarrassment.¹²⁶ Through their handling of the manuscript debate, Masaryk and his collaborators sought to demonstrate that rigorous work, not fabricated tradition, could be the bedrock of Czech national identity. Although he initially faced intense opprobrium for these efforts, only a few years later in 1891 Masaryk was elected to his first term in the imperial Reichsrat.

By the time Hašek began his writing career, the manuscript controversy was long since settled. Masaryk, meanwhile, had moved entirely from academics into politics as the leader of the influential Realist Party. After the outbreak of the World War, though, as in the time of the National Awakening, history was deployed in an effort to legitimize the nation and inspire its defenders. From units of the Czechoslovak Legions named after medieval Hussite warriors to the casting of the Siberian uprising as an “anabasis,” a rhetorical gesture I treat at length in this chapter, historical signifiers were often put to the service of galvanizing, and later memorializing, the war effort. *Osudy* advances a skeptical attitude towards history not as a statement about the epistemological limitations of the genre but rather in response to the use of historical material for propagandistic purposes. For this reason, Hašek targets historical narrative wherein factual material is deceptively subordinated to a political or ideological agenda.¹²⁷

In this chapter, I will discuss the irreverent treatment of history that runs throughout the novel, focusing on three different aspects which expose the formal underpinnings of historical

¹²⁶ Thereafter, the manuscripts have enjoyed a reappraisal as creative works in their own right. Roman Jakobson argued that “the manuscripts were the highest achievement of Czech verbal art during the first quarter of the nineteenth century” (“In Memory of V.V. Hanka,” 403). In 2010 one of the premier Czech publishing houses, Host, brought out a complete annotated edition of the texts and in 2018, Michigan Slavic Publications released a new English translation by David Cooper.

¹²⁷ In *Metahistory*, Hayden White identifies three primary strategies of explanation employed by historians: formal argument, emplotment, and ideological implication. *Osudy* betrays Hašek’s perceptive view of the political uses of history as a literary genre, but his thinking was not as nuanced or rigorously theoretical as White’s.

discourse. First, I will consider the narrator's commentary on historical concepts and figures as a gesture of demystification. The narrator mixes historical rhetoric with invented fictional elements, revealing the porousness and similarity of the two genres. Next, I will analyze the chapter "Švejk's Budějovice Anabasis" in the context of Xenophon's *Anabasis*, a work of classical Greek history, as well as the Czechoslovak Legions' "Siberian anabasis." I argue that Hašek uses parodic techniques to subtly ridicule, on the one hand, the memorialization of the Legions and on the other hand, the anabasis as both a military strategy and a literary genre.

Finally, I will turn my attention to the character of Marek, a working-class volunteer soldier who, towards the end of the novel, writes an audacious and unhinged history of his battalion. Hašek attributes to Marek some salient episodes from his own autobiography, and this urges us to pay special attention to the character's writing career. Marek's satirical and irreverent approach to his writing career is a *mise en abyme* for the novel's attack on the concept of military heroism and the methods of perpetuating this destructive myth, and it's the key to Hašek's critique of historiography. In these three ways, *inter alia*, the novel exposes and experiments with history's fundamental manipulability, leading the reader to question the historian's presumed authority, and think about the ways the discourse of history can be weaponized as a tool of establishing and maintaining power. "Historiography," as Gary Saul Morson points out, "is literary criticism practiced by other means." According to Hašek, it's propaganda by another name.

As an entryway into Hašek's demystification of historical figures, I will begin with the representation of Field Marshal Radetzky. By demystification, I mean Hašek's irreverent treatment of typically vaunted people and concepts, by which the author reveals the manipulations required to make such privileging seem the natural order of things. Hašek

accomplishes this by, on the one hand, drawing out the fictive or exaggerated elements in familiar cultural myths and, on the other hand, emphasizing elements of chance and the human nature of larger-than-life figures from history. Joseph Radetzky von Radetz (1766-1858), better known as Marshal Radetzky, is a choice example because Švejk, the narrator, and minor characters representing Austrian imperial interests all comment on him in telling ways. Radetzky was the most celebrated Austrian military leader of his era, embraced popularly and officially. Over the course of his 72-year military career, Radetzky played a crucial role in defeating Napoleon at the Battle of Leipzig in 1813, and in suppressing the 1848 revolution in the Lombardy region of Italy (Cole, 65-66). Towards the end of his life and after his death, Radetzky was celebrated throughout the Austrian Empire with monuments, commemorative literature, music (namely Strauss' Radetzky March), and veterans' associations named in his honor. Because Radetzky was born in the Bohemian town of Tábor, and hence could claim Czech "nationality," the Viennese court used him to signify the compatibility of national identity and imperial loyalty. In Prague, an enormous statue of Radetzky was erected in the year of his death on the main square of the Malá strana [Lesser quarter], in view of Prague Castle and along the traditional coronation route; the Emperor Franz Joseph attended the unveiling (Cole, 79). The towering monument showed Radetzky standing on a shield held up by his troops, each representing a different nationality within the empire, and had a dual-language inscription: "To Field-Marshal Joseph Count Radetzky von Radetz, the leader of the brave imperial royal army in Italy 1848–1849" in German on the front of the plinth, Czech on the back (Cole, 78).¹²⁸

¹²⁸ The monument was taken down in 1928 and transferred to the Lapidarium at Prague's Exhibition Grounds, where it can be seen today. One can't help but be reminded of the massive Stalin Monument that once towered over Prague which depicted the Communist leader flanked by rows of Czech and Soviet citizens.

But in Bohemia, the cult of Radetzky may have been problematic from the start. While the German-speaking Prague bourgeoisie and some members of the Bohemian nobility embraced the idea of Radetzky's dual national-imperial identity, he was looked on with suspicion by Czech nationalists and the Prague working class, especially who had sympathized with the revolutions of 1848. The first of many references to Radetzky in *Osudy* is, in fact, a reference to the Malá strana monument. Soon after receiving his call-up papers, Švejk is placed under arrest by military authorities on suspicion of malingering. As two soldiers escort him to the garrison jail, they pass by the statue of Radetzky when Švejk lets out his war cry: "Na Bělehrad, na Bělehrad!" ["To Belgrade! To Belgrade!"]. The narrator informs us: "And Marshal Radetzky looked dreamily down from his monument at the good soldier Švejk, as, limping on his old crutches, he slowly disappeared into the distance with his recruit's flowers in his button-hole" (61).¹²⁹ A crowd gathers to watch Švejk's strange spectacle: a physically crippled recruit expressing outsized enthusiasm through his speech, dress and comportment. The statue, vivified by the narrator, becomes an all-seeing presence, a stone monument to the imperial military power by whose command Švejk is both conscripted and arrested. The statue of Radetzky is a symbol of the state itself: all-knowing and all-powerful, yet literally and figuratively immovable. Not quite a stone guest, Radetzky is only partially animated, endowed with the ability to merely perceive the scene unfolding at his plinth. What's more, he's not entirely engaged with the events unfolding in front of him. He watches "snivě" ("dreamily" or "pensively"), as if Švejk's ordeal only partially distracts him from his train of thought, perhaps having to do with his own imperial victories over the republicans in 1848. Having achieved monumental status, Radetzky is no

¹²⁹ "A maršálek Radecký snivě se díval ze svého pomníku za vzdalujícím se dobrým vojákem Švejkem s rekrutskou kytkou na kabátě, kulhajícím na starých berlích" (I: 71).

longer obligated to intervene in Czech politics or imperial conflicts. Yet he remains a larger-than-life figure in the physical landscape of Prague, and the historical imagination.

Later, Švejk and other characters will invoke Radetzky as a model warrior. In the sanatorium hut of the garrison prison, an optimistic young army doctor urges the recruits to “be unconquerable warriors, mindful of the glory of Radetzky and Prince Eugène of Savoy.”¹³⁰ Afterwards a more cynical senior doctor, who suspects all the patients of malingering, advises him, “not even Radetzky or your Prince Eugène of Savoy could make soldiers out of bastards like them” (78).¹³¹ The doctors’ conversation pivots around the image of Radetzky and Prince Eugène in a way that illustrates the limits of the monarchy’s promotion of the Radetzky cult. The young doctor holds up these historical commanders as a shining example; the older, more experienced doctor feels that the recalcitrant Czech recruits would present a challenge to even Austria’s greatest military strategists.

Švejk, with his seemingly straightforward military enthusiasm, is a wholehearted adherent of the Radetzky cult. Švejk cites Radetzky’s example when the soldiers learn that Italy has entered the war.

“Now we need another Radetzky,” said Švejk. “He knew a thing or two about the Italian countryside... Once at home in the house where I used to live before, they caught a thief in the attic. When he got in the bastard noticed that the builders were just repairing the air-shaft, and so he tore himself away from his pursuers, knocked down the house-portress, and dropped down the ladder into the air-shaft, from which he couldn’t get out at all. But there wasn’t a single path papa Radetzky didn’t know. No one could catch him anywhere. There’s a book where it’s all written about that general, how he ran away from Santa Lucia, how the Italians ran away too and how he only realized that he had actually won on the second day when he couldn’t find any Italians and couldn’t see them through

¹³⁰ “budou nepřemožitelnými válečníky, pamětlivými na slávu Radeckého i prince Eugena Savojského” (I: 88). Prince Eugène was a diplomat and commander of the Austrian Imperial Army in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, whose popularity rivalled Radetzky’s (Cole, 85).

¹³¹ “Z těch lumpů by ani Radecký, ani ten váš princ Eugen Savojský nevychovali vojáky” (I: 89).

his telescope. And so he came back and occupied abandoned Santa Lucia. After that he was promoted marshal.” (514-515)¹³²

Švejk’s reference to Radetzky is characteristic of his style as a storyteller in that he compares a historical feat to a bit of neighborhood gossip, thus diminishing Radetzky’s prestige. Such satirical storytelling, to quote Hayden White, frustrates “normal expectations about the kinds of resolutions provided by stories cast in other modes” (8). Švejk also reimagines Radetzky’s victory in Italy, considered one of his greatest military achievements, to be a combination of dumb luck and opportunism. If Radetzky achieved the rank of marshal for “occupying” an abandoned city, then the entire system of military ranks becomes suspect.¹³³ This is exactly the kind of accidental, improvised victory Hašek satirized in the Bugulma Tales. But Švejk tells this story in a reverential tone, so that even while the content is irreverent, the form conforms to imperial usage.

When Švejk says of Radetzky’s occupation of Santa Lucia, “There’s a book where it’s all written about that general,” he gestures towards the flood of commemorative literature that followed the Italian campaign; the vast majority of it was in German but some was Czech (Cole, 85-86). Švejk, and indeed Hašek, probably knows about the existence of such books without having read one. The epithet “Father Radetzky” is common in the commemorative discourse, supposedly deriving from Radetzky’s reputation for having been on personal terms with his

¹³² “‘Ted’ bychom potřebovali novýho Radeckýho,’ prohodil Švejk, ‘ten už byl vobeznámenej s tamější krajinou... To u nás jednou v domě, ještě na starým bytě, chytli na půdě zloděje, a von si chlap povšimnul, když tam vlez, že právě zedníci vopravujou světlík, von se jim tedy vytrh, skolil domovnici a spustil se po lešení dolů do světlíku a vodtamtud vůbec nemoh ven. Ale náš tatíček Radecký věděl vo každěj cestě, nemohli ho nikde dostat. V jedný knížce vo tom jenerálovi bylo to celý popsáný, jak utek vod Santa Lucie a Taliáni jak taky utekli, a teprve jak druhej den vobjevil, že to vlastně vyhrál, když tam Taliány nenašel a neviděl dalekohledem, tak se vrátil a vobsadil vopuštěnou Santu Lucii. Vod tý doby byl menovanej maršálkem’” (III: 78-81).

¹³³ In fact, Radetzky was already field marshal when the Italian campaign began, but when it ended, he was initiated into the Order of the Golden Fleece, the Roman Catholic equivalent of knighthood.

troops.¹³⁴ In Czech depictions of Radetzky, this was sometimes softened even further through use of the diminutive “tatiček” [“little papa”] (Cole, 92). It is therefore not an example of Švejk’s typical eccentricity when he refers to the esteemed Field Marshal as “náš tatiček Radecký” [“our little papa Radetzky”]; rather he is regurgitating the official discourse, even if he invokes it in his typically subversive way. Elsewhere, Švejk will pronounce the marshal’s name in the colloquial way as “Radeckej” (III: 8). He thus imagines an intimate personal relationship with Radetzky, just as the imperial propaganda would encourage.

The longest and most significant discussion of Radetzky is introduced via a character whose appearance is brief but memorable: the senior chaplain Ibl. Sylvie Richterová points out that his bizarre “three-letter name, the mirror-image of the word *blb* [fool], functions like ‘zaum’ and thus confirms that for Hašek *blbost* [foolishness] is universal.”¹³⁵ The senior chaplain Ibl arrives to deliver a drumhead mass on the topic of death on the battlefield. To spur the troops towards this likely fate, he tells a rousing story in which Marshal Radetzky comforts a dying soldier. His oration includes the same themes and motifs of the earlier references to Radetzky and brings the official discourse to its most extreme point.

My dear men... imagine that it is the year 1848 and the Battle of Custozza has ended in victory, where after a fierce battle lasting ten hours the Italian King Albert has had to abandon the bloody battlefield to our warrior father, Marshal Radetzky, who in his eighty-fourth year has won such a glorious victory.

And lo, my dear men, the veteran marshal has stopped on the hill before conquered Custozza! Around him are his faithful generals. The whole circle are held spellbound by the solemnity of the moment, for at no distance at all from the marshal, my dear men, a warrior can be seen wrestling with death. With his limbs shattered on the field of glory the wounded standard-bearer, Hrt, senses that the marshal’s eyes are upon him. In a compulsive fit of enthusiasm the valiant wounded standard-bearer still clutches his Gold Medal firmly in his stiffening right hand. At the sight of the noble marshal the pulse of

¹³⁴ One military reform he implemented was the custom that senior officers refer to their colleagues as “*du*” [“*ty*”/ “*thou*”] rather than “*Sie*” [“*vy*”/“*you*”] (Cole, 66).

¹³⁵ “trojhláskové jméno zrcadlově symetrické ke slovu *blb* působí jako ‘zaum’ a dotvrzuje, že *blbost* je pro Haška čímsi univerzálním” (130).

his heart quickens again, the last vestige of his strength suffuses his paralysed body and in his dying moments he strives towards his marshal.

“Spare yourself these pains, my brave warrior!” the marshal calls to him, dismounting from his horse and about to shake his hand.

“It’s no good sir,” says the dying warrior. Both my arms are shot away. But one thing I beg of you. Please tell me the full truth: is it total victory?”

“Total, my dear boy,” says the marshal kindly. “It’s a pity that your joy is marred by your wounds.” (448-449)¹³⁶

In introducing the story, the narrator points out two things about Ibl’s oration. First, that Ibl delivers the same speech to multiple battalions, making it part of his repertoire. It’s the historiographical version of a pub story, in which the orator’s skills are put to explicitly propagandistic purposes. Ibl evokes the image of Radetzky in a systematic way in line with the empire’s use of the Radetzky cult. Švejk picks up on this propagandistic purpose, saying “It was very beautiful and edifying...He gave us such a wonderful example from the history of our army at the time when Radetzky was still serving in it” (448).¹³⁷ Second, Ibl has relied on the commemorative literature described above to craft his speech. The narrator explains, “it was

¹³⁶ “Milí vojáci...tak tedy si myslíte, že je rok osmačtyřicátý a že vítězstvím skončila bitva u Custozy, kde po desetihodinovém úporném boji musil italský král Albert přenechatí krvavé bojiště našemu otci vojínů, maršálkovi Radeckému, jenž v 84. roce svého života dobyl tak skvělého vítězství. A hle, vojáci milí! Na výšině před dobytou Custozzou zastavil se kmet vojevůdce. Kolem něho jeho věrní vojevůdcové. Vážnost okamžiku zmocnila se celého kroužku, neboť, vojáci, v nepatrné vzdálenosti od maršálka bylo pozorovat vojína, jenž se smrtí zápasil. S roztržitými údy na poli cti pociťoval zraněný praporečník Hrt, jak na něho hledí maršálek Radecký. Hodný zraněný praporečník ještě svíral v tuhnoucí pravici zlatou medaili v křečovitém nadšení. Při pohledu na vznešeného maršálka ožil se ještě jednou tepot jeho srdce a zchromlým tělem pronikl poslední zbytek síly a umírající pokoušel se s nadlidskou námahou plížit se vstříc svému maršálkovi.

‘Popřej si klidu, můj hodný vojíne,’ zvolal k němu maršálek, sestoupil s koně a chtěl mu podati ruku. ‘Nejde to, pane maršálku,’ řekl umírající voják, ‘mám obě ruce uraženy, ale o jedno prosím. Sdělte mně plnou pravdu: Je ta bitva zcela dobytá?’

‘Docela, milý brachu,’ pravil laskavě polní maršálek, ‘škoda, že tvá radost je zkalena tvým zraněním’” (III: 8-9).

¹³⁷ “Bylo to moc hezký a poučný...Von nám dával takovej pěkněj příklad z dějin naší armády, když ještě sloužil Radeckej” (III: 8).

noticeable that he had taken the material from the army almanacs” (447).¹³⁸ This detail opens up a meta-textual possibility for interpreting this section. In his book *Jaroslav Hašek: A Study of Švejk and the Short Stories* Cecil Parrott explains that Hašek borrowed the text of Ibl’s oration almost verbatim from a 1915 army almanac. The only change he made is the addition of the detail that the wounded soldier was unable to shake hands (155), a grotesque joke about the countless casualties of war which entirely subverts the standard discourse aimed at honoring soldiers’ sacrifices and valorizing the singular figure of Radetzky.

These references to Radetzky show the various ways military history operates within the novel: as an inspiring example, a disheartening reminder, a source of propaganda, a subject rife with parodic potential. Hašek’s demystification of military history is characteristic of his irreverent attitude towards traditionally inviolate figures and events. But that “tradition,” we come to understand, is an intentional construct, the origins of which can be traced and exposed as part of a complex mechanism of legitimizing and maintaining power. The official imperial use of Radetzky as a symbol for multi-national patriotism had been crystallized long before the First World War, although as I explained above, it may have been of limited efficacy in the Czech context. In *Osudy*, Hašek shows how the experience of the war contradicts the myth of war heroism, and reveals the unreliability of military history as its narrative vehicle.

Before moving on to my three main topics, I would like to return to the opening scene of the novel, this time focusing on the subversion of one of the backbones of historical discourse, causality:

“And so they’ve killed our Ferdinand,” said the charwoman to Mr Švejk, who had left military service years before, after having been finally certified by an army medical board as an imbecile, and now lived by selling dogs – ugly, mongrel monstrosities whose pedigrees he forged.

¹³⁸ “bylo znát, že bral materiál z vojenských kalendářů” (III: 8).

“Which Ferdinand, Mrs Müller?” he asked, going on with the massaging. I know two Ferdinands. One is a messenger at Průša’s, the chemist’s, and once by mistake he drank a bottle of hair oil there. And the other is Ferdinand Kokoška who collects dog manure. Neither of them is any loss.” (3-4)¹³⁹

In the previous chapter, I showed how Švejk and Mrs. Müller encode simultaneously their sense of national belonging and indifference to the assassination within the private sphere of intimate conversation. Another effect of this exchange is to upend the understanding of Franz Ferdinand’s assassination as the incident that sparked the World War. Not only is it reduced to petty gossip, but the entire incident is denied the centrality it is conventionally afforded in narratives of the war. Carr writes, “The study of history is a study of causes” (81). Švejk’s initial reaction denies any casual power at all: “Neither of them is any loss.” Once he acknowledges the identity of Ferdinand, however, Švejk engages in a bit of causal speculation to explain the assassination, saying, “And at Sarajevo into the bargain! That’s in Bosnia, Mrs Müller. I expect the Turks did it. You know, we never ought to have taken Bosnia and Herzegovina from them” (4).¹⁴⁰ And while he anticipates that the incident will have major repercussions, he predicts, instead of war, a series of copy-cat assassinations: “You mark my words, Mrs Müller, it’ll be the turn of the Tsar and Tsarina next and maybe, though God forbid, even of His Imperial Majesty the Emperor, now they’ve started with his uncle” (5).¹⁴¹ Like a lot of what Švejk says, accuracy is intermixed with

¹³⁹ “‘Tak nám zabili Ferdinanda,’ řekla posluhovačka panu Švejkovi, který opustiv před léty vojenskou službu, když byl definitivně prohlášen vojenskou lékařskou komisí za blba, živil se prodejem psů, ošklivých nečistokrevných oblud, kterým padělal rodokmeny. Kromě tohoto zaměstnání byl stížen revmatismem a mazal si právě kolena opodeldokem.

‘Kerýho Ferdinanda, paní Müllerová?’ otázal se Švejk, nepřestávaje si masírovat kolena, ‘já znám dva Ferdinandy. Jednoho, ten je sluhou u drogisty Průši a vypil mu tam jednou omylem láhev nějakého mazání na vlasy, a potom znám ještě Ferdinanda Kokošku, co sbírá ty psí hovínka. Vobou není žádná škoda’” (I:9).

¹⁴⁰ “A v Sarajevu k tomu, to je v Bosně, paní Müllerová. To udělali asi Turci. My holt jsme jim tu Bosnu a Hercegovinu neměli brát” (I: 10).

¹⁴¹ “A uviděj, paní Müllerová, že se dostanou i na toho cara a carevnu, a může být, nedej pánbůh, i na císaře pána, když už to začli s jeho strýcem” (I: 11).

inaccuracy based on information Hašek had by the time he wrote the novel. Švejk correctly predicts the assassination of the Tsar and Tsarina, but wrongly describes the relation of Franz Joseph to Franz Ferdinand; the former was the latter's uncle, not the other way around as Švejk says. The assassination still functions in the novel as the action which initiated the World War; hence its positioning in the first sentence of the book. But when Švejk fails to appreciate the importance of this incident, rejecting the conventional causality of the outbreak of war, the novel pokes a hole into the narrative that renders comprehensible an unwieldy conflict. Hayden White wrote that in historiography, the death of a king is a moveable story element like any other. In *Osudy*, it's barely even that.

Of course, Švejk is not a historian. He is, however, a character shaped by received notions of history, notions he, along with the narrator and other characters, rehearses and sometimes ridicules. Animating all these figures is an author who was deeply suspicious of historiography. Hašek presents written history as a tool of the powerful who use it to explain and justify their authority. The reader of history is therefore categorically disempowered. In place of the imbalanced relationship between historian and history-reader, *Osudy* proposes, and creates, a mutually empowering relationship between the author and the reader of fiction.

2. Narrator as historian

In addition to moving along the action of the novel and telling digressive stories, the narrator can be counted on to dabble in historical discourse. Seymour Chatman distinguishes between narrative, descriptive and argumentative textual "services" and, in moments of historical commentary, the narrator combines all three. He simultaneously *narrates* actions unfolding in the world of the novel, *describes* similar circumstances familiar from history, and *argues* for some interpretation. Like his indefinite character, this movement between discursive modes

makes the narrator a slippery figure. If anything unites his various forms of commentary, it's a cohesive attitude: skeptical and irreverent. The narrator's use of historiographical rhetoric is always subversive, exposing the hypocrisies history is meant to normalize. Like Švejk, he is not a historian, yet his commentary reveals a wealth of historical knowledge. The narrator's awareness of history is not particularly erudite but general, suggesting that he reflects the same base level of knowledge which could be expected from any relatively sophisticated reader. This is a crucial distinction. The narrator is slightly more learned than Švejk and his fellow soldiers, but he shares their status and perspective. As a former volunteer soldier himself, the narrator is a lower- or working-class figure, and his commentary expresses his alignment with the other low-ranking soldiers rather than with officers or representatives of the empire.

There are two moments in the text when a posited author-figure provides the crucial narrative services, in the preface and the epilogue to the first volume, and like the narrator, he addresses himself to the problems of history-writing. The epilogue, which is signed Jaroslav Hašek, is on the one hand concerned with the fate of the characters from the novel, explaining what befell some of them after their exit from the story-line and describing them as if they were not fictional at all: "Palivec is still alive" (215); "Otto Katz is also still alive" (216).¹⁴² At the same time, this Hašek-figure speaks about the novel itself as a contribution to Czech literary culture. He acknowledges criticism the book is liable to garner for its obscene language, but concludes by writing:

I do not know whether I shall succeed in achieving my purpose with this book. The fact that I have already heard one man swear at another and say 'You're about as big an idiot as Švejk' does not prove that I have. But if the word 'Švejk' becomes a new choice specimen in the already florid garland of abuse I must be content with this enrichment of the Czech language. (216)¹⁴³

¹⁴² "Palivec je naživu" (I: 234); "Otto Katz je též naživu" (I: 235).

¹⁴³ "Nevím, podaří-li se mně vystihnout touto knihou, co jsem chtěl. Již okolnost, že slyšel jsem jednoho člověka nadávat druhému: 'Ty jsi blbej jako Švejk,' právě tomu nenasvědčuje. Stane-li se však slovo

Hašek here draws attention to the book qua book and himself as its author, while at the same time attesting to the factual basis of its characters. Palivec, he writes, “came to see me when he read that he was in the book, and he bought more than twenty copies of the first instalment and distributed them to his friends, thus contributing to its dissemination” (215).¹⁴⁴ Like Part Two of *Don Quixote*, the epilogue insists on the veracity of the book’s contents, claiming that its characters have lives outside these pages, while simultaneously acknowledging its transmission to the audience via a written text.

The preface, quoted here in its entirety, does the same thing:

Great times call for great men. There are unknown heroes who are modest, with none of the glory and history of Napoleon. If you analyzed their character, you would find it eclipsed even the glory of Alexander the Great. Today you can meet in the streets of Prague a shabbily dressed man who is not even himself aware of his significance in the history of the great new era. He goes modestly on his way, without bothering anyone, nor is he bothered by journalists asking for an interview. If you asked him his name, he would answer you simply and modestly: ‘I am Švejk...’

And this quiet, modest, shabbily dressed man is indeed that good old soldier Švejk, heroic and brave, whose name was once on the lips of all the citizens of the Kingdom of Bohemia in Austrian times, and in the Republic his glory will not fade either.

I am very fond of the good soldier Švejk and in relating his adventures during the world war, I am convinced that you all will sympathize with this modest, anonymous hero. He did not burn down the temple of the goddess in Ephesus, like that dummy Herostratus did, just to get himself into newspapers and school books. And that’s enough. The author.¹⁴⁵

Švejk novou nadávkou v květnatém věnci spílání, musím se spokojit tímto obohacením českého jazyka” (I: 235).

¹⁴⁴ “Přišel mne též navštívit, když četl, že je v knize, a skoupil přes dvacet sešitů prvního čísla, které rozdál svým známým, a přispěl tak k rozšíření knihy” (I: 234).

¹⁴⁵ “Veliká doba žádá velké lidi. Jsou nepoznaní hrdinové, skromní, bez slávy a historie Napoleona. Rozbor jejich povahy zastínil by i slávu Alexandra Makedonského. Dnes můžete potkat v pražských ulicích ošumělého muže, který sám ani neví, co vlastně znamená v historii nové velké doby. Jde skromně svou cestou, neobtěžuje nikoho, a není též obtěžován žurnalisty, kteří by ho prosili o interview. Kdybyste se ho otázali, jak se jmenuje, odpověděl by vám prostince a skromně: ‘Já jsem Švejk ...’ A tento tichý, skromný, ošumělý muž jest opravdu ten starý dobrý voják Švejk, hrdinný, statečný, který kdysi za Rakouska byl v ústech všech občanů Českého království a jehož sláva nezapadne ani v republice.

The preface claims that Švejk exists outside the pages of the book in the reader's hands, while at the same time drawing attention to the fact that the reader is encountering him within those pages, which were written by the author now addressing her directly. By referencing Švejk's fame in both "Austrian times" and "the Republic," the author-narrator establishes that the narration is taking place in the present day, that is, the early 1920s in the First Czechoslovak Republic. In this way Hašek simultaneously insists on the factual basis of the story and affirms the constructed nature of the text.

The existence of Švejk in both the defunct Austrian-controlled Kingdom of Bohemia and the current Czechoslovak Republic points to a historical chronology outside the world of the novel. The first Švejk story, "Dobrý voják Švejk" ["The Good Soldier Švejk"], appeared in 1911 in the Prague satirical magazine *Karikatury*; the following year, it became the titular story in a collection. The novella *Dobrý voják Švejk v zajetí* [*The Good Soldier Švejk in Captivity*] was published by the Kiev-based Legionnaire press Čechoslovan in February 1917. When the author states in the preface to the novel: "In Austrian times his name was once on the lips of all the citizens of the Kingdom of Bohemia, and in the Republic his glory will not fade either," he may well be referring to the popular success of this character. Švejk's popularity in imperial times and during the war is a *fait accompli*, whereas for the Republic, it's a projection, a claim Hašek is making about the novel we are about to read. The statement expresses almost audacious self-confidence, yet it is not out of the bounds of the professional historian. "History," writes Carr, "acquires meaning and objectivity only when it establishes a coherent relation between past and

Mám velice rád toho dobrého vojáka Švejka, a podávaje jeho osudy za světové války, jsem přesvědčen, že vy všichni budete sympatizovat s tím skromným, nepoznaným hrdinou. On nezapálil chrám bohyně v Efesu, jako to udělal ten hlupák Hérostrates, aby se dostal do novin a školních čítanek. A to stačí. AUTOR" (I: 7).

future” (124). The popularity of Švejk stories in the recent past combined with expectation that this Švejk novel will be embraced, suggests that “in the Republic his glory will not fade either.” Hašek’s first readers could not judge the accuracy of this claim; its truth value was only potential. Reading the novel nearly a century after its publication, we realize not only the truth of the statement but something even Hašek could not predict: Švejk’s glory outlived the Republic which fell with the Nazi occupation of Bohemia and Moravia.¹⁴⁶

Hašek also makes a claim for Švejk’s worthiness for historical record by book-ending the preface with references to historical figures. By suggesting that Švejk “eclipsed even the glory of Alexander the Great,” the author-narrator elevates the status of ordinary folk conventionally deemed unworthy of note in history books. Carr writes that facts of history are distinct from other facts of the past in they are “accepted by other historians as valid and significant” (7). “Historical,” is, then, not the affirmation of mere existence in the past, but a consensus about importance. We may extend this thinking to say that not all figures from the past are historical figures; only those whose lives had a significant impact on the course of history. Carr illustrates how a fact may achieve the status of historical fact: as a result of a school or even a single historian’s convincing interpretation about the importance of that previously unacknowledged fact. In this way, the preface states that *Osudy* will do the same for its “modest, anonymous hero”: demonstrating his importance and thus raising him to the status of a historical figure. But the mechanism is effective in two directions at once. Just as Švejk’s status is raised, his presence on any list of worthy figures punctures the aura of respectability enjoyed by such historical heroes as Napoleon and Alexander the Great. After all, Švejk is a man who has “been finally

¹⁴⁶ The period of Nazi occupation, 1939-1945, is the only time *Osudy* has ever been censored or out of print in the Czech lands.

certified by an army medical board as an imbecile, and now lived by selling dogs – ugly, mongrel monstrosities whose pedigrees he forged.”

An even more pointed historical reference is to Herostratus. Herostratus is perhaps history’s most famous arsonist; he is known exclusively for having burnt down the Temple of Artemis in 356 B.C, which he allegedly did for the express purpose of achieving notoriety (Fawcett, 33). The phrase “Herostratic fame” is synonymous with fame achieved at any cost and therefore represents the polar opposite of modesty, an attribute associated with Švejk in the preface. Not only was Herostratus executed for this act, but in an attempt to deny him his sought-after fame, Greek authorities proclaimed it illegal to pronounce or write his name.¹⁴⁷ Obviously, our very knowledge of Herostratus proves that this *damnatio memoriae* was ineffective; in fact, the story of his arson was recorded by the historian Theopompus not long after it occurred (Fawcett, 33). In the preface to *Osudy*, the author-narrator dismisses Herostratus’ method for achieving fame, but he nevertheless asserts its efficacy by including him in this list of historical figures. At the same time, his mention of “newspapers and school books,” while anachronistic, points to common institutional mechanisms for preserving historical memory. The author-narrator may disparage Herostratus as a “*hlupák*” [“stupid fellow”], but the text preserves his story through retelling it, just as the Greek authorities feared almost 2,500 years ago. In the same way, the preface insists, Hašek’s novel will preserve the story of Švejk, a notorious “*blb*” [“idiot”].

Hašek’s preface points to the rhetorical mechanisms by which certain figures are preserved via the discourse of history, including but not limited to “heroes,” contrasting them

¹⁴⁷ Again, this calls to mind the Stalin Monument in Prague. It was completed in May 1955, just months before Krushev’s “Secret Speech” began the process of de-Stalinization. Too expensive and dangerous to demolish, the statue remained intact until 1961, during which time it was illegal to write about or photograph it.

with Švejk. He begins with Napoleon and Alexander the Great, who are both associated with “*sláva*” (“glory”). Seemingly juxtaposed is Švejk, whom the author-narrator describes as “*skromný*” (“modest”) four times in this brief excerpt. The preface does not argue that glory and modesty are not mutually exclusive, but there is a qualitative difference between these attributes. Glory is an external measure, accorded by onlookers and commentators in the public sphere. While modesty can be noted by observers in the context of an implicit contrast between reputation and comportment, it can also exist privately within the individual as a matter of self-regard.¹⁴⁸ In this comparison, Švejk’s modesty represents an impediment to public attention and acclaim, illustrated by the journalists who fail to interview him, crucially keeping him out of the written record. Švejk is finally associated with glory at the end of the second paragraph, but his story is transmitted orally, “on the lips of all the citizens of the Kingdom of Bohemia.” Crucially it is citizens, the common folk, not institutional gatekeepers, who will preserve the memory of Švejk through oral storytelling. The only written record of Švejk’s existence are the texts authored by Hašek. The attribution at end of the preface to “The Author” is a self-referential mechanism which signals the importance of artifice and narrative manipulation in the coming novel.

After the preface, the narrator replaces the posited author as the figure of narrative authority, and he too is concerned with conventions of historical discourse. The narrator’s historical commentary stands out conspicuously from the narrative; usually it appears prominently at the beginning of chapters. He regularly cites well-known historical episodes to establish moral standards for the fictional situation at hand. For example, when Švejk appears in criminal court, the narrator sets the scene by saying:

¹⁴⁸ I admit that as a material condition, modesty can also be involuntary; many people would live less modestly if we could afford to!

The glorious times of Roman rule over Jerusalem were coming back. The prisoners were led out and brought before the Pontius Pilates of 1914 down on the ground floor. And the examining magistrates, the Pilates of modern times, instead of honorably washing their hands, sent to Teissig's for goulash and Pilsen beer and passed more and more indictments to the Director of Prosecutions. (24)¹⁴⁹

He uses another historical reference when Švejk is about to be interrogated:

Police Inspector Braun set the scene for his meeting with Švejk with all the cruelty of Roman lictors in the time of the charming Emperor Nero. With the same ruthlessness as they said: "Throw this scoundrel of a Christian to the lions," Inspector Braun said: "Put him behind bars." (37)¹⁵⁰

In these examples, Pontius Pilate and Emperor Nero function as signifiers. Carr writes, "Great history is written precisely when the historian's vision of the past is illuminated by insights into the problems of the present" (31). The narrator does not bring up Pilate and Nero in order to share some new idea about history; on the contrary, he assumes a general understanding of the semiotic meaning of Pilate and Nero and uses them as short-hand for the perversion and misuse of power that Švejk encounters in his day. The narrator draws on examples from history precisely to comment on the present day.

The chapter "Švejk Goes with the Chaplain to Celebrate a Drumhead Mass" begins with a long satirical meditation on the historical relationship between organized religion and state-mandated killing, including ritual sacrifice, capital punishment and war. Some of the information the narrator presents as "historical fact" is exaggerated for comic effect or outright invented. But even when the facts are separated from non-facts, we perceive that what the narrator says is true: where all three are connected, the state, church, and military collaborate in the business of death.

¹⁴⁹ "Vracela se slavná historie římského panství nad Jeruzalémem. Vězně vyváděli i představovali je před Pilátou roku 1914tého dolů do přízemku. A vyšetřující soudcové, Piláti nové doby, místo aby si čestně myli ruce, posílali si pro papriku a plzeňské pivo k Teissigovi a odevzdávali nové a nové žaloby na státní návladnictví" (I: 31).

¹⁵⁰ "Policejní inspektor Braun aranžoval scénu setkání se Švejkem s krutostí římských pochopů doby roztomilého císaře Nerona. Tvrdě, jako tenkrát, když oni říkali: 'Hod'te toho lumpa křesťana lvům,' řekl inspektor Braun: 'Dejte ho za katr!'" (I: 45).

Preparations for the slaughter of mankind have always been made in the name of God or some supposed higher being which men have devised and created in their own imagination.

Before the ancient Phoenicians cut a prisoner's throat they also performed religious ceremonies just as solemnly as did new generations some thousand years later before marching to war and destroying their enemies with fire and sword.

The cannibals of the Guinea Islands and Polynesia sacrifice to their gods and perform the most diverse religious rites before ceremoniously devouring their captives or unnecessary people like missionaries, travelers, agents of various business firms or persons who are just inquisitive. As the culture of vestments has not yet reached them they decorate the outsides of their thighs with bunches of gaudy feathers of forest birds.

Before the Holy Inquisition burnt its victims, it performed the most solemn religious service – a High Mass with singing.

When criminals are executed, priests always officiate, molesting the delinquents with their presence.

In Prussia the unfortunate victim was led to the block by a pastor, in Austria to the gallows by a Catholic priest, in France to the guillotine, in America to the electric chair by a clergyman and in Spain to a chair where he was strangled by an ingenious appliance. In Russia the revolutionary was taken off by a bearded Orthodox priest etc.

Everywhere on these occasions they used to march about with a crucified Christ figure, as if to say: "They're only cutting your head off, they're only hanging you, strangling you, putting fifteen thousand volts into you, but think what the chap there had to go through."

The great shambles of the world war did not take place without the blessing of priests. Chaplains of all armies prayed and celebrated drumhead masses for victory for the side whose bread they ate.

When mutineers were executed a priest appeared. A priest could be seen at the execution of Czech legionaries.

Nothing has changed from the time when the robber Vojtěch, whom they nicknamed "the Saint", operated with a sword in one hand and a cross in the other, murdering and exterminating the Baltic Slavs. (125-126)¹⁵¹

¹⁵¹ "Přípravy k usmrcování lidí děly se vždy jménem božím či vůbec nějaké domnělé vyšší bytosti, kterou si lidstvo vymyslílo a stvořilo ve své obrazotvornosti.

Nežli podřízli staří Féničané krk nějakému zajatci, sloužili stejně slavné bohoslužby jako o několik tisíc let později nové generace, než táhly na vojnu a hubily své nepřátele ohněm i mečem.

Lidožrouti ostrovů Guinejských i Polynésie, než sežerou slavnostně své zajatce či lidi nepotřebné, jako misionáře, cestovatele a jednatele různých obchodních firem či prosté zvědavce, obětují předtím svým

The narrator's catalog exposes the universality of this phenomenon, whereby brutal methods of punishment are assumed to be civilized or even justified because they are carried out by the state. He begins with the most chronologically and culturally distant examples: ancient Phoenicians and "primitive" Oceanic islanders. From there, he brings his argument closer to home, first geographically by moving to cases on the European continent (Spain during the Inquisition, France during the Revolution) and then chronologically (electric power-driven America, revolutionary Russia). The reference to the Czech Legions, the only explicit one in the entire novel, is the most immediately relevant. It returns the narration to the place and time of the novel, the Austrian Imperial Army in the First World War. The cornerstone of Hašek's critique of the military, here as to throughout the novel, is the glorification of death on the battlefield.

Once the (implicitly Czech) reader has been primed to realize the relevance of this ritual slaughter for her own culture, the final item in the catalog appears to attack a tenet of that culture itself.¹⁵² "The robber Vojtěch, whom they nicknamed 'the Saint'" is St. Vojtěch, known in

bohům, vykonávající nejrozmanitější náboženské výkony. Poněvadž k nim nepronikla ještě kultura ornátů, ozdobují své hyždě věnci z pestrého péří lesního ptactva. Než svatá inkvizice upálila své oběti, sloužila přitom nejslavnější bohoslužby, velkou mši svatou se zpěvy.

Při popravách provinilců účinkují vždy kněží, obtěžující svou přítomností delikventa.

V Prusku vodil pastor ubožáka pod sekyru, v Rakousku katolický kněz k šibenici, ve Francii pod gilotinu, v Americe kněz na elektrickou stoličce, ve Španělsku na židli, kde byl důmyslným přístrojem uškrcen, a v Rusku bradatý pop revolucionáře a tak dále.

Všude přitom manipulovali s Ukřižovaným, jako by chtěli říci: Tobě jenom useknou hlavu, oběsí tě, uškrtí, pustí do tebe patnáct tisíc volt, ale co tenhle musel zkusit.

Veliká jatka světové války neobešla se bez požehnání kněžského. Polní kuráti všech armád modlili se a sloužili polní mše za vítězství té strany, čí chleba jedli.

Při popravách vzbouřených vojáků objevil se kněz. Při popravách českých legionářů bylo vidět kněze. Nic se nezměnilo od té doby, kdy loupežník Vojtěch, kterému přezdíli 'svatý', účinkoval s mečem v jedné a křížem v druhé ruce při vraždění a vyhubení Pobaltických Slovanů" (I: 137-138).

¹⁵² The cover of the first edition of the *Švejk* novel, a self-published booklet, jokingly proclaimed, "S českým vychází kniha na právech originálu současně v překladech ve Francii, Anglii, Americe. První česká kniha, přeložená do světových jazyků! Nejlepší humoristicko-satirická kniha světové literatury! !Vítězství české knihy v cizině!" ["With the Czech in the original the book is simultaneously coming out in translation in France, England, America. The first Czech book translated into the languages of the

English as St. Adalbert, a medieval Bohemian bishop who was canonized shortly after his death (Sayer, 31). Vojtěch's emblem is indeed a cross and a sword, symbols of his death: he was murdered during a mission in Prussia by the people he was attempting to convert. In Vojtěch's vita, of course, his violent end is proof of his holiness. In a different kind of narrative, for example one with an anti-religion agenda, his violent death might serve as a cautionary tale about the danger of proselytizing. But the vita is the standard narrative and Vojtěch is one of the earliest and most important Bohemian saints; his relics are housed in St. Vitus Cathedral on the grounds of the Prague Castle.¹⁵³ The narrator thus defamiliarizes the ubiquitous image of St. Vojtěch to reveal how narrative, be it religious vita, historiography or war novel, can become a tool that powerful institutions use to normalize the violence they condone, glorify or perpetrate.

In the excerpt cited above, the narrator condemns organized religion for its complicity in legitimizing state-sponsored violence. The narrator will bring this up again in reference to the novel's second drumhead mass, the one administered by Senior Chaplain Ibl. In the beginning of that chapter, the narrator notes with his characteristic irony, "A military train was again carrying off to Galicia another herd of men driven to the slaughter-house" (447).¹⁵⁴ Ordering the events in this way, suggesting that the soldiers will ultimately die on the battlefield and then moving backwards through time to the benediction they received before departing, the narrator exposes the complicity of the church in the cynical performativity of such rituals.

world! The best humoristic-satiric book of world literature! ! The triumph of a Czech book abroad!"] In reality, only Czech-speakers were able to read *Osudy* until Grete Reiner's 1926 German translation.

¹⁵³ In fact, in 1997, in honor of the 1,000th anniversary of his martyrdom, the cathedral was officially renamed Katedrála svatého Víta, Václava a Vojtěcha (the Cathedral of Saint Vitus, Wenceslas and Adalbert), but everyone still just calls it St. Vitus. Thousand-year-old habits die hard.

¹⁵⁴ "Vojenský vlak vezl do Haliče opět novou skupinu lidí hnáných na jatky" (III: 7). Ibl is administering a blessing to a regiment on their way to the land that is today the border of Poland and Ukraine, the site of heavy fighting in the First World War.

These historical overviews are similar to the digressive stories the narrator tells. Both historical overviews and narrative asides are detour-texts, not necessary for moving along the central action of the novel. Both add verbal texture and variety; the narrator is at times conversational, at times long-winded, and, when he veers into a historian's lane, didactic. Sometimes these modes overlap. In the previous chapter, I quoted an excerpt in which the narrator reflects on exceedingly devoted officers' orderlies he has known. In fact, the section begins with a meditation on the history, and historiography, of that relationship:

The institution of officers' orderlies is of very ancient origin. It seems that even Alexander the Great had his batman. What is certain, however, is that in the period of feudalism the knights' hirelings performed this role. What else was Don Quixote's Sancho Panza? *I am surprised that no one has yet written up the history of army orderlies.* If anyone had, we should read in it how at the siege of Toledo the Duke of Almagro was so hungry that he ate his orderly without salt, which the duke himself mentions in his memoirs, relating that his orderly had fine, tender, succulent meat tasting like something between chicken and donkey. (162; emphasis added)¹⁵⁵

As in the previous example, the narrator mixes signposts for reliable historiography (references to Alexander the Great, feudalism and the Duke of Almagro) with humorous exaggeration. The Duke of Almagro, Fernando Álvarez de Toledo, was a tyrannical sixteenth-century Spanish statesman, noted for his cruelty and brutality (Koenigsberger). But the anecdote about him eating his servant is Hašek's invention, brought to life with descriptive and comic detail. The most complex meta-textual detail is Hašek's invention of the Duke's memoirs; here, Hašek's fictional

¹⁵⁵ "Instituce důstojnických sluhů je prastarého původu. Zdá se, že již Alexandr Makedonský měl svého pucfleka. Jisto však je, že v době feudalismu vystupovali v té úloze žoldnéři rytířů. Čím byl Sancho Panza Dona Quijota? *Divím se, že historie vojenských sluhů nebyla 150 doposud nikým sepsána.* Našli bychom tam, že vévoda z Almagru snědl svého vojenského sluha při obležení Toleda z hladu bez soli, o čemž vévoda sám píše ve svých pamětech, vypravuje, že jeho sluha měl maso jemné, křehké, vláčné, chutí se podobající něčemu mezi kuřecím a oslím" (II: 179).

Parrott uses the words "orderly" and "batman" to refer to the soldiers assigned to commissioned officers as personal assistants. Whereas the aide-de-camp helps on the battlefield, the orderly is responsible for the officers' personal effects. Funnily enough, a derogatory American military slang term for such men is "dog-robber." The term refers to their obsequiousness, a willingness to scavenge in order to please their officers (*OED*), not, as some would like to believe, as a tribute to the dog-stealing Švejk.

text fabricates an unreal non-fictional text. The reference to Don Quixote and Sancho Panza functions similarly. By including them on a list of historical figures, without reference to Cervantes, the narrator uses them as a source for historical information, implicitly dismissing the notion that either literary fiction or literary history must be approached in a distinct way. The narrator expresses surprise “that no one has yet written up the history of army orderlies,” yet this omission is in line with Hašek’s critique of historiography in general: it valorizes those few designated heroes while erasing the numberless subordinates whose sacrifices enabled their victory.

These digressive tendencies expand the parameters of what a narrator of a war novel can do. Even greater are the consequences of his dabbling in two supposedly discrete narrative genres: oral storytelling and written history. In this way, the narrator challenges the reader’s inclination to distinguish between fiction and non-fiction genres, and even the assumption that there is a clear division between narratives that are fact-based and those are not. By imbuing his fiction with non-fictional elements, Hašek casts doubt on the viability of a non-fictional narrative. At the same time, the narrator’s liberal mixing of fact and invention combined with the oral quality of the text also gestures to a pre-historic mode of storytelling, when stories of war were told in epic form.

The final example of the narrator’s incursions into history that I’ll discuss is when Švejk puts on the abandoned Russian uniform just “to know how it would suit him” (666), an episode I discussed in the previous chapter as an example of the narrator’s lapses into the first person.¹⁵⁶ Arrested by Hungarian gendarmes as an enemy combatant, they come to the conclusion that

¹⁵⁶ “jak asi by mu slušela ruská uniforma” (III: 238).

Švejk is part of “a military organization of Czech deserters on the Russian front” (679).¹⁵⁷ The narrator informs us:

Nothing definite was yet known about revolutionary organizations abroad and it was only in August that the battalion commanders on the line Sokal-Milijatin-Bubnów¹⁵⁸ received the confidential report that the former Austrian professor Masaryk had fled abroad, where he was carrying out propaganda against Austria. A stupid ass from the division appended to it the following order: ‘If captured he should at once be brought to division staff!’

I hereby bring this to the attention of President Masaryk, so that he may know what pitfalls and traps were laid for him between Sokal, Milijatin and Bubnów.¹⁵⁹ (679-680)

This moment is rich in formal experimentation and divergence from narrative convention. First of all, this is one of the narrator’s few lapses into the first person.¹⁶⁰ Moreover, while throughout the novel the narrator shows his extensive historical knowledge, only in this moment is he omniscient with regards to the present. He is aware of the early phases of organizing the Družina, something none of the novel’s characters take part in or, as this scene demonstrates, know about. The establishment of the Družina was carried on at the same time as the events of the novel, but in a different geographical zone – Russia and Ukraine. Indeed, the phrase “Neznalo ještě nic určitého” [“Nothing definite was yet known”] conveys a sense of universal ignorance about this phase of the organization for everyone except those directly involved.

¹⁵⁷ “bojovné organizace z přeběhlíků na ruskou stranu” (IV: 251).

¹⁵⁸ Cities in the Lviv oblast of Ukraine.

¹⁵⁹ “Neznalo ještě nic určitého o revolučních organizacích v cizině a teprve v srpnu na linii Sokal – Milijatin – Bubnovo obdrželi velitelé bataliónů důvěrné rezerváty, že bývalý rakouský profesor Masaryk utekl za hranice, kde vede proti Rakousku propagandu. Nějaký pitomeček od divize doplnil rezervát ještě tímto rozkazem: ‘V případě zachycení předvésti neprodleně k štábu divize!’” (IV: 251). The final sentence was left out of editions between at least 1951 and 1968, perhaps in connection with the communist regime’s disparagement of Masaryk. Multiple publishing houses ran editions of *Osudy*, so it is difficult to nail down the dates for the change and ascertain why the line disappeared and reappeared when it did.

¹⁶⁰ This may be explained by Hašek’s personal involvement in this issue. Hašek was an early Družina recruit and his journalism from the early years of the war show that he resented Masaryk’s reliance on foreign diplomacy while soldiers faced mortal danger resulting from those negotiations. In this instance, the narrator may indeed be Hašek’s mouthpiece.

The narrator here relies on sophisticated modes of emplotment described by Lionel Grossman in his essay “History and Literature: Reproduction or Signification.” Grossman is specifically writing about eighteenth-century novels and historical writings, but his insights are useful in understanding what Hašek accomplishes in this section. Grossman writes:

The ultimate unifying center of eighteenth-century historical writing, it has been said, is the narrator himself rather than the narrative of events: the latter exists largely as a pretext for “philosophical” commentary, and for the sake of the community of “philosophers” that this commentary was expected to establish between narrator and reader, and among readers. History, in this important respect, was not essentially different from fiction [...] (22)

In this instance, Hašek’s narrator is doing work that is both novelistic and historical. On the one hand, he draws the reader into a relation of ironic complicity, sharing knowledge about the narrative which the characters lack. At the same time, by referring to historical facts which are beyond the geographic, though not temporal, purview of the novel, he enjoins the reader to map out the entire picture of a complicated moment, a World War after all, wherein multiple events occurred simultaneously. From the perspective of history, the narrator is sharing a piece of information that was, by the time the novel was written, widely known. But from the perspective of fictional narrative, which brings us back into the war years, he’s letting the reader in on a secret.

For the challenge it poses to literary norms of sequencing, most interesting is the way the narrator steps out of bounds of the temporal setting of the novel to address Masaryk as President of the Czechoslovak Republic. Louis Mink writes, “To comprehend temporal succession means to think of it in both directions at once, and then time is no longer the river which bears us along but the river in aerial view, upstream and downstream seen in a single survey” (554-555). The novel is of course set in the years before Masaryk assumed that office, before the office or even the country existed. It takes place when he was indeed, as the narrator disparagingly puts it, “the

former Austrian professor.” But the narration of the events of the novel take place later, in the Republican era under Masaryk’s presidential administration. In this moment in the novel, the narrator indicates how much had changed in the intervening five years.

In this instance, the narrator does what Carr defines as a historian’s true task: using knowledge of the present to initiate a dialogue between past and present. The narrator’s chronological ambiguity can only partially be explained by thinking about him as a historian, because he transgresses other boundaries too. The narrator’s refusal to stick to the story, his insistence on providing commentary on characters and events which have no bearing on the main plot, create the unraveling and sprawling effect of the novel as a whole. It’s the opposite of the process of selection a historian uses to make his narrative coherent and convincing.

3. The Anabasis

Among the greatest satirical sequences in the novel is the chapter “Švejk’s Budějovice Anabasis.” In this long chapter from Volume II, Švejk has been separated from his regiment while travelling via train from Prague to České Budějovice. In the preceding chapter, “Švejk’s Misadventures in the Train,” someone pulls the emergency brake,¹⁶¹ and everyone is evacuated from the car. The regiment re-boards the train and it departs while Švejk is drinking beer in the station café. Knowing that they are bound for České Budějovice, Švejk sets out on foot, determined to meet them there. But as he travels through the Bohemian countryside, everyone he meets assures him that he is traveling in the wrong direction. Here’s a typical encounter, when Švejk meets an old woman on her way home from church:

“I’m going to my regiment at Budějovice, mother,” answered Švejk, “to the war.”

“Then you’re going the wrong way, soldier,” said the old woman in a scared voice.
“You’ll never get there this way through Vráž. If you go straight on you’ll get to Klatovy.”

¹⁶¹ It was probably Švejk.

“I believe that a man can get to Budějovice even from Klatovy,” said Švejk resignedly. (242)¹⁶²

Švejk is convinced that you can get anywhere from anywhere, and ultimately, we must admit, that’s true. But of course, this overlooks questions of efficiency, of the costs in time and labor. It may be true, but it’s also wrong.

The idea of travelling to a destination by a wildly circuitous route is a reference to the most famous episode in the history of the Czechoslovak Legions, the so-called Siberian anabasis of summer and fall 1918. “Anabasis” is an ancient Greek term denoting a long military march (*ἀνάβασις* means “ascent” or “going up”). It’s most frequently used to refer to the Greek military leader and historian Xenophon’s account of the “march of the 10,000,” an aborted military campaign led by Cyrus the Younger in 370 BCE, more on which follows. The Siberian anabasis began shortly after the October Revolution, when the Czechoslovak National Council, the army leadership under the direction of Masaryk, determined that the Czech troops in Russia should be evacuated to the western front in France.¹⁶³ But the Bolsheviks refused to grant the Czechs safe passage unless they agreed to disarm. An early attempt to separate the troops into three groups and disperse them across Russia was rebuffed (Sak, 28), and the National Council and the Allies reached a compromise: if the Legions travelled eastwards along the Trans-Siberian Railroad towards Vladivostok, they would reach the sea and would be granted safe passage on the long maritime journey back to western Europe.

¹⁶² ‘Ale jdu vám, matičko, do Budějovic k regimentu,’ odpověděl Švejk, ‘do tej války.’
‘Ale to jdou špatně, vojáčku,’ ulekaně řekla babička, “to tam nikdy nepřijdou tímhle směrem přes Vráž, kdyby šli pořád rovně, tak přijdou na Klatovy.’

‘Já myslím,’ řekl Švejk odevzdaně, ‘že se i z Klatov člověk dostane do Budějovic’” (II: 263).

¹⁶³ Anti-Habsburg Czechs in France first entered the French Foreign Legion before establishing their own independent army. This is how the Czechoslovak Legions came to their name.

Hašek had defected from the Legions before this episode, but once he returned to Prague, he was disinclined to make enemies of the celebrated, and in some cases powerful, veterans. A number of veteran Legionnaire officers were prominent in social and political life of the Czechoslovak Republic (Orzoff, 85), so that there could have been real consequences for Hašek should he explicitly besmirch them. Guilty of both desertion and, technically, bigamy, he could easily have been imprisoned at the slightest provocation. Although Hašek does not pillory the Czechoslovak Legions, he clearly saw the humor inherent in the story of their anabasis, or at least in the enshrinement of the episode in such epic terms. “Švejk’s Budějovice Anabasis” mocks the tendency to mythologize their achievements as part of Hašek’s larger project of demystifying, and hence disarming, military history.

The Legions’ military achievements in Siberia proved their mettle, and yet the official propagandistic use of this episode served to obscure some less boast-worthy, but perhaps weightier truths about the whole episode. For one thing, the Legions’ success in Siberia was short-lived; by October 1918 the increasingly well-organized Red Army was recapturing all the cities the Czechs had taken. For another thing, this wasn’t a theater of the World War; rather the Legions were intervening in what was becoming the Russian Civil War. And then there is the most embarrassing truth of all: their whole strategy was based on travelling in the wrong direction across the largest country on earth. What they achieved was truly astonishing, but it was also colossally wasteful. The Legions’ efforts in Siberia won them the political support of the Allies which was crucial in establishing the Czechoslovak Republic, and as Carr points out, “Sometimes those who were defeated have made as great a contribution to the ultimate result as the victors” (120). Still, inclusion in the historical record is one thing; mythologization is quite another. In “Švejk’s Budějovice Anabasis,” Hašek found a way to poke fun not exactly at the

Siberian campaign, but at the way the campaign was being memorialized. Švejk's journey to, or rather from Budějovice exposes the inherent absurdity of the anabasis as both a military maneuver and a narrative genre, upending the primary assumption that an anabasis can ever be straightforward.

It is unknown whether Hašek read Xenophon's *Anabasis*, or simply connected what he knew about the Greek text to the tendency to refer to the Legions' Siberian campaign as an "anabasis." Hašek's general aversion to erudite reading makes the latter option seem more likely, as, for example, his awareness that there existed books about Marshal Radetzky does not necessarily mean that he ever read any. To be sure, he does not comment on the specific similarities between the two campaigns. Instead, Hašek's narrator ruminates on the concept of the anabasis as a military maneuver, drawing out its potential for waste, danger and pointlessness. "Švejk's Budějovice Anabasis" begins:

Xenophon, that warrior of ancient times, travelled through the whole of Asia Minor and got to God knows where without any maps at all. And the Goths of old made their expeditions without any knowledge of topography. Marching forward all the time is what is called an anabasis: penetrating into unknown regions: being cut off by enemies who are waiting for the first convenient opportunity to wring your neck. If anyone has a good brain, like Xenophon or all those thieving tribes who came to Europe from God knows where in the Caspian or Sea of Azov, he can work real wonders on a march.

Caesar's Roman legions penetrated somewhere to the north by the Gallic Sea and they had no maps either. Once they said they would march back to Rome again by another route so that they could get more out of it. And they got there too. And it is obviously from that time that people say that all roads lead to Rome.

All roads lead to České Budějovice too. The good soldier Švejk was fully convinced of this when instead of the Budějovice region he saw villages in the Milevsko region.

All the same he went steadily forward, for no good soldier can allow a Milevsko to stop him from getting to České Budějovice. (241)¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁴ "Starověký válečník Xenofón prošel celou Malou Asií a byl bůhvíckde bez mapy. Staří Gótové dělali své výpravy také bez topografické znalosti. Maširovat pořád kupředu, tomu se říká anabaze. Prodírat se neznámými krajinami. Být obklíčeným nepřáteli, kteří číhají na nejbližší příležitost, aby ti zakroutili krk.

The narrator describes an anabasis not as an organized effort of soldiers marching in formation, but instead highlights the chaotic potential and uselessness of such a maneuver. The assertion that Xenophon “got to God knows where” supports my hunch that Hašek never read the painstakingly detailed *Anabasis*, although it’s also just funnier to belittle the ancient soldiers’ journey and this classical Greek text. The repeated anachronistic references to a lack of maps suggests that soldiers on an anabasis, such as the Czechoslovak Legions traveling eastward through Siberia, make decisions not strategically, but out of confusion.¹⁶⁵ The narrator’s roundabout rhetoric turns this into a joke: as if historically vaunted soldiers, including Xenophon’s 10,000, the Goths and the Roman legions, were ignorant of the most basic geographical information. The narrator suggests that marching endlessly forward is not an achievement; on the contrary, it’s evidence of having lost control. In typical Haškovian subversion of a familiar idea, the narrator asserts that the proverb “All roads lead to Rome” originated in the Roman legions’ hearty attitude towards losing their way. This flagrantly ignores the historical fact of the sophisticated Roman roadways, which is generally known to have given rise the saying.¹⁶⁶ The meaning of the proverb, however, remains the same: the same goal may be achieved through many different methods. And although the narrator introduces Xenophon as

Když má někdo dobrou hlavu, jako ji měl Xenofón nebo všichni ti loupežní kmenové, kteří přišli do Evropy až bůhvíodkud od Kaspického nebo Azovského moře, dělá pravé divy na pochodu. Tam někde na severu u Galského moře, kam až se také dostaly římské legie Caesarovy bez mapy, řekly si jednou, že se zas vrátí a pomaširují jinou cestou, aby ještě víc toho užily, do Říma. A dostaly se tam také. Od té doby se říká patrně, že všechny cesty vedou do Říma. Stejně vedou také všechny cesty do Českých Budějovic. O čemž byl plnou měrou přesvědčen dobrý voják Švejk, když místo budějovického kraje uviděl vesnice milevského. Šel však nepřetržitě dál, neboť žádnému dobrému vojákovi nemůže vadit takové Milevsko, aby přece jednou nedošel do Českých Budějovic” (262-263).

¹⁶⁵ It also evokes the opening scene of the *Bugulma Tales*, when the narrator is sent to his post having neither a map nor directions to guide him.

¹⁶⁶ The proverb is attributed to the theologian Alain de Lille, who wrote, “mille viae ducunt homines per saecula Romam” (“a thousand roads lead men forever to Rome”) in *Liber Parabolarum*, 1175 (*Thesaurus Proverbiorum Medii Aevi*).

a warrior, he later discredits him by associating him with “thieving tribes.” Perhaps because of Hašek’s ignorance, or perhaps as an intentional dig, the narrator omits the fact that Xenophon was also a historian.

The story Xenophon tells in *Anabasis*, a text equal parts historical and autobiographical, shares much with the enterprise of the Czechoslovak Legions. A huge and formidable army was amassed outside of its homeland, but its fortunes suddenly changed owing to the developing political situation. Xenophon tells how Cyrus’ intention was to usurp the throne from his brother Artaxerxes, and he raised this army under a variety of false pretenses and dishonest political maneuvers. When Cyrus was killed in action at the Battle of Cunaxa, the army was left not only leaderless, but liable to accusations of treason against Artaxerxes. The majority of the narrative is the story of them fighting their way across Asia Minor to safely return home to Greece. After deciding to divide the army into three smaller groups, the generals were slaughtered in a series of surprise attacks. Following this, a new set of generals was elected, among them Xenophon.

A first-hand account, *Anabasis* is an extraordinary historical document as well as being a fascinating work of literature. The classicist JK Anderson characterizes Xenophon as an inadequate historian and suggests that this appraisal is the scholarly consensus. Still he argues that *Anabasis* is valuable as the “memoirs of an eyewitness, not a balanced account drawn from many sources” (342). Xenophon is both the author of the text and a character in it, and yet he looms over the text more like a posited author than a narrator. He consistently uses the third person to describe the events; even when he himself is chosen to help lead the army, he describes himself as “Xenophon, an Athenian.”¹⁶⁷ Still, this is not an exercise in self-effacement. Even

¹⁶⁷ Xenophon is not the only ancient Greek historian to write in third person. Although it was of course rare for the historian to also participate in the historic event, Thucydides had taken the same approach with his *History of the Peloponnesian War*. Thanks to Professor Ben Stevens and #classicstwitter for helping me contextualize this.

while his book highlights the democratic leadership of the army, he stresses “Xenophon’s” wisdom as a strategist and decision-maker, claiming authority from having been a disciple of that other famous Athenian, Socrates. At one point, soldiers accuse Xenophon of punishing them with excessive cruelty, and an ad-hoc military tribunal is convened. Xenophon testifies at length to the cowardice of the plaintiffs and the necessity of the punishment they received, all the while averring that if his peers see fit to remove him from leadership, he will respect their judgment. Xenophon’s acquittal in this case forms a minor episode in the anabasis, but perhaps a major one in his autobiography. A perceptive commentator, Xenophon was nevertheless not above a bit of self-promotion. As we shall see later in this chapter, Marek’s battalion history also exposes the role of vanity in historiography.

Like the march of Xenophon’s 10,000, the Czechoslovak Legions’ anabasis has two parts: the trip across Russia via train, and the trip practically around the world via ship. The writer and legionnaire veteran Jaroslav Kratochvíl divided his 1922 book *Cesta revoluce* [*The path to revolution*] into two parts: “První období anabase” and “Druhé období anabase,” the first and second phases of the anabasis.¹⁶⁸ Another early book about the maneuver is historian František Šteidler’s *Návrat Československých Legií kolem světa do vlasti* [*The Return of the Czechoslovak Legions around the world to their homeland*] from 1921. Šteidler supplies an introduction to a collection of photographs taken by the Legionnaires as they visited exotic locales ranging from Singapore to San Diego. Surprisingly charming considering the fact that they document a massive military maneuver, the photos have the look and feel of snapshots from a young person’s vacation.

¹⁶⁸ It’s tangential to this discussion, but Kratochvíl’s usage of the word “revolution” should also be clarified. He uses it not in reference to the Russian Revolution, but the creation of the Czechoslovak state, in which the Legions, as stated earlier, played a crucial role.

Šteidler credits Raymond Poincaré with relating the Legions' Siberian campaign to the *Anabasis* of Xenophon: "according to the words of former president of the French Republic R. Poincaré, the task was greater and more glorious than even the one from ancient history, the universally known anabasis of 10,000 of Xenophon's Greeks" (4).¹⁶⁹ In fact, though, the usage is older. I have not been able to definitively identify the first recorded usage, but the earliest example I've found is from 1919, and, funnily enough, it's satirical. A book of cartoons by Václav Švec, published that year by the legionnaire press in Irkutsk, includes one with the caption, "Back home, when he starts lying." It shows a young soldier having returned home to Czechoslovakia, saying to a group of older men,

...and we drove on ahead through all of Ukraine to Siberia and then on through Siberia, and again we drove the Fifth [Division of the Red Army] from Vladivostok through a bypass to the west. And later when we all gathered together it was a kind of anabasis, a real pleasure.¹⁷⁰

His listeners' faces register skepticism and the caption asserts that the soldier is an unreliable narrator. What he's saying is basically true, but to his listeners, his speech seems exaggerated because of the unlikely nature of the story and the epic connotation of the word *anabasis*, which the soldier misuses slightly and which stands out from the soldier's otherwise vernacular Czech. "Anabasis" is such a rarefied word, it's clear that the young soldier picked it up from somewhere, a commanding officer, say, or a written text intended to inspire the troops.

I have the sense that the word was used for propagandistic rather than strategic purposes, intended to glorify the Legions' exploits and raise morale during a grueling journey. Maps in a set of original military documents relating to their movement across Siberia in 1918 and 1919

¹⁶⁹ "podle slov býv. presidenta francouzské republiky R. Poincaré dílo větší a slavnější, než jest ona ze starověkých dějin všeobecně známá anabase 10.000 Xenofontových Řeků."

¹⁷⁰ "Až se začne doma lhát"; "...a hnali jsme před sebou přes celou Ukrajinu až do Sibíře a potom furt přes Sibíř, pátej to zase hnali od Vladivostoku ochvatem [*sic*; should be "obchvatem"] na západ. A když jsme to potom sehnali dohromady byla z toho taková anabáze, no jedna radost."

have titles like “Rozložení ešelonů,” “Schema situace na Uralské frontě” and “Síly východní skupiny” (“Distribution of train cars,” “Map of the situation on the Ural front,” and “Forces of the eastern group”). They illustrate the anabasis, with words as well as pictures, but that term never appears. Ultimately, the difference between a long march and an anabasis is qualitative, not quantitative; it reflects rhetoric more than strategy. Nevertheless, military historians rely on the term when writing about the Siberian campaign still today. In 1996 the Czech historian Robert Sak wrote a thorough, not even vaguely propagandistic book about the Legions which has been the best scholarly resource for my research. Its title is *Anabáze*.

“Švejk’s Budějovice Anabasis” is a picaresque typical of the rest of the novel, following Švejk as he travels through a series of Bohemian villages. But unlike the Czechoslovak Legions and Xenophon’s 10,000, Švejk is not traveling home. In an ironic subversion of the anabasis genre, Švejk’s destination is the posting of his regiment. Hašek compounds the irony through encounters Švejk has with people who assume he is on his way home, which is to say, deserting. Two things contribute to this impression. First and most obviously, the fact that despite his repeated assertions that he is on his way to rejoin his regiment, Švejk persists in traveling away from Budějovice. Second, everyone he meets has extensive experience with deserters. Whereas the former point is part of the humorous characterization of Švejk, the latter is a weighty comment on the lived experience of the war. Everyone – from gendarmes to an old churchgoer to a couple of tramps who’ve taken up residence in a haystack – compares Švejk to the other deserters they know, in many cases members of their own families. Through his steadfast determination to not be separated from his regiment, Švejk uncovers how widespread a phenomenon desertion was. At the same time, there is an ironic truth that remains unspoken in all these encounters: Švejk’s regiment has deserted *him*. A final meta-literary comment is

delivered via the chapter's ending: more than halfway through the chapter, after the reader has been oriented to the mode of anabasis, the narrative and dialogue echo the plot as Hašek begins writing "anabastically." The text begins *wandering*, in a way that is strikingly aimless even for a picaresque.

Thinking him a deserter, most of the villagers Švejk encounters show him sympathy and attempt to help him travel undetected. The first person he meets, the old woman on her way home from church, makes it clear that she understands the desire to desert, and she even thinks it's wise that he do so:

We've already had a chap like you here. He had to go to Pilsen to the Landwehr. He was called Toníček Mašků...He was a relation of my niece and he went away. And a week later the gendarmerie went looking for him, because he hadn't reported to his regiment. After another week he turned up here in mufti saying he had been allowed home on leave. But the mayor went to the gendarmerie and they pulled him out of that "leave". Now he's written from the front that he's wounded and that he's lost a leg. (242-243).¹⁷¹

She supplies Švejk with food and advises him which route to take in order to avoid the gendarmes. When they part, she "made the sign of the cross on him and said that she had two grandsons in the army" (243).¹⁷² Shortly after departing from her, Švejk meets an accordion player who "took Švejk for a deserter and advised him to go with him to Horažďovice, where he had a married daughter whose husband was a deserter too" (243).¹⁷³ Švejk even encounters some actual deserters on his way: two soldiers from the 35th regiment who had "deserted just before they should have been marched to the front, and the artilleryman had been on the tramp from the

¹⁷¹ "U nás byl taky jeden takovej nezbeda. Ten měl ject do Plzně k landvér, nějakej Toníček Mašků...von je vod mojí neteře příbuznej, a vodjel. A za tejden už ho hledali četníci, že nepřijel ku svýmu regimentu. A ještě za tejden se vobjevil u nás v civilu, že přej je puštěnej domů na urláb. Tak šel starosta na četnictvo, a voni ho z toho urlábu vyzdvihli. Už psal z fronty, že je raněnej, že má nohu pryč." (II: 263).

¹⁷² "pokřižovala ho a řekla, že má tam dva vnuky" (II: 264).

¹⁷³ "považoval Švejka za dezertýra a radil mu, aby šel s ním do Horažďovic, že tam má provdanou dceru, jejíž muž je taky dezertýr" (II: 264).

day he was called up” (245).¹⁷⁴ Each of these characters counsel Švejk on the safest way to move through the countryside, many of them urging him, for example, to trade his uniform for civilian clothing. Only once does Švejk encounter someone who does not sympathize with the perceived attempt to desert. A farmer, paranoid about deserters becoming robbers and vagabonds, says, “They run away from the army, they don’t want to serve in it and then they roam about the whole district and steal” (244).¹⁷⁵ This man’s adverse reaction also presupposes the prevalence of desertion.

Švejk spends varying amounts of time with these characters. Most of the encounters occur in passing, but a few times he bands together with someone for a portion of his journey. In one ironic episode, a seemingly upright gendarme allows himself to flirt with desertion when he and Švejk undertake a mini-anabasis together. Švejk is arrested in the village of Putim, and the lance-corporal is instructed to escort Švejk to the district gendarmerie command in the nearby town of Písek. On the way, the lance-corporal suggests that they stop off for a “*štampřle*” [a small drink] (II: 296), but urges Švejk to be discreet.¹⁷⁶ Once inside, the lance-corporal finds reasons for putting off the continuation of their journey: a blizzard threatens, they’ve had too much to drink, “Písek wouldn’t run away” (275).¹⁷⁷ Ultimately, the lance-corporal lets slip his real reason for remaining in the pub: “‘Let’s be glad that we sit in a warm place,’ was his

¹⁷⁴ “že utekli před marškou před měsícem a dělostřelec že je od samé mobilizace na cestách” (II: 266).

¹⁷⁵ “Uteče to z vojny, sloužit to tam nechce, a tak to chodí po celým okolí, a kde může, tak to krade” (II: 265).

¹⁷⁶ The set-up is reminiscent of an earlier scene, at the beginning of the chapter “Švejk Batman to the Chaplain,” when two soldiers escorting Švejk from jail to his new post are easily convinced to make a pit stop:

‘I’m thirsty,’ said Švejk.

The lanky one and the small tubby one exchanged quick glances.

‘We might drop in somewhere for a quick one,’ said the little fellow, feeling he could count on the lanky one’s consent, ‘but somewhere where it won’t attract attention’ (101).

¹⁷⁷ “Písek nemůže utéct” (II: 296).

decisive word. ‘Out there in the trenches in stinking weather like this those chaps go through a lot more than we do sitting by the stove’” (275).¹⁷⁸ Like Otto Katz, this lance-corporal has found a way to serve in the army without putting himself in danger or discomfort. Service in the gendarmerie keeps him from the front, and this comment reveals his disinclination to ever see military action. This is why he extends his transport of Švejk as long as possible, indulging, if only for a few hours, in a temporary desertion.

Who is closer to the classical anabasis – Švejk the seemingly AWOL soldier who is in fact going to his regiment, or the large group of deserters taking the long way home? In fact, none fits the definition. In Xenophon’s text, as well as the story of the Czechoslovak Legions’ return to Europe, the soldiers maintain their allegiance to the army while making their way home. The army therefore remains empowered to punish them for breaches in discipline. The crucial difference that distinguishes soldiers on anabasis from Švejk and the deserters he encounters may be solitude – and agency. When one soldier makes his way home of his own volition, it’s desertion. But 10,000 soldiers marching under orders is an anabasis, whether their destination is home or the battlefield. Still, as “Švejk’s Budějovice Anabasis” shows, one or two soldiers marching alone can be emblematic of a larger breakdown of military order. And indeed, Švejk’s travels through the countryside reveal that these are not isolated cases of individual desertions; a piecemeal but nevertheless mass desertion is underway.

Crucially, there is one person who does not take Švejk for a deserter: the sergeant of the gendarmes who eventually places him under arrest believes that Švejk is a Russian spy. Whereas all the other deserters and deserter-sympathizers are preoccupied with avoiding arrest, Švejk

¹⁷⁸ “‘Buďme rádi, že sedíme v teple,’ bylo jeho rozhodné slovo, ‘tam v zákopech za takové sloty zkusejí víc než my u kamen’” (II: 299).

does not attempt to evade or lie to the gendarme. Instead, he straightforwardly answers all the questions put to him during an interrogation, explaining his movement through the villages by consistently asserting that he is a soldier in the Austrian army on his way to Budějovice, all geographic logic to the contrary. Švejk is arrested in Putim, a village he's already passed through. This makes him realize that he has walked in a giant circle without even approaching Budějovice. This has important implications vis-à-vis Hašek's technique of emplotment. Because Švejk has walked in a circle, this cannot be an anabasis in the literal sense of the word; an up-country march denotes unidirectional movement. This narrative, on the other hand, has traced a circle, following Švejk through a series of villagers back practically to his starting point.

The interrogation scene basically repeats the action of the chapter up to that point, in dialogue rather than narration. When Švejk explains his circular route to the arresting officer, he verbally retraces the circle he has just walked.

“It's a terribly simple matter,” Švejk confided. “I'm going to my regiment, I'm looking for it and not deserting from it.”

[...]

“And so you can't find your regiment?” he said. “Have you gone to look for it?”

Švejk explained to him the whole situation. He named Tábor and all the places he'd passed through on the way to Budějovice: Milevsko – Květov – Vráž – Malčín – Čížová – Sedlec – Horažďovice – Radomyšl – Putim – Štěkno – Strakonice – Volyň – Dub – Vodňany – Protivín and finally Putim again. (282)¹⁷⁹

Here, Hašek begins writing “anabastically.” Hašek employs the parodic technique of drawing attention to his own narrative devices in order to redouble his critique of the anabasis as both a military maneuver and a literary genre. Reflecting his belief that an anabasis is a condition of

¹⁷⁹ “‘To je věc náramně jednoduchá,’ svěřil se Švejk, ‘já jdu k svému regimentu, já ho hledám, a neutíkám od něho. Já si nic jinýho nepřeju než se co nejdřív dostat k svému regimentu.’ [...] ‘Vy tedy nemůžete svůj regiment najít,’ řekl, ‘vy jste ho šel hledat?’

Švejk vysvětlil mu celou situaci. Jmenoval Tábor a všechna místa, kudy šel do Budějovic: Milevsko – Květov – Vráž – Malčín – Čížová – Sedlec – Horažďovice – Radomyšl – Putim – Štěkno – Strakonice – Volyň – Dub – Vodňany – Protivín – a zas Putim” (II: 304).

having lost control, at this point Hašek relinquishes his control over the narrative. Narrative digressions occur throughout the novel, so it is perhaps not so striking when the narrator supplies lengthy backstories for characters in this chapter who will never appear in the novel again. One example is the detailed story of Sergeant Flanderka's attempt to make an informant of Pepek, a "kretén" ["cretin" or "village idiot"] (II: 281). And yet the narrative moves increasingly free from its central axis; focus shifts away from Švejk as the narrator relates the character and backstory first of Flanderka, then Flanderka's housekeeper, then the lance-corporal, characters whom we will never encounter again. Now we recall the narrator's definition from the beginning of the chapter: "Marching forward all the time is what is called an anabasis: penetrating into unknown regions" (241). While the narrator explores the memories and motivations of these throwaway characters, he creates a compound narrative of multiple causes and motivations, revealing the unexpected complexity of a seemingly simple event: the arrest of an insignificant soldier in a tiny town.

All this "extraneous" detail runs counter to the conventional dictates of the written anabasis genre, and indeed history in general, wherein only information that pertains to the historian's argument is presented. Even Xenophon's self-centered digressions serve his own personal agenda, although they may offer less to the student of ancient Greece. As other theorists of history have also noted, Morson points out that if historians did not stick to an agenda, "their histories would not be narratable. Without some principle of selection, it would be impossible to know what events to include or construct any story at all" (103). Hašek's undifferentiating embrace of all aspects of the story surprises us and leads us to realize how accustomed we are to the omission of information. Like the promotion of an unimpactful soldier to the position of

protagonist-hero, this inclusivity subverts conventions, literary and historiographical, for determining significance.

The impression that Hašek is echoing the actions of the novel through his narrative technique becomes most striking at the end of Švejk's Budějovice anabasis, which is not to say the end of the chapter "Švejk's Budějovice Anabasis". When Švejk is finally reunited with his regiment, the narrator states point-blank: "And so ended Švejk's Budějovice anabasis" (284).¹⁸⁰ The chapter then continues for another sixteen pages, approximately 20% of the chapter as a whole. For the remainder of the chapter, Švejk is placed under regimental arrest where he makes the acquaintance of Marek, the one-year volunteer who becomes his great partner-in-mischief. There is no more movement or physical action of any kind; the pages are made entirely of Marek's endlessly rambling monologue about his impressions of serving in the army. Švejk barely even speaks, Marek needing little prompting to keep up the stream of verbiage. Even the story of Švejk's anabasis, repeated now for the second time in dialogue, is shifted over to Marek:

The volunteer now asked Švejk what was his offence.

"You were trying to find your regiment?" he said. "That must have been some hunt. Tábor, Milevsko, Květov, Vráž, Malčín, Čížová, Sedlec, Horažďovice, Radomyšl, Putim, Štěkno, Strakonice, Volyň, Dub, Vodňany, Protivín, Putim, Písek, Budějovice. A thorny path!" (290)¹⁸¹

Because Marek is an important character (the next section of this chapter focuses on him entirely), I do not mean to suggest that the final fifth of the chapter is random or inconsequential. But it is decidedly not a part of the Budějovice anabasis. The fact of Švejk's having arrived at his final destination, and being incarcerated there, makes it categorically impossible for the anabasis

¹⁸⁰ "Tím skončila Švejkova budějovická anabaze" (II: 306).

¹⁸¹ "Jednorocní dobrovolník dal nyní Švej kovi otázku o jeho vině.

'Hledal regiment?' řekl, 'to je pěkná túra. Tábor, Milevsko, Květov, Vráž, Malčín, Čížová, Sedlec, Horažďovice, Radomyšl, Putim, Štěkno, Strakonice, Volyň, Dub, Vodňany, Protivín, Putim, Písek, Budějovice. Trnitá cesta" (II: 312).

to continue. It is only the narrator who fulfills the definition of anabasis that he himself supplied: “marching forward all the time [...] penetrating into unknown regions,” pushing the story eternally onward. The movement has become more important than the destination, as the narrative presses on without aiming for any conclusion or “point.”

The function of “Švejk’s Budějovice Anabasis” is to break down the epic status of the Siberian campaign and their worldwide route home, a status which, when revealed as a formal construct, loses its mystifying power. The word “anabasis” would have served as an unmistakable signpost to First Republic readers. One character he meets on his way even comments, “Why, he’s making a trip round the world” (244).¹⁸² The chapter thus manages to expose the charged discourse which mythologized the Legions without directly attacking the individuals that made up the army or minimizing the sacrifices they made. Even the deserters Švejk encounters, after all, have deserted from the Austrian Army, not the Czechoslovak Legions; it was Hašek who deserted from both.

If we accept the chapter’s premise on its face – that Švejk’s journey is an anabasis – we realize what kinds of details and perspectives must be left out of the familiar narratives about Xenophon’s 10,000 and the Czechoslovak Legions. This realization reduces if not their accomplishments, at least their mythic status. If, on the other hand, we think of this as a parody of an anabasis, or a wild exegesis on the premise, the chapter still exposes a surprising assumption which underlies the genre: our desire for narrative to progress straightforwardly. In Hašek’s hands, even a story about “marching forward all the time” becomes chaotic. The narrative flouts historiographical convention by reflecting the experience of serving in the war as

¹⁸² “Dyt’ von dělá cestu kolem světa” (II: 266).

complicated to the point of incoherence. Unhinged, the anabasis form is free to wander, and the journey transforms its own narrative.

4. Soldier as historian

After meeting in the regimental prison, Švejk and the volunteer soldier Marek become fast friends. Although Marek has received a fair amount of critical attention, his work as a historiographical parodist is an under-appreciated component of the novel. Marek carries significance for many critics who read him as an alter-ego of his creator. Like Hašek (and the narrator), Marek has entered the army as a one-year volunteer in the 91st infantry regiment. Marek also shows his similarity to Hašek in one memorable episode from his civilian life which I discuss in detail at the end of this chapter: his stint as editor for the magazine *Svět zvířat* [*World of Animals*], a job he loses for writing about imaginary animals as if they were real.¹⁸³ But Marek is mostly discussed in terms of his friendship with Švejk. Hana Arie-Gaifman, for example, writes that the “partnership between Švejk and Marek is based on their immediate recognition of a very special similarity: they are both ‘underdogs’ within the military machine” (317). But she never discusses Marek’s attempt at writing history, which I argue enables him to transcend his underdog status by giving him an entryway into the discourse of the powerful.

There are, of course, important limits to the autobiographical reading. For one thing, Hašek served out the war as a journalist, and he could have given this job to Marek; parodic examples of reportage would have been right at home among the novel’s other inserted texts. This difference should not be elided. It signals first, that Marek is not a pure stand-in for Hašek and, second, that Hašek is doing something very specific with historiography. Hašek’s novel as a

¹⁸³ The falsification of animals is a recurring theme in *Osudy* and elsewhere in Hašek’s work. The reader will recall that Švejk “lived by selling dogs – ugly, mongrel monstrosities whose pedigrees he forged” (3). It’s sometimes said that Hašek briefly made his living this way.

whole draws our attention to the disconnect between the official narrative of the world war, indeed the myth of military heroism in general, and the lived experience of soldiers. It especially narrows in on what poet Wilfred Owen describes as “The old Lie: *Dulce et decorum est/Pro patria mori*,” the supposed glory of death on the battlefield. Marek voices this critique and suggests another way of reading his specific military history. In writing his history of the battalion, Marek finds the same kind of freedom from oppressive systems that we have identified in communal storytelling. This is because Marek brings to his history the same lower-class perspective that animates his storytelling. What’s more, his battalion history is a work of imaginative literature. On the subject of Hašek’s self-referentiality, though, it must be noted that his great parodic work *Politické a sociální dějiny strany mírného pokroku v mezích zákona* [*The Political and Social History of the Party of Moderate Progress Within the Limits of the Law*] was also fictional historiography.

In *Hidden in Plain View*, Gary Saul Morson discusses the parodic treatment of history in Tolstoy’s *War and Peace*, a demystification of the discourse that is surprisingly similar to what Hašek does in *Osudy*. Morson explains Tolstoy’s fundamental distrust of the historiographical process that necessarily reduces and simplifies impossibly complex events. To Tolstoy, the multitude of reasons, both accidental and intentional, that lead to certain outcomes are as unknowable as the intricacies of human behavior. Morson writes, “The historical sections of *War and Peace* satirize history and historiography, and the domestic (or “Peace”) sections discredit received views of individual psychology and their representation in novels” (83). Behind the mysteries of both psychology and history, Tolstoy’s novel proposes, we can perceive only the ineffable power of God. Hašek’s skepticism is rooted in quite a different belief system and leads him to draw very different conclusions. Like Tolstoy, however, Hašek believed that “histories

perform a mendacious social function. By enabling people to believe that events do make sense, histories blind them both to the chaos that so often governs human events and to humanity's incapacity to understand whatever order may exist" (Morson, 100). But whereas Tolstoy's demystification of historiography raises divine worship in its place, Hašek's is fundamentally destructive. His skepticism towards historians is part of his all-encompassing distrust of the institutions of authority. If Hašek proposes anything as an illuminating alternative to written history, it's fiction, a narrative form in which manipulation of historical material, as well as outright invention, is to be expected. And he accomplishes this just as Tolstoy does: by showing the ways in which history is, whether we realize it or not, fictionalized.

In the chapter "Across Hungary" in Volume III of *Osudy*, Captain Ságner discovers another recruit, the ambitious Cadet Biegler, poring over manuscripts of military histories. Biegler's motivation is counter-intuitive; he is looking for information, not on how to be a better soldier, but on how to be a better writer, "because he wanted to make a name for himself not only on the battlefield but also as a literary phenomenon describing the war events" (489).¹⁸⁴ At this point, Biegler is only in the drafting stage. He has not yet begun to write any narratives, but he has a list of "very promising titles":

'The Characters of the Warriors of the Great War. – Who Began the War? – The Policy of Austria-Hungary and the Origin of the World War. – War Notes. – Austria-Hungary and the World War. – Lessons from the War. – Popular Lecture on the Outbreak of the War. – Military Political Reflection. – The Glorious Day of Austria-Hungary. – Slav Imperialism and the World War. – Documents from the War. – Documents for the History of the World War. – A Diary of the World War. – A Daily Survey of the World War. – The First World War. – Our Dynasty in the World War. – Peoples of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy under Arms. – The World Struggle for Power. – My Experience in the World War. – The Chronicle of My War Campaign. – How the Enemies of Austria-Hungary Fight. – Who Will Be the Victors? – Our Officers and Our Men. – Memorable Acts of My Soldiers. – From the Times of the Great War. – On the Turmoil of Battle. – The Book of Austro-Hungarian Heroes. – The Iron Brigade. – A Collection of My

¹⁸⁴ "neboť chtěl vyniknout nejen na poli válečném, ale i jako literární fenomén, popisující válečné události" (III: 52).

Writings from the Front. – The Heroes of Our March Battalion. – Handbook for Soldiers in the Field. – Days of Battles and Days of Victory. – What I have Seen and Experienced in the Field. – In the Trenches. An Officer Relates... -- Forward with the Sons of Austria-Hungary! – Enemy Aeroplanes and Our Infantry. – After the Battle. – Our Artillery. – Faithful Sons of the Fatherland. – Come All the Devils in the World against Us... -- Defensive and Offensive War. – Blood and Iron. – Victory or Death. – Our Heroes in Captivity.’ (489-490)¹⁸⁵

The list of Biegler’s projected titles shows a range of predictions for how the story of the war could be told, and sold, after its conclusion. The generic variety illustrates an idea from Hayden White’s *Metahistory* about modes of emplotment as a form of historiographical argumentation. In certain highly formulaic historical texts, White argues, the “meaning” of a story can be discerned by identifying the type of story being told. Some of Biegler’s potential projects highlight his personal involvement, such as “A Diary of the World War,” “The Chronicle of My War Campaign” and “An Officer Relates...” Others, like “Austria-Hungary and the World War” and “Our Dynasty in the World War,” emphasize the imperial scale of the war. Some focus on the patriotism of the soldiers, like “The Book of Austro-Hungarian Heroes,” “Forward with the Sons of Austria-Hungary!” and “Faithful Sons of the Fatherland.” Finally, some of the titles show a future orientation: “Lessons from the War” and, most prophetic of all, “The First World War,” as if a second were already on the horizon. All but one of the titles, “Who Will Be the

¹⁸⁵ “Charaktery vojínů z velké války – Kdo počal válku? – Politika Rakousko-Uherska a zrození světové války – Válečné poznámky – Rakousko-Uhersko a světová válka – Naučení z války – Populární přednáška o vypuknutí války – Válečně politické úvahy – Slavný den Rakousko-Uherska – Slovanský imperialismus a světová válka – Dokumenty z války – Dokumenty k dějinám světové války – Deník o světové válce – Denní přehled světové války – První světová válka – Naše dynastie ve světové válce – Národové rakousko-uherského mocnářství ve zbrani – Světový zápas o moc – Mé zkušenosti ve světové válce – Kronika mého válečného tažení – Jak bojují nepřatelé Rakousko-Uherska – Čí je vítězství? – Naši důstojníci a naši vojáci – Pamětihodné činy mých vojáků – Z dob velké války – O bitevní vřavě – Kniha rakousko-uherských hrdinů – Železná brigáda – Sbírka mých psaní z fronty – Hrdinové našeho maršbataliónu – Příruční kniha pro vojáky v poli – Dny bojů a dny vítězství – Co jsem viděl a zkusil v poli – V zákopech – Důstojník vypravuje... – Se syny Rakousko-Uherska kupředu! – Nepřátelské aeroplány a naše pěchota – Po bitvě – Naše dělostřelectvo věrnými syny vlasti – I kdyby šli všichni čerti proti nám... – Válka obranná a útočná – Krev a železo – Vítězství nebo smrt – Naši hrdinové v zajetí” (III: 52-5).

Victors?”, presumes an Austrian triumph. And none of them predict anything like the collapse of the empire.

Carr writes, “Good historians, I suspect, whether they think about it or not, have the future in their bones. Besides the question, Why?, the historian also asks the question, Whither?” (102). Biegler’s future-orientation, however, is more cynical than the kind of thinking Carr describes; his goal, after all, is not to imagine the future development of his nation, but to become “a literary phenomenon.” Looking back on the outbreak of war from the vantage point of the early 1920s, Hašek was able to satirize the way the conflict could be boiled down to a straightforward narrative, and the proliferation of literary genres – works of historical fiction, drama, poetry and propagandistic history – that relied on this simplification. This obliquely attacks the emerging genre of Legionnaire literature, which were useful tools of propaganda for Masaryk’s administration (Boterbloem, 139). The classic examples of Legionnaire literature by veterans like Rudolf Medek and Hašek’s friend František Langer came later, but already when Hašek was writing *Osudy*, publishing houses devoted to military literature had released a number of non-fiction accounts of the anabasis, such as Šteidler’s *Návrat Československých Legií*. And yet, even as Biegler is able to predict the marketplace demand for first-hand accounts of the war, he cannot imagine how the war would actually conclude. To the post-war, post-empire reader, Biegler’s confident certainty is laughable.

The novel also satirizes the way military literature is used within the context of the army. When officers are looking for looking for an unbreakable code in which to send sensitive intelligence, Biegler cites an example that appears in *The Encyclopedia of Military Science* and *The Handbook of Military Cryptography*: a cipher based on a certain page from volume two of the 1886 novel *Die Sünden der Väter* [The Sins of the Father] by the Bavarian historical novelist

Ludwig Ganghofer. But the system goes awry when Švejk, deciding it's illogical to read the second part first, brings his lieutenant the wrong volume. It's true that Švejk's "mistake" undermines the plan, but in any case, a code documented in multiple books is hardly secret. Biegler himself says, "The method was perfected by Lieutenant Fleissner in his book, *The Handbook of Military Cryptography*, which anyone can buy at the publishers of the Military Academy in Wiener Neustadt" (468-469).¹⁸⁶ It's not so much that Švejk foils their plan, as that he does so sooner than the enemy could.

Biegler does not develop into an author; he is incapacitated from both his historiographical and military activities by a bout of diarrhea, an affliction that often appears in Hašek's fiction as something like God's own vengeance. And yet, the figure of the military historian does not disappear from the novel. Instead, in the following chapter "In Budapest," it is transferred to, and transformed by, the irreverent one-year volunteer Marek. Marek's improvisational talent allows him to take on the role of the historian. His practice of creative writing undermines the military and imperial bodies who rely on historiography to reinforce their authority, and mocks the readers who uncritically consume such texts.

Captain Ságner informs Marek of his new responsibility in a speech that evokes the first generation of Hašek criticism:

"You're very negligent, you one-year volunteer," he said to him. "In the volunteer school you were a thorough devil and instead of trying to do well and get promoted, as your intelligence deserved, you just drifted from arrest to arrest. The regiment must really be ashamed of you, volunteer. However, you can rectify your faults if you carry out your duties in the proper way and so take your place again in the ranks of good warriors. Devote your efforts to the battalion and do so with love. I shall see what I can do with

¹⁸⁶ "Metoda ta zdokonalena nadporučíkem Fleissnerem v knize Handbuch der militärischen Kryptographie, kterou si každý může koupit v nakladatelství Vojenské akademie ve Vídeňském Novém Městě" (III: 29).

you. You're an intelligent young man and certainly have the talent to write in a good style." (558-559).¹⁸⁷

In his article "Hašek's Early Critics," Jindřich Toman shows that the reception of Hašek's first publications showed more or less agreement about the author's talent, and his waste thereof.

Practically all the critics opined that Hašek was a gifted humorist but lacking discipline. With no regard for literary convention or the expectations of decency in subject matter and language, the early critics felt that Hašek could not be expected to garner respect as an artist. A similar logic guides Captain Ságner's directive to Marek. He recognizes the volunteer as intelligent and full of potential, but charges that, so far, he has squandered his gifts. Solemn dedication to his new task – writing a serious work of lasting value – would redeem him in the eyes of his contemporaries and for posterity. Hašek's inclusion of this is highly irreverent. It represents advice neither he nor his character will ever take. On the contrary, Marek's seemingly whole-hearted adoption of the duty of memorializing the war enables him to ridicule the authority figures around him. The work he authors is a send-up of the genre of military history, and, as an actionless, anti-war war novel, a *mise en abyme* of *Osudy*.

Mise en abyme refers to the representation of an entire work of art in miniature within itself. This technique originates in visual art, such as heraldic shields. A classic Czech example is the western entrance to the St. Vitus Cathedral on the grounds of the Prague Castle, where the doors are adorned with bronze relief images of landmark moments in Czech Christian history arranged chronologically. In the final image, the relics of Saint Václav are being conveyed to St.

¹⁸⁷ “‘Jste velice nedbalý, vy jednoroční dobrovolníku,’ řekl k němu, ‘ve škole jednoročáků byl jste pravou metlou, místo toho, abyste hleděl vyniknout a získat hodnost, která vám náleží dle vaší inteligence, potuloval jste se z arestu do arestu. Regiment se za vás musí hanbit, vy jednoroční dobrovolníku. Můžete však napravit svou chybu, když řádným plněním svých povinností ocitnete se opět v řadě těch dobrých vojáků. Věnujte své síly bataliónu s láskou. Zkusím to s vámi. Jste inteligentní mladý muž a jistě máte i schopnosti psát, stylizovat’” (III: 125).

Vitus Cathedral by a group entering through this very door. In written texts, the *mise en abyme* may be a short passage or a single image which duplicates or reflects the text as a whole.

In *The Author as Hero*, Justin Weir shows the utility of the *mise en abyme* for twentieth-century Russian novelists whose characters were themselves authors. The novels within the novels of Bulgakov, Pasternak and Nabokov, Weir argues, function as codes or keys for how the larger texts should be read. Hašek's transformation of Marek, already a semi-autobiographical character, into an author is a similar self-referential gesture. While we read only a short excerpt from Marek's history, he expounds at length about his writing process in dialogues which satirize the twinned discourses of historiography and military heroism.

Like Biegler, Marek intends to write a predictive history of the Austrian military campaign. However, Marek's method is very different. Marek sees in his appointment an opportunity for the ultimate game of make-believe, writing texts that detail military actions not yet undertaken. Marek's fabricated military history details the deaths of many of the characters from the battalion and argues that only by dying does a soldier provide meaningful service. Ironically, it's only in the pages of Marek's false history that the battalion ever sees action.

Marek says that his made-up scenes of enemy casualties "will be even better in, say, three months' time, when our battalion captures the Tsar of Russia" (581).¹⁸⁸ This is an extraordinarily layered moment of prewriting history which, according to historical chronology, is actually an act of *rewriting*: Hašek writing in 1922 describes the semi-autobiographical character Marek writing in 1915, not knowing what would eventually happen to Tsar Nicholas. Marek's battalion history is an exercise in wish-fulfillment on many levels. The reader may see humor in the incongruity between Marek's projection and the actual course of history as we know it. But even

¹⁸⁸ "Nebo ještě lepší to bude asi tak za tři měsíce, to náš bataliún zajme ruského cara" (III: 149).

in the world of the novel, Marek's disproportionately high ambition for his battalion pokes fun at the over-inflated ego of military men and those who write about them.

Marek's predictive history ridicules the arrogant confidence with which Austria is conducting the war. As he explains to Švejk, "The main thing for a conscientious historian like me is first to draw up a plan of our victories" (580).¹⁸⁹ In this assertion Marek reveals that his responsibility is not to recount events as they occurred, but to imagine them as they ought to occur. Carr defends the historians' ability to make predictions, but he delimits this in such a way as to preclude what Marek does:

The historian, as we have seen, is bound to generalize; and in so doing, he provides general guides for future action which though not specific predictions are both valid and useful. But he cannot predict specific events because the specific is unique and because the element of accident enters into it. (63)

Marek's predictions take advantage of our allowance that written history not limit itself to past events, but he brings it to an extreme that transgresses both generic convention and reliable imagination. The results of the military actions, then, are expected to conform to his prewritten "history." The reliable foundation of history as we know it, indeed the fact that it concerns itself primarily with events of the past, is thus turned on its head. With it goes the authority of the historian.

Marek's approach to history-writing simultaneously elevates the power of historiography and annihilates the legitimacy of the historian. In planning and writing his text, he also imagines the fate [*osud*] of each individual soldier and officer, as well as the way the battalion will be honored in the victorious Austrian future. In all of this, Marek ridicules the expectation of soldiers' self-sacrifice and the celebration of military brutality. He explains:

¹⁸⁹ "Hlavní věcí je pro důkladného historika dějin, jako jsem já, udělat si zprvu plán našich vítězství" (III: 148).

I must prepare in advance small episodes which testify to the battalion's unexampled heroism. I'll have to think out an entirely new war terminology for it. I've already invented one new term. I intend to write about the *self-sacrificing resolution* of our men, who are riddled through and through with splinters of shrapnel. (581; emphasis added)¹⁹⁰

Marek's foregrounding "self-sacrificing resolution" is all the more ironic because this battalion has undertaken no military action and has done nothing to distinguish itself. In Marek's history, however, each man will have the opportunity to die a properly grisly, if often stupid and avoidable, death, and thus become a hero, at least literarily. Significantly, the only major characters who escape death by Marek's pen are his two favorite people in the battalion, himself and Švejk.

An inserted text titled "Heroic Death of Quartermaster Sergeant-Major Vaněk" gives us a sense of Marek's writing style and the sorts of liberties he takes with his history. It shows the usually self-centered Vaněk disguised as a peasant as part of a plot to blow up the enemy's armored train. He is initially taken as a spy and sentenced to an ignominious death by hanging, but once his true identity and high rank are revealed, the sentence is commuted to death by firing squad. In Marek's version, Vaněk's last words are an order for the soldiers' daily rations to be increased and for the money he has won at cards to be donated to the Russian Red Cross. Thus, Marek's fictionalized Vaněk becomes more magnanimous than the man on whom Marek based him. At the same time, though, Marek has ridiculed his subject by attributing to him the very qualities he lacks, dressing him as a peasant, threatening him with hanging and finally having him shot. In the normal course of military relations, a one-year volunteer would never be able to publicly deride a superior officer in this way. But by taking on the persona of a writer, Marek gains the freedom to describe humiliating fates for everyone, regardless of rank.

¹⁹⁰ "mezitím si musím připravit do zásoby malé epizody, svědčící o bezpříkladné hrdinnosti. Bude mně třeba vymyslet si zcela nové válečné termíny. Jeden jsem si již vymyslel, budu psát o *obětavé odhodlanosti* našeho mužstva, prošpikovaného střepinami granátů" (III: 149).

Marek also brings his talents as an improviser into his writing, as he simultaneously writes and rewrites. Because he approaches his task as if writing fiction, he is not bound by a sequence of events that have already happened and is free to modify details as he – and his subjects – see fit. Before revealing his chapter on Vaněk's death, he gives the quartermaster the option of either vanishing without a trace or being wounded and caught behind barbed wire. Chodounský the telephone operator, destined to be buried by a mine explosion, may choose between two sets of dying words: "I'm dying and I congratulate my battalion on its victory" or "Give my last greetings to our Iron Brigade!" (both 615).¹⁹¹ And to the gluttonous soldier Baloun, who is to be "strangled by a lasso, thrown down from an enemy plane at the very moment when he is wolfing his lieutenant's dinner" (583),¹⁹² Marek promises that he will omit from the text the embarrassing details about Baloun's insatiable appetite, even though the entire episode of his death is invented.

Marek's willingness to negotiate over these details comprises another critique of the genre: the historian's appeal to the vanity of his subject, to say nothing of the autobiographer. Objectivity thus cannot be assumed on the part of the historian or, if still living and collaborating, his subject. Carr points out that history is mankind's study of itself, and this is one of the conditions that render impossible scholarly objectivity (114). The historian can alter the details of an event in order to stroke the egos of those involved. Because Marek is a battalion historian responsible for depicting high-ranking officers and military heroes, this aspect strikes at the heart of the warrior cult. We recall that in his preface to the novel, the narrator compares

¹⁹¹ "Umírám a gratuluji svému bataliónu k vítězství!"; "Pozdravujte ode mne naši železnou brigádu!" (both III: 184).

¹⁹² "Bude uškrcen lasem vymrštěným z nepřátelského aeroplánu právě v tom okamžiku, kdy bude požírat oběd svého obrlajtnanta Lukáše" (III: 150).

Švejk to “the historical glamour of a Napoleon” and “the glory of Alexander the Great” (1).¹⁹³

Marek’s writing process casts doubt on the legends of such famed military leaders and makes us wonder about the historian’s standard of significance when the ultimate goal is to depict someone in the recognizable tradition of a military hero. What inglorious elements must be omitted to craft such a character?

Indeed, the entire battalion history comes to seem more like a vanity project than an attempt at factual documentation. In this way it recalls Xenophon’s *Anabasis*, in which the Xenophon-character occasionally enjoys an outsized share of the spotlight. Although Xenophon is forthright about his mistakes, he has a tendency to exaggerate his own importance as a leader and deny credit to his colleagues (Anderson, 337). But Marek suggests that death alone can truly satisfy the requirements for military glory, explaining:

In short everybody will have his turn, everyone of our battalion will distinguish himself so that the glorious pages of our history will overflow with victories – although I really would much prefer them not to overflow, but I can’t help it. Everything must be carried out thoroughly so that some memory of us will remain until, say, in the month of September there will be really nothing left whatsoever of our battalion, except these glorious pages of history which will carry a message to the hearts of all Austrians, making it plain to them that all those who will never see their homes again fought equally valiantly. And I’ve already written the end, you know, Mr Vaněk – the obituary notice. Honour to the memory of the fallen! Their love for the Monarchy is the most sacred love of all, for death was its climax. (583-584)¹⁹⁴

Marek’s demurral of his own creative process, the suggestion that he “would prefer not to” write blood-soaked pages, suggests that he is bound by literary convention even against his own will.

¹⁹³ “slávy a historie Napoleona”; “slávu Alexandra Makedonského” (I: 7).

¹⁹⁴ “Zkrátka a dobře, na každého dojde a každý se vyznamená z našeho bataliónu, takže slavné stránky našich dějin budou přeplněny vítězstvími – ačkoliv bych velice nerad to přeplňoval, ale nemohu si pomoci, všechno musí být provedeno důkladně, aby po nás zbyla nějaká památka, nežli, řekněme v měsíci září, nezbude z našeho bataliónu dočista nic než jenom ty slavné stránky dějin, které budou mluvit do srdcí všech Rakušanů, že je jisto, že všichni z těch, kteří nespátí už svůj domov, bili se stejně statně a udatně. Konec toho již jsem sestavil, víte, pane Vaňku, toho nekrologu. Čest památce padlých! Jejich láska k mocnářství je láskou nejsvětější, neboť vyvrcholila ve smrt” (III: 151).

It is neither the war itself nor he the author who kills off his officers and fellow-soldiers, but the demands of the genre. The battalion history must conform to readers' expectations: "according to my notes our battalion will suffer heavy and severe losses, because a battalion without dead is no battalion at all" (582).¹⁹⁵ Not only their glory but the soldiers' identity qua soldiers comes from their willingness to die. For Marek's text to fulfill the expectations of the genre, that willingness must be followed to its logical extension. Every time Marek talks about his text, he focuses on the death of the characters, not their military accomplishments. In his relentless focus on death, Marek's history resembles an obituary omnibus. And yet, despite the emphasis on death, he also evokes the immortalizing function of the written word, claiming that "there will be really nothing left whatsoever of our battalion, except these glorious pages of history" (583). This must be cold comfort for the soldiers facing their own death, which is made possible by their enlistment and elaborately predicted in Marek's text.

To be sure, Biegler's work would have had the same emphasis. When Captain Ságner sees his early notes, Biegler explains, "My model is the German professor, Udo Kraft. He was born in the year 1870, volunteered for service now in the world war and fell on 22 August 1914 at Anloy. Before his death he published a book: *Self-Education in Dying for the Emperor*" (490).¹⁹⁶ *Osudy* contains very few original footnotes and even fewer sources, but here, Hašek himself provides a full citation, "Udo Kraft: *Selbsterziehung zum Tod für Kaiser. C. F. Amelang's Verlag, Leipzig,*" as if to emphasize that such a destructive book actually exists.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁵ "batali6n bez mrtv6ch nen6 2adn6m batali6nem" (III: 150).

¹⁹⁶ "M6m vzorem je n6meck6 profesor Udo Kraft. Narodil se roku 1870, nyn6 ve sv6tov6 v6lce p6hl6sil se dobrovoln6 a padl 22. srpna 1914 v Anloy. P6ed svou smrt6 vydal knihu *Sebev6chova pro smrt za cis6re*" (III: 53-54).

¹⁹⁷ And it really does! The book's OCLC number is 560643067.

Marek is convinced of the success of his project, and is so bold as to imagine the scintillating effect his book will have even on a royal readership. Describing the future of his text to his fellow soldiers, Marek predicts that his history will bring such glory to the battalion that “a small intimate family celebration [will be] held in the Imperial Household”¹⁹⁸ at Schönbrunn, the imperial summer residence. His description of this celebration is no less detailed than the military history and gives him the opportunity to ridicule the monarchy by presenting a scene as ostentatious as it is obscene. He implicates the Archduchess and the Emperor himself, adding that:

The Monarch’s general adjutant, Count Paar, must and will be there, and because during such family and intimate receptions someone occasionally feels faint (by which of course I don’t mean that Count Paar himself should vomit), the presence of the personal doctor, the Counsellor of the Court, Dr Kerzl, will be required. For the sake of decency, to ensure that the court footmen shouldn’t permit themselves any liberties with the ladies-in-waiting present at the reception, the Marshal of the Court, Baron Lederer, the Chamberlain, Count Bellegarde, and the principal Lady-in-Waiting, Countess Bombelles, will appear. The latter fulfills the same role among the ladies-in-waiting as madame does in the Prague brothel, U Šuhů. (582)¹⁹⁹

Marek’s description of the court shows an extreme degree of irreverence, which is the principal quality of Marek’s persona, especially but not only as an author. His status as a writer gives him the license, if only in his imagination, to record the activities of the monarchy, including its sordid goings-on and lower-bodily functions, and he takes shocking liberties in his account of it, creating a Bakhtinian carnival of the court. Members of the court are subject to the same human urges as the soldiers – going to the bathroom, going to the brothel – so the difference between

¹⁹⁸ “musí být v budoucnosti oslaveny v rodinném kruhu v Schönbrunnu” (III: 149).

¹⁹⁹ “Musí tam být a bude tam generální adjutant mocnáře hrabě Paar. Poněvadž při takových rodinných a intimních hostinách bývá občas někomu mdlo, čímž ovšem nemyslím, že se hrabě Paar snad poblije, je vyžadována přítomnost osobního lékaře, dvorního rady dr. Kerzla. Kvůli pořádku, aby si snad dvorní lokajové nedovolili nějaké důvěrnosti ku dvorním dámám přítomným na hostině, objevuje se nejvyšší hofmistr baron Lederer, komoří hrabě Bellegarde a vrchní dvorní dáma hraběnka Bombellesová, která hraje mezi dvorními dámami stejnou úlohu jako madam v bordelu u Šuhů” (III: 150).

the two groups is not based on behavior, but on power. This is that monarchy which the soldiers' bodily sacrifice, elaborately detailed in Marek's history, is meant to preserve.

Marek's battalion history is the most threatening kind of subversive activity; beneath the veneer of conformity to generic norms, it hides a challenge to the very system the text is supposed to uphold. He does not mask his critique of the military in Aesopian language. Rather, he follows the directions to the letter, and carries his task to its most extreme conclusion. In this way he resembles Švejk, whose expressions of military enthusiasm are so overwrought, they seem sarcastic. Marek thereby reveals the great distance between the idealized version of the war, the comprehensible and inspiring version promoted through official literature, and the lived experience. Marek's experiment with writing the battalion history on the one hand indulges his irreverent streak, but at the same time it achieves a weightier task: ironically, it confirms the power of the written word. That power in and of itself is, as historian Melvin Kranzberg said of technology, "neither good nor evil; nor is it neutral." The moral value of such a power comes from who wields it, how and why.

Marek's history forces us to examine our assumptions about the reliability and authority of the historian. He delights in all the habits which are permitted in the writing of history which, upon analysis, compromise the text's reliability; he casts predictions, suppresses and emphasizes details based on his own feelings about the people involved, and exaggerates the ideological message, hence recommending his work for political propaganda. If historians and readers of history have already come to terms with the idea that the presentation of history necessarily requires some interpretation, hence manipulation, of factual material, authority is still established in part on the assumption that the material is indeed factual. Marek's text is an extreme representation of the modernist conviction that there is no knowable core of information which

generates and organizes the historical text. The text, instead, is all. By dispensing with a factual basis altogether, Marek produces a work in the form of historical interpretation that is, in fact, pure invention. It is, in fact, fiction.

Significantly, the battalion history is not Marek's first foray into writing that fictionalizes a non-fiction genre. In Volume II, chapter "Švejk's Adventures in Királyhida," Marek recounts his tenure as the editor of *Svět zvířat* [*World of Animals*].²⁰⁰ Marek tells how the owner of the magazine offered him the job after Marek expressed commitment to the humane treatment of animals and claimed to be knowledgeable about biology and animal husbandry; no further proof of his qualifications was ever requested. His creative ambitions soon alter the course of the publication. He plans first to inject life into the magazine by introducing new columns, including "'The Merry Animal Corner,' 'Animals about Animals,' always carefully taking the political situation into account [...] 'An Animal's Day' alternating with 'Movement among Cattle.'"²⁰¹ This set of titles becomes a parody of the journalism of the day, ranging from entertaining human-interest stories to seemingly political articles. But Marek is not satisfied with the creative potential of this approach. He explains:

I proceeded from the basic assumption that animals like, for instance, the elephant, the tiger, the lion, the monkey, the mole, the horse, the pig etc. were already quite familiar creatures to the readers of *The Animal World* and that it was therefore necessary to stimulate the readers with something fresh, with new discoveries. [...] My new animals multiplied daily. I was extremely surprised myself by my successes in these spheres. I never had any idea that it would be necessary to make such copious additions to the animal kingdom and that Brehm had left out so many animals from his book *The Life of Animals*. (325)²⁰²

²⁰⁰ Some of the details differ from his biography, but Hašek freely uses the names of some of the real people involved, including "my old comrade Hájek" and "[the magazine's] owner, Mr Fuchs" (323).

²⁰¹ "'Veselý koutek zvířat,' 'Zvířata o zvířatech', všímaje si přitom bedlivě politické situace. [...] 'Ze dne zvířat' že se musí střídat s 'Novým programem řešení otázky domácího skotu' a 'Hnutím mezi dobytkem'" (II: 349).

²⁰² Vycházel jsem z toho principu, že například slon, tygr, lev, opice, krtek, kůň, čuně atd. jsou dávno již každému čtenáři Světa zvířat úplně známými tvory. Že třeba čtenáře rozrušit něčím novým. [...] Přibývala mně nová zvířata každým dnem. Sám byl jsem velice překvapen mými úspěchy v těchto

As with his military history, Marek creates a fictional work within the confines of a non-fiction genre; this time it's science journalism. The motivation for both acts is the same: the desire to make the text more satisfying, a more perfect fulfillment of the generic expectations. At the magazine, he claims he felt compelled to do so because "the readers of *The Animal World* are in general very inquisitive" (325).²⁰³ His articles take on the appearance of authenticity through details that are specific to the genre. Marek quotes invented scientists and gives geographical and biological details for his imaginary animals, which include the Sulphur-Bellied Whale, the Sepia Infusorian and the Irritable Bazouky Stag-Puss.²⁰⁴ Marek's inventive spree comes to an end when he is taken to task by other journalists; another newspaper quotes a specious article from *The Animal World*, leading to a condemnation in the pages of *Čas* [*Time*], the pre-war organ of Masaryk's Realist Party. Marek is finally undone when yet another editor challenges his invented nomenclature, thereby revealing that the animals themselves are invented. The controversy impugns the magazine as a whole and brings Marek's career as a "journalist" to an end.²⁰⁵

Marek's stunt at *Animal World* ridicules the editor who hired him without confirming his qualifications and makes fools of the readers who curiously but uncritically consumed his writing. These victims of his prank are linked by their gullibility. Readers of the magazine desire

oborech. Nikdy jsem si nepomyslel, že je třeba zvířenu tak silně doplnit a že Brehm tolik zvířat mohl vynechat ve svém spise *Život zvířat*. (II: 350) *Život zvířat* is *Brehms Tierleben*, a hugely influential German zoological encyclopedia published serially throughout the mid-nineteenth century. Hašek mentions it in his story "Ma drahá přítelkyně Julča."

²⁰³ "jsou vůbec čtenáři Světa zvířat velice zvědaví" (II: 350).

²⁰⁴ This passage and Hašek's actual work with *Svět zvířat* suggest themselves as the inspiration for Karel Čapek's 1936 science fiction novel *Válka s mloky* [*War with the Newts*], which also includes parodies of texts from a variety of genres. The connection is beyond the bounds of this research, but it would be instructive to pursue this question.

²⁰⁵ In the novel, the owner of the magazine is driven to the point of insanity and death by Marek's antics. The historical Mr. Fuchs, however, survived his acquaintance with Hašek, as did the magazine as a whole. In the winter of 1924, the magazine's editorial board was invited to a private memorial on the first anniversary of Hašek's death.

to be entertained, indeed mystified, by the genre of popular science journalism; they expect it to be at once reliable and incredible. The fact that Marek is challenged only by other journalists suggests that he could have gone on fooling the readership indefinitely.²⁰⁶ His work as a military historian is, in this way, an improvement on that method; by involving his officers and fellow-soldiers in the composition, he implicates the only people able to challenge its veracity. In order to cement the myth of the heroic sacrifice of the war, the subjects of Marek's writing willingly participate in his distortion of facts, events, and ultimately the representation of themselves. Moreover, by labelling his creative works as non-fiction, Marek mocks those readers whose eagerness for a work to conform to generic expectations makes them incapable of discerning the manipulations such criteria may enable.

With very little exaggeration, the episode comes directly out of Hašek's autobiography, and he referred to it repeatedly in his fiction. The short stories "Kynologický ústav," later republished under the title "Můj obchod se psy" and "Má drahá přítelkyně Julča" ["The Cynological Institute"/"My Business with Dogs" and "My Dear Girlfriend Julča," both from 1914) are based on Hašek's zoological enterprises from this period. But even more than fictional material, the stunt confirmed Hašek's suspicions about the mechanisms of manipulating his readership. Hašek reflected on the experience in a speech he delivered during the Party of Moderate Progress campaign in 1911, the year after he had been fired from *Animal World*. The speech begins, "Kdo je politik, musí prodělat velkou školu života, hlavně musí se naučit klamat lidi" ["Whoever is a politician must pass through the great school of life, and above all must learn how to deceive people"] (Hašek, *Politické a sociální dějiny* 44). He draws the conclusion

²⁰⁶ It calls to mind the Sokal Affair, a mid-90s mystification in which a physics professor published an intentionally erroneous manuscript to reveal the lack of editorial rigor in academic journals. Thanks to Justin Weir for reminding me of this episode.

that the successful deceptions he carried out at *Animal World* represent the beginning of his development into a capable politician. About a decade elapsed between Hašek's original prank and his retelling it through Marek, but he seems to have maintained the same sense of the episode's implications. When texts are presented as non-fiction, they may yet contain fictional elements. In these cases, fabrication is often an intentional deception in the author's pursuit of some end, as a successful deception rewards the author, perhaps with money, perhaps with some other form of power. On the other hand, when texts are presented as fiction, their fabricated nature is a given. The contract between a fiction-writer and a fiction-reader is therefore mutually empowering, as the author is at liberty to invent material and technique in the pursuit of creative expression, and the reader is rewarded for recognizing the extent of that invention.

Both Marek's articles for *Animal World* and his military history show the hallmarks of literary mystification: a text whose recognizable format deceptively obscures its invented or inflammatory essence. A mystification, like any successful hoax, must be plausible enough to be taken seriously, otherwise it will announce itself as a fabrication. But mystifications are distinguished from other kind of hoaxes insofar as the deception, and subsequent disillusionment, are part of the artistic method. Marek's two literary mystifications reveal gullibility on the part of the readership, and his military history moreover suggests the degree to which those in power rely on the readers' naïveté. Of all the characters who lie and deceive, Marek is the only one who does so through writing. His willing conformity to the imperial military system as a volunteer soldier gives him first-hand knowledge of it. Like Švejk, his apparent embrace of the military system both informs and masks his subversive activity. Only when he becomes an author working in the highly codified genre of military history does Marek find a way to express himself within that system and to reveal the limits of both the genre and what it seeks to achieve.

5. Conclusion

The novel's cheeky treatment of historical information, along with the plethora of narrative forms it takes, amounts to an assault on the most basic assumptions about how historical information is preserved and transmitted. From the very first page, the author-narrator's preface upends the conventional hierarchy of heroic historical personages. By equating Švejk with figures like Napoleon and Alexander the Great, he simultaneously elevates the good soldier, and discredits the famed leaders. The equivocation suggests the artifice of war heroism, revealing it to be a myth, a fiction. And yet Hašek's project is not to attack the personal reputations of these or other military leaders, but rather to draw our attention to the way those stories are used. Over and over again throughout the novel, shining examples from military history are invoked in order to convince people to join and support the war effort. History is put to the service of propaganda, used to explain, justify, and glorify the real business of war: death on the battlefield.

Through his irreverent treatment of historical personages and historiography, Hašek shows that, more often than not, historical discourse is essentially an expression of power. But his project is not to spur historians towards greater critical thinking or self-awareness; for Hašek, historians are to be grouped with the clergy and government officials as irredeemable agents of powerful institutions. Rather, he proposes critical and self-aware fiction as a worthy and more honest alternative: a source of information and inspiration whose inventive elements are transparent, though not necessarily easy to comprehend. His most sophisticated and demanding work, *Osudy* creates Hašek's ideal reader: skeptical, perceptive, and holding nothing so sacred that it can't withstand ridicule.

The novel format, indeed the very premise of fiction, allows Hašek to include details and anecdotes which convention – or political consideration – might render unsuitable for inclusion in a historical text, such as the mass desertion Švejk discovers as he roams the Bohemian countryside. This of course extends to the type of characters that history records, and thus honors, which brings us back to the good soldier Švejk. He and the other low-ranking soldiers who populate this novel never set foot on a battlefield, and, from the viewpoint of a conventional military historian, never achieve anything. But from another perspective, perhaps avoiding the battlefield is their greatest achievement. What does it mean, then, to be a “good soldier” – dying in battle, or surviving it? These competing notions round out our sense of the war, and the novel may ultimately give a truer, if not more accurate, account than “non-fiction” texts of what it meant to experience it. This suggests that the line that separates fiction from non-fiction is a sort of border wall, erected by powerful people and institutions with a vested interest in ownership over the official version of the story.

Švejk as a character and the novel as a whole disavow all authority, a gesture anathema to historiography. The novel presents three individuals whose narratives run counter to the version peddled by powerful institutions: the narrator, with his anti-authoritarian commentary; Švejk, with his steadfast insistence on the correctness of his own decisions; and Marek, who dispenses with factual material in order to accomplish the primary goal of imperial military history – justifying countless deaths on the battlefield. These figures model a refusal to be manipulated, and by learning how to read their stories, we can develop our own methods of resistance to the tyranny of narratives that seek to be authoritative. In Hašek’s view, historiography inevitably manipulates the reader, but fiction can empower her.

CHAPTER FOUR

My Friend Hašek: Memoirs Beyond Fact and Fiction

The story will only get repeated and exaggerated. –Daphne du Maurier

Gertrude Stein found her too easily shocked to be interesting. –Gertrude Stein

1. Introduction

Hašek died on January 3, 1923. In the following days, major newspapers ran obituaries hailing him as the brilliant author of the beloved Švejk novel. Here we begin to see a shift in Hašek's reputation, as some of these same newspapers had, in the previous two years, criticized *Osudy* for its foul language and disrespectful representation of the Czech war effort. Some of the obituarists referenced the multiple false rumors of Hašek's death that had been reported between 1915 and 1920 during his army service. The item published in *Čas*, for example, begins "There are probably many people who still don't believe that Hašek really died this time" ("Literatura a umění," 3). In *Tribuna* the headline read "Jaroslav Hašek mrtev?" ["Jaroslav Hašek dead?"]. The reference to this popular rumor itself illustrates the quality of Hašek's sui generis celebrity; he was famously unreliable and unpredictable.

The following year, friends of the author organized a memorial event on the anniversary of his death. Drawing up a list of people to invite, it was noted who in the past twelve months had written books about Hašek: Antonín Bouček, Franta Sauer, Emil Artur Longen, Zdeněk Matěj Kuděj, Ivan Suk and, twice, Václav Menger. On the invitation, the organizers identified themselves as "Trosky Strany mírného pokroku v mezích zákona," or "The ruins of the Party of Moderate Progress within the Limits of the Law." While the guest list ran long with the names of

writers and editors who had known and worked with Hašek, the invitation also included a request to “Bring with you all acquaintances who we may have, through an oversight, forgotten.”²⁰⁷

By the late 1970s, there were more than a dozen books in what had become a distinctive “I knew Hašek” genre. These books are not biographies. Some are memoirs of a relationship with the author, others are autobiographical novels, and a few are non-narrative collections of anecdotes. Eventually, the genre died out with the passing of those who had been Hašek’s contemporaries. These books, which have never been seriously treated as a literary corpus, are the best source of information for the Hašek legend, which is not necessarily Hašek’s life story, but the story of his life story.

In the previous chapters, I have attempted to illuminate Hašek’s use of autobiography, especially insofar as it would have been legible to his original readers. But this approach takes for granted the idea that Hašek’s first readers knew something about his life. In fact, Hašek was a celebrity long before he was a celebrity writer. Celebrity in this sense means simply the state of being famous, whether for talent, achievement or notoriety, during one’s lifetime. The academic discipline of celebrity studies, while robust, is newly formulated,²⁰⁸ yet the discourse of celebrity is much older. Weber’s essay “Politics as Vocation,” which attempts to explain how some individuals exercise authority over others, may be fruitfully applied to the mechanisms of celebrity, in particular his theory of charismatic authority:

[R]ule based on the acquiescence of those who submit to the purely personal “charisma” of the “leader.” For this is where we discover the root of the idea of “vocation” in its highest form. Submission to the charisma of the prophet or warlord or of the great demagogues of the assemblies, the *ekklesia*, of ancient Greece or of Parliament means

²⁰⁷ “N.B. Přiveďte s sebou všechny známě, na které jsme snad nedopatřením zapomněli.”

²⁰⁸ In the burgeoning field of celebrity studies, P.D. Marshall’s *Celebrity and Power* from 1997 and Chris Rojek’s *Celebrity* from 2001 are considered to be the seminal texts and the flagship journal *Celebrity Studies* was founded only in 2010. In some ways, celebrity studies picks up where the “death of the author” debate left off, but with increased focus on mass media and the increasingly commodified business of famousness.

that such men are held to be the inwardly “chosen” leaders of humankind. People do not submit to them because of any customs or statutes, but because they believe in them. Such a leader does indeed live for his cause and “strives to create his work,” if he is anything more than a narrow-minded and vain upstart, a passing product of his age. But the devotion of his followers, that is, his disciples and liegemen, or his entirely personal band of supporters, is directed toward his person and his qualities. Leadership has manifested itself in all parts of the globe and throughout history in the shape of two dominant figures of the past: the magician and prophet on the one hand, and the chosen warlord, gang leader, and *condottiere* on the other. (Weber, *The Vocation Lectures* 34-35).

Although Weber’s concern is political power, his model helps to illustrate how some individuals manage to claim the attention of the masses. Importantly, Weber does not see charismatic authority, or any kind of authority for that matter, as evidence of validity or virtue. For him, the “prophet” and the “gang leader” rise to prominence in exactly the same way: by commanding the personal devotion of those who recognize their extraordinary qualities.

Scholars working in the field of celebrity studies agree that there is a difference between traditional renown, the recognition of having achieved some great feat, and modern celebrity, with which renown may or may not coincide. During his lifetime, Hašek did not enjoy or court literary prestige. His reputation as an estimable author derived from posthumous reappraisals of *Osudy*. Following this shift, a large number of Hašek’s friends and collaborators wrote memoirs about their friendship with the man who was beginning to be regarded as an important author, retelling the famous anecdotes from earlier in his life. These memoirs, which are the focus of this chapter, represent the emerging discourse not about the value of Hašek’s writing, but about his personal legacy.

Some scholars see a unique connection between literary modernism and the rise of the modern literary celebrity.²⁰⁹ In his book *Modernism is the Literature of Celebrity*, Jonathan

²⁰⁹ Most the scholarship on modernist celebrity focuses on Anglophone literature and/or Parisian literary society in the early 20th century. Such studies shed light on the meaning of Hašek’s celebrity, but do not

Goldman argues that authors like James Joyce and Gertrude Stein consciously cultivated an public image that corresponded to their idiosyncratic texts; this of course was enabled in part by technological advancements in radio, photography and cinema. The years of Hašek's life align with the era of literary modernism and his work, especially *Osudy*, bears the imprint of modernist technique, but he was not part any group or school pursuing it. Moreover, Hašek's anti-intellectual tendencies were quite out of step with the erudite ethos that both produced and celebrated modernist literature. In contrast to contemporaneous famous writers, modernist or otherwise, Hašek's celebrity was predicated not on the genius of his work, but primarily on his personality as an anti-authority prankster. As far as Hašek's image goes, in the extant photos of the author, which number around twenty, he is never shown to be smiling. This of course includes formal photos from his military years, but also informal ones, taken on a walk with his wife or with the "Executive Board" of the Party of Moderate Progress. But while he doesn't smile, he is certainly playing. In every photo, he poses pompously and stares deadpan into the camera, a parody of a very important author. In one exemplary photo taken in a park with Emil Artur Longen, Xena Longenová and other cabaret actors laughing and playing music, Hašek lays on his side in front of them all, one hand tucked against his cheek, another splayed on his hip, looking straight into the camera almost seductively.

take into account the kinds of political questions that were necessarily consequential for an author moving between late-Habsburg Bohemia and early soviet Russia in the same time period.



Figure 2: Hašek and his actor friends. The bottom row shows, left to right, Hašek, Longenová and Longen. On the top row, the man holding the guitar is J. Leitzer. The other two men and the dog are unidentified. Photographer unknown. 1914. Památník národního písemnictví, Prague.

In “Literature and Biography,” Tomashevsky argues that certain authors construct “legendary biographies” which function as the interpretive key to their literary texts. The legendary biography is neither a written text nor a set of historical facts, but the author’s intentionally constructed reputation which she encodes into her literature. Tomashevsky writes,

for a writer with a biography, the facts of the author's life must be taken into consideration. Indeed, in the works themselves the juxtaposition of the texts and the author's biography plays a structural role. The literary work plays on the potential reality of the author's subjective outpourings and confessions. Thus the biography that is useful to the literary historian is not the author's curriculum vitae or the investigator's account of his life. What the literary historian really needs is the biographical legend created by the author himself. Only such a legend is a *literary fact*. (55; original emphasis)

Tomashevsky's argument elides, however, the question of the author's fame, a status usually achieved through the endorsement of literary institutions such as large-scale publishing houses and journalistic criticism. The cooperation of literary institutions validates an author and creates the impression that their work should be taken seriously. Obviously, as with charismatic individuals in any field, many authors achieve fame without genius; I repeat that fame is not an indicator of greatness. Tomashevsky, however, is writing about canonical authors, authors whose fame extends for generations in part because of the cooperation of literary institutions. He takes for granted the fact that insofar as a legendary biography is consciously cultivated, it could only be effective for a celebrity writer. Although in his final years Hašek's writing became increasingly sophisticated and ambitious, for the majority of his adult life, his fame was uncoupled from prestige.²¹⁰ Both his literature and his self-mythologizing was of a brand that resisted conventional enshrinement by literary institutions.

The Hašek legend is a fictionalized version of his life and character which emerged from the ongoing, collective process of interpreting his work and biography. The legend is partially composed of the humorous stories about him that were, and among fans continue to be, transmitted orally. In this chapter, the word "story" refers to an oral tale about Hašek, as opposed to "short story," a written fictional text. "Story" in this sense is used interchangeably with "anecdote." Of course, Hašek is not the only famous author to whom a set of anecdotes are

²¹⁰ According to his second wife Alexandra Lvova, until he began work on *Osudy*, not even Hašek took Hašek seriously as a writer.

attached. Tomashevsky writes, “The biographies of real authors, for example of Puškin and Lermontov, were cultivated as oral legends. How many interesting anecdotes the old-timers ‘knew’ about Puškin!” (51).²¹¹ The anecdotes connected with Hašek often represent his quick wit, weaponized against the foibles of the imperial government and the norms it put into place. An illustrative example is the story of Hašek’s behavior immediately following the assassination of Franz Ferdinand. Hašek is said to have registered at a Prague hotel under a Russian name in order to see how long it would take secret police to arrest him on the suspicion of being a spy. This episode appears in both Radko Pytlík’s and Cecil Parrot’s biographies of Hašek. Emil Artur Longen, author of a Hašek memoir, claims the name he used was Lev Nikolayevich Turgenev (35), while Antonín Bouček, who published two volumes of anecdotes about Hašek, records it as Fyodor Ivanovich (*50 historek* 55).

The circulation of these anecdotes shows that Hašek’s fame was distinct from his career as an author. In pre-war Prague there were people “kdo ho znali jedině z anekdot” [“who knew him only from anecdotes”] (Langer, 30). We shall see, however, that his celebrity was not universal; some of the memoirists were unaware of Hašek before becoming personally acquainted with him. He was certainly known among the bohemian set in Prague, and, as we shall see, stories about him tended to appear like a trail of breadcrumbs in other places where he travelled. Not all the stories repeated about Hašek are entirely true or even based in fact, but they

²¹¹ The Pushkin anecdotes became themselves canonical as an oral genre. In *Анекдоты из жизни Пушкина*, Danil Kharmis parodied this mirror image of the official literary culture with his collection of nonsensical vignettes about the major figures of Russian literature. Here’s one for example: “У Пушкина было четыре сына и все идиоты. Один не умел даже сидеть на стуле и все время падал. Пушкин-то и сам довольно плохо сидел на стуле. Бывало, сплошная умора; сидят они за столом: на одном конце Пушкин все время со стула падает, а на другом конце — его сын. Просто хоть святых вон выноси!” [“Pushkin had four sons and they were all idiots. One was not even able to sit on a chair and was all the time falling off. Pushkin himself voluntarily sat incorrectly on chairs. So there was this ongoing joke; they sat around the table: on one end Pushkin all the time falling off the chair and on the other end — his son. It’s enough to try the patience of a saint!”]

were believable enough, and in some cases simply entertaining enough, to be incorporated into the developing narrative of Hašek's life. Langer gives a sense of Hašek's ownership, if not authorship, of some of these anecdotes. While the majority of Hašek anecdotes are narratives of episodes from his life, some may have been pure fabrication, invented by whoever first told the story, or else so changed in the retellings that they became divorced from the factual basis. Langer writes that friends and acquaintances would come to Hašek to verify the various anecdotes that were circulating, so that the author often heard, second-hand, stories about himself. When the stories were true, Langer says, Hašek exaggerated them. When they were false but amusing, Hašek sometimes repeated them, adding to his ever-growing repertoire of stories about himself (56). That the Hašek legend was organic and collectively authored speaks to the collaborative artistic practices of his milieu. In the same way, Hašek was the face of the Party of Moderate Progress but he was not the sole driving force behind it. Indeed, the whole project was the idea of Eduard Drobník, a figure known today almost entirely for his role in "Hašek's" great stunt. Hašek acted as candidate in part because of his skills as an improvisational orator and in part because of name recognition. Already by 1911, the idea of Hašek as a candidate for the imperial council was so funny and enticing a premise, it ensured the success of the stunt.

Foucault writes, in "What is an Author?":

an author's name is not simply an element in a discourse (capable of being either subject or object, of being replaced by a pronoun, and the like); it performs a certain role with regard to narrative discourse, assuring a classificatory function. Such a name permits one to group together a certain number of texts, define them, differentiate them from and contrast them to others. In addition, it establishes a relationship among the texts. (147)

The anecdotes that make up the Hašek legend circulated during his lifetime because they were funny; Hašek's name, and a sense that that name stood for irreverent subversion, was the element

uniting this corpus. They have been recorded and preserved in the memoirs, however, not because of any inherent literary value or even humor, but because Hašek's name eventually became associated with *Osudy* and other now well-regarded works. In both its oral and written phases, the Hašek legend is an authored text, although, as I will show, its authorship was improvised and at least partially collective.

In speaking about Hašek's authorial legend, I distinguish legend from myth, although the latter is the term preferred by František Langer, the most astute Hašek memoirist, because my project is not to "demythologize" Hašek. I am interested neither in explaining the mechanics of his charisma, nor in scrupulously separating fact from fiction. What I hope to produce is a reading of the Hašek legend which destabilizes the categories of fact and fiction and the presumption of authority that underlies texts presented as nonfiction, similar to what Hašek achieved in his later works. Perhaps surprisingly, given the subject's virulent atheism, legend is also useful in its Christian sense as a synonym for a saint's *vita*, as opposed to the polytheistic valence of mythology. (The same distinction holds for the Czech terms *legenda* and *mýtus*.) As I will shortly explain, Hašek's death is a crucial narrative moment in most of the memoirs about him, just as it would be in a saint's legend. I also prefer the term legend because both the English word and the Czech *legenda* carry the additional meaning of a cartographic key.

There is a two-part written corollary to the orally transmitted Hašek legend. First of all, as we have seen in the previous chapters, Hašek preserved some but not all of his own pranks in his quasi-autobiographical fiction. From Hašek's pen, however, this is the extent of it. He kept no diary and of the few examples of correspondence that have been preserved, many are primarily financial negotiations. Because of this lacuna, scholars, and casual readers, have over-relied on the fiction as a source of biographical information about the author, often, as I shown,

overlooking the meaningful divergences. A more thoughtful schema for assessing Hašek's development of his own legend is to say that he participated in authoring it through 1) public mischief-making; 2) telling stories about his mischief; and 3) writing literary texts inspired by his mischief. The sum total of the autobiographical references in his fiction comprise one component of the legend's written version.

But Hašek did not insert all of the anecdotes into his fiction. For example, the story about Hašek checking into a Prague hotel under a Russian pseudonym to test the secret police could easily have been used in *Osudy*. The assassination of Franz Ferdinand initiates the novel, and mutual distrust between the police and the populace is a major theme in the first chapters. Hašek could have attributed some version of this experience for example to Švejk or, better yet, one of the characters he meets in a prison cell. But although this anecdote obviously gained currency during Hašek's lifetime as an example of his comic flouting of authority, he did not include it in the novel, perhaps because a self-referential authorial intrusion would have been out of place in the early chapters, which I have shown are the most tightly plotted parts of the book. Blatant autobiographical references do not appear until later in the novel, when Švejk enters the army (and meets the semi-autobiographical Marek). From this omission, I conclude that Hašek viewed some if not most of his stunts as ends in themselves, rather than as a laboratory in which he developed material for his fiction.

The great majority of the Hašek anecdotes that make up the legend have been preserved thanks to other authors. The memoirs and autobiographical fiction of the author's friends and acquaintances make up the second written component of the Hašek legend. These books, which I'll refer to by the shorthand of "Hašek memoirs," are responsible for the articulation and preservation of the Hašek legend, even as a number of them problematize the legend as such.

Distinct from the scholarly criticism of Hašek's works, the Hašek memoirs became the vehicle for determining our reading of his life and for arguing about the true meaning of his legacy. In addition to the light they shed on the subject of Hašek, the books tell a fascinating story about commercial literature. In each book, the author's agenda – be it financial, artistic, or for the purposes of “setting the record straight” – must be weighed against the elements of Hašek's life that are emphasized, omitted, or explained away. Because these books are not biographies, the authors do not have the burden of telling the story of Hašek's life in total. Rather, they are narrative records of a personal relationship with the writer. This explains the limited scope and conspicuous bias of some of the texts. But how the memoirists characterize Hašek, differing from each other sometimes radically, reveals their motive for writing the work as well as their stake in defining his legacy.

In this chapter, I will briefly present two catalog-style books of anecdotes, before discussing two autobiographical novels and five memoirs. All the Hašek memoirs offer some combination of documentary value, entertainment and insight. At the same time, all of them also could reasonably be described as exploitative insofar as the memoirists stood to profit from their relationship with the deceased author, a relationship which was, in some cases, exaggerated. The autobiographical novels I discuss present the most distilled version of the Hašek legend. Written by people who in their day were no less famous than Hašek, they articulate what has become the typical or iconic image of the author. One interesting tendency of these books is that Hašek comes to resemble a character from his own fiction. The examples I have selected were both published in 1923: Zdeněk Matěj Kuděj's *Ve dvou se to lépe táhne* [Literally, *It Goes Better in a Pair*; an idiom along the lines of “Many hands make light work”] and František Sauer's *Franta Haban ze Žižkova* [*Franta Haban from Žižkov*].

Next, I move on to a group of books I call “corrective memoirs.” These books challenge the image of Hašek that the autobiographical novels helped crystallize. They are distinguished by high levels of literary craftsmanship, and by some non-financial motivation (artistic or historiographical). My examples are *Můj přítel Jaroslav Hašek* [*My Friend Jaroslav Hašek*] by Emil Artur Longen from 1928, *Přátele Haškovi a lidé kolem nich* [*Friends of the Hašeks and the People Around Them*] written by Vilma Warausová in 1965, and the section “Vzpomínání na Jaroslava Haška” in František Langer’s 1963 memoir *Byli a bylo* [“Remembering Jaroslav Hašek” in *They Were and It Was*]. The final group is “extra-legendary memoirs.” Apart from authoring these books, memoirists in this category were not otherwise involved in literary or cultural spheres, to the extent that when they met Hašek, they were wholly unaware of his works and reputation. They naturally had their own agendas and biases, and occasionally polemicize with other Hašek memoirists, but they are less self-consciously interested in the cultivation of the Hašek legend as a cultural product and their own role in it. I look first at 1960’s *Vzpomínky na poslední leta Jaroslava Haška* [*Reminiscences on the Last Years of Jaroslav Hašek*] by Hašek’s clerk Kliment Štěpánek. Finally, I give the last word to a person who was essentially a victim of the Hašek legend, his second wife Alexandra Lvova, who in 1965 published a short memoir in the journal *Průboj*.

The memoirs as a whole are complicated by a historical paradox. The majority of them detail Hašek’s life before the war. But his time in the Red Army was a turning point in his life, both in terms of his development as a thinker and his reception in Czech society. The disillusionment he experienced in Soviet Russia contributed to the all-encompassing distrust of institutions of power expressed in *Osudy*, a viewpoint more extreme than that found in his earlier works. At the same time, his entry into the Red Army was the definitive, unforgiveable act for

the many people already suspicious of Hašek's politics, including his fellow members in the Czechoslovak Legions, some of whom occupied positions of power in Masaryk's Czechoslovak Republic. Although he had long annoyed members of the political, military and literary establishment with his provocative journalism and satire, this new phase represented a serious threat to republican Czechoslovak politics; it was feared that the always-popular Hašek would espouse the communist views that were seen as a dangerous contagion.²¹² And if the ire of his long-time critics weren't enough, when he returned to Prague from Russia in 1920, up until his death in early 1923, Hašek systematically alienated most of his old friends. While the pre-war anecdotes provided fodder for light if irreverent entertainment, details about the final period of his life are far from amusing. Many memoirists noted a change in Hašek's personality. No longer the boisterous raconteur, he was prone to anger, especially when drinking, and self-isolation.

It was during these last, lonely years that he wrote *Osudy*, a final statement on what he had experienced serving in three armies. By the time of his death, the novel, which was initially published in a serialized version, was popular among readers and beginning to inspire praise from other writers and literary critics. The original self-published booklets were repackaged into bound volumes shortly after their first round of distribution, and the reputable publishing house of Adolf Synek brought out a second edition of Volume I as early as 1922. It is ironic, then, that although many of the Hašek memoirs focus on the author's early life, such books would probably never have been written had *Osudy* not become a success. As a prankster and public figure, the Hašek who is the central character of many memoirs, may have eventually faded from collective memory. But the popularity and eventual critical acclaim of *Osudy* legitimized Hašek's life as an object worthy of enduring study and as a narrative that could be marketed,

²¹² This is probably why *Osudy* was originally self-published. At this point in his career, no respectable publisher would risk working with Hašek.

even in competing versions. Just three years earlier, when he first returned to Prague from Russia, the eventual proliferation of “My friend Hašek” books would have been unimaginable.

The literal death of the author looms large in these texts. Almost every memoirist recounts the multiple false rumors of Hašek’s death: that he had been thrown overboard a warship, executed by a military tribunal, or killed in a brawl with drunken soldiers. Some, with the good humor of hindsight, treat his multiple deaths as a joke, while others describe the grief they experienced, at least initially. When it finally came, Hašek’s death was not completely sudden; it was a process that unfolded in the days following a New Year’s Eve bender. Despite his prodigious publishing activity and the increasing popularity of the still-unfinished *Osudy*, Hašek died penniless. His funeral was paid for by the Lipnice chapter of Sokol, a civic-minded gymnastics organization that dated back to the mid-nineteenth century. With its patriotic earnestness and motto of “mens sana in corpore sano,” Sokol was anathema to Hašek, and he to them; after the World War, many Sokol members were veteran legionnaires. The Sokol members paid for his burial and casket not because of Hašek’s identity as an author or celebrity (in fact, in spite of it!), but because he was a Lipnice resident.

The guest list at Hašek’s funeral is also significant. None of Hašek’s friends from Prague travelled to Lipnice to attend, including the memoirists. Some sources hold that his son Richard, then age 10, travelled there in the escort of Jarmila Mayerová’s brother (Lvova, 31). In her 1965 memoir, however, Mayerová’s friend Vilma Warausová addresses this explicitly, writing that reports of Richard’s attendance were false. In fact, of all the authors of Hašek memoirs, only his second wife Alexandra Lvova and his clerk Kliment Štěpánek attended his funeral; they both lived in Lipnice. The painter Jaroslav Panuška, who also lived in Lipnice and had invited Hašek there, was also present. Nevertheless, Hašek’s funeral becomes a meaningful event in the

memoirs. Insofar as these memoirs are themselves legitimized by the authors' personal relationships to Hašek, the status of their friendships at the time of his death may lead the reader to question the sincerity of the whole enterprise. Emil Artur Longen, for example, begins his book by recounting the reactions of himself, his wife and their friend the author Egon Erwin Kisch to the news that Hašek had died, thus dramatizing his absence not only from the funeral but also from the final period of Hašek's life.

Perhaps by giving the sparsely attended funeral a prominent position in their books, a structure later copied by the biographers Radko Pytlík and Cecil Parrott, the memoirists attempt to apologize, if only to the reader, for deserting Hašek in his final years. Only Langer expresses unqualified regret at missing the funeral, which is in line with his overall sympathetic portrait of Hašek. If I as a researcher dwell on the question of attendance at Hašek's funeral, it is a reflection of the importance of this question in the primary texts. I sense that the memoirists' narrative strategies when writing about Hašek's death helped them work through their feelings of guilt, not just about missing the funeral but perhaps, on some level, for writing about him opportunistically.

Hašek died at age thirty-nine from heart failure after many years of excessive drinking, yet alcohol functions as a sort of magical element in the Hašek legend. Beer, beloved in Czech culture generally, was a key component of Hašek's socializing with the pre-war Prague bohemian set. For example, the Party of Moderate Progress was initiated as a way to drum up business for the gang's favorite bar, where the rallies were held. Audience members were permitted to ask one question each; for every subsequent question they had to purchase a beer (Parrott, *The Bad Bohemian* 112). Hašek allegedly punctuated his speeches with pauses every five- to ten-minute intervals, during which he would refresh his own beer. In this way he

speechified for up to three hours (Pytlík, *Toulavé house* 178). During the same period, Hašek wrote the one-act play *Sklenice černé kávy* [*A cup of black coffee*], whose characters are a monk, a virginal woman, the young Professor Masaryk and the poet Quido Maria Vyskočil. Their shared taste for sobering black coffee represents their aloofness from normative Prague social life.

More is at stake, however, in the association of Hašek with beer. There is a tendency among the memoirists and anecdote-collectors to write about his drinking habits in Rabelaisian terms, but Hašek was no giant. I am committed to writing critically, not romantically, about the alcoholism which cost Hašek important relationships, including his first marriage, and eventually, his life. Even stories that detail friends' attempts to get him sober usually hinge on Hašek's resistance and ultimately turn humorous. For example, Josef Lada is said to have literally locked Hašek in his apartment to detox and write, but one day Lada fell ill and sent Hašek out to get medicine; Hašek returned, in good spirits, six days later (Longen, 50). Longen goes farther than any other memoirist to show the cruel and alienating side of Hašek, especially when under the influence. But he also includes enough of these "jolly drunk" anecdotes which contribute to the notion that Hašek's drinking was part of his mystique, one of the extraordinary abilities that demonstrated his charisma. Similarly, František Langer uses contradictory terms on the topic. A medical doctor by training, he describes Hašek's drinking as an "illness" (31), but elsewhere he refers to him as "the Bacchus of Prague bars" (10). Langer first befriended Hašek when both were young men, but he saw Hašek's drinking develop into something dangerous in later years. Indeed, most of the memoirists cherish happy memories of the youthful excesses they shared with Hašek. But I take issue with critics like Karel Kosík, who writes that for Hašek alcohol was a "miraculous liquid" and an "elixir of life" (1995, 85), because to repeat these

formulations is to enable a reading public who would have us sacrifice an author's health to his productivity.²¹³ It's true that the extant body of Hašek's writing was fueled by beer, but we'll never know the caliber of fiction, humorous or otherwise, a mature, sober Hašek might have produced.

Even the legendary version of Hašek's drinking habits is challenged by his lengthy period of sobriety in Russia. According to Langer, Hašek also briefly experimented with sobriety while serving in the Czechoslovak Legions (70-72). Critics generally maintain that Hašek produced no worthwhile fiction during this period, which adds to the impression that intoxication was the necessary prerequisite for his creativity. It's true that Hašek's Red Army writing is limited to journalism and feuilletons, all of which is fundamentally propagandistic. But I disagree, for example, with Parrott, who writes that Hašek's Soviet propaganda "could have been written by any hack journalist working for the Bolsheviks," and was therefore "the least successful of his productions" (*Jaroslav Hašek* 68). To my mind, Hašek's skills as a generic and rhetorical mimic rank among his greatest strengths. He acquired these skills as a young man churning out political journalism, alternating between or simultaneously writing for rival parties; during these years, he learned how to manipulate factual data to create a compelling text. Later, in his mature fiction he parodied and repudiated propagandistic journalism. That his Soviet propaganda is indistinguishable from examples by his Russian comrades – in an acquired language no less! – makes it a very successful production indeed.²¹⁴ Moreover, it was immediately after his return from Russia that Hašek wrote the Bugulma Tales, the most sophisticated of his short stories and,

²¹³ For a thorough study of the myth of the alcoholic literary genius, see Leslie Jamison's *The Recovering: Intoxication and its Aftermath*.

²¹⁴ Peter Steiner, for one, presents an admiring literary analysis of Hašek's Soviet propaganda in his article "'S puškou v ruce, s ohněm v srdci': Jaroslav Hašek jako rudoarměský propagandista" ["With a rifle in the hand, with fire in the heart: Jaroslav Hašek as Red Army propagandist"] from the recent edited volume *Fikce Jaroslava Haška*.

as a cohesive nine-story series, a step towards his evolution into a novelist. To say that his period of sobriety was creatively fruitless seems to me shortsighted.

Ultimately, the treatment of alcoholism, or lack thereof, shows the limits of the Hašek legend. All the memoirists who knew Hašek before and after the war agree that his drinking was less amusing when he returned from Russia. The Hašek legend insists on preserving the author's excessive drinking for comic effect while sanitizing its inevitable consequences. And yet, an attempt to reconcile this contradiction is perhaps present in the memoirists' fixation with Hašek's death. Drinking was essential to Hašek's writing process and lifestyle. His characters often bond over a shared pint, and alcohol may well have unlocked his imagination as an improviser and humorist. But improvisation is only an artistic method when it's channeled; in other circumstances, impulsive behavior creates instability. A chronic drinker's life is characterized by the awareness that the unexpected is to be expected, and this affects the drinker as much as those close to him. A paradoxically constant state of change is a larger theme in Hašek's life. Part of what makes the Hašek legend distinct from other authorial legends is the improvised, organic process of both creating and enshrining it. The memoirists represented his drinking in different ways but always in accordance with their understanding of the legend: as something to be repudiated – or regurgitated.

Hašek had no interest in setting the record straight about his own life or work. Fictional texts he wrote in 1921 after he returned to Prague, such as "Moje zpověď," "Jak jsem se setkal s autorem svého nekrologu" and "Dušička Jaroslava Haška vypravuje" ["My Confession," "How I Met the Author of My Obituary" and "The Ghost of Jaroslav Hašek Speaks"] impudently deal with ad hominem attacks that other authors and veteran legionnaires published in newspapers around this time. Rather than respond straightforwardly to the accusations or attempt to clear his

name, Hašek published these humorous short stories which exaggerate the charges and the level of his guilt, turning the whole issue of his supposed moral and political lapse into a farce. The Hašek memoirists played a crucial role in articulating the legend, organizing it into a narrative, and transforming it from an oral to a written text. As a result, the almost universally accepted conception of Hašek as a person is a combination of self-aggrandizement, comedic distortion and misinformation both intentional and unintentional.

The chronology of publications is telling: Hašek memoirs were published more or less continuously from the time of Hašek's death in 1923 until none of his survivors remained. I believe that the latest Hašek memoir was *Znal jsem Haška* [*I Knew Hašek*] from 1977. The author is Josef Pospíšil, a Czech who, like Hašek, transferred from the Austrian Army to the Czechoslovak Legions and finally joined the Red Army. When he wrote his Hašek memoir, Pospíšil was eighty-three years old.²¹⁵ Following the 1948 communist takeover of Czechoslovakia, biographers and memoirists began describing Hašek in consistent ideological terms, revising his political itinerancy into a lifelong quest for revolutionary purpose. Other than that, it was largely up to the individual memoirist whether to tell Hašek's story as a comedy or tragedy. Indeed, despite the easily accessible evidence that Hašek was a complex and often unhappy person, authors continued to produce collections of comic anecdotes about him. Journalist Antonín Bouček's first volume of anecdotes about the author came out in 1923, the year Hašek died; it was revised and reprinted fifteen years later. A similar collection of stories, Radko Pytlík's *Naš přítel Hašek* [*Our Friend Hašek*], was published in 1979.

²¹⁵ Pospíšil wrote two other memoirs about his time in Russia, and in 1949 edited the Czech translation of a Russian memoir anthology titled *Hovořili jsme se soudruhem Stalinem* [*We Spoke with Comrade Stalin*].

The catalog-style books of anecdotes represent how the Hašek legend was ultimately realized as a commercial publishing venture. Their nominal authors are Bouček and Pytlík, but both assume the authorial stance of a compiler. In the months after Hašek's death, Bouček, the editor of the communist newspaper *Rudé právo*, gathered anecdotes about the author into the book *50 historek ze života Jaroslava Haška* [*Fifty Stories from the Life of Jaroslav Hašek*]. While the introduction supplied by early Hašek champion Ivan Olbracht is a perceptive work of criticism, Bouček eschews a framing narrative and simply enumerates anecdotes in chronological order, so that his text reads like a book of jokes. The great majority of anecdotes are from the pre-war era. A handful of anecdotes at the end tell of Hašek going to war and the false rumors of his death. In the last episode, he returns to Prague and attempts to make money by selling his own autograph. A slightly expanded edition was published in 1938 under the title *Kopa historek ze života Jaroslava Haška* [*Three-score Stories from the Life of Jaroslav Hašek*]. This version lingers longer on Hašek's return from Russia and follows him to Lipnice, but it crafts a comic ending out of the seeming oxymoron of a sober Hašek.

The second illustrative text is by Radko Pytlík, the most prominent living *haškolog*.²¹⁶ Pytlík's *Náš přítel Hašek* [*Our Friend Hašek*] from 1979 is also essentially a collection of anecdotes, but Pytlík performs an act of narrative ventriloquism by involving the Hašek memoirists as informants. In the foreword, he writes:

The book *Our Friend Hašek* gathers a handful of stories, narrations and montages from the known and unknown memoirs of Josef Lada, Zdeněk Matěj Kuděj, Emil Artur Longen, Ladislav Hajek, Antonín Bouček, Gustav Roger Opočenský, Josef Macha, František Langer, Jiří Mahen, Franta Sauer, Eduard Bass, Josef Mayer, Karel Šnor, etc. (6; see note)²¹⁷

²¹⁶ Funnily enough, life imitated art when Pytlík was falsely reported as dead in a recent edition of the Czech magazine *Reflex*. Many thanks to Veronika Tuckerova for sharing the erroneous article.

²¹⁷ "Kniha *Náš přítel Hašek* shrnuje hrst příběhů, vyprávění a montáží podle známých i neznámých vzpomínek Josefa Lady, Zdenka Matěje Kuděje, Emila Artura Longena, Ladislava Hajka, Antonína

The rest of the book simply re-narrates anecdotes from the perspectives of those “authors.”

Pytlík had published his biography of Hašek, *Toulavé house* [*The Wandering Gosling*] a few years earlier, in 1971. *Náš přítel Hašek* feels as if it’s composed of the material that Pytlík chose not to include in the biography, perhaps because it could not be verified. And yet, like any researcher who loves their subject, Pytlík had grown attached to his material. The book begins:

I can’t help it, I love the anecdotes and stories about Jaroslav Hašek. It seems to me that in these short, elliptical oral stories, which evoke medieval facetiae or fabliaux, Hašek becomes something more than what he actually was: he becomes the whimsical, cheerful Eulenspiegel²¹⁸ of prewar Prague, the staggering god of old wine cellars and taverns, the jocular idol from the time when “rotten Austria cheerfully collapsed.”

This is also how he was known to his readers, who sensed that Hašek was a singular person who, though he wrote comedy, in fact lived it even more. This is why he was so ahead of his time. Hašek was a living myth and his bohemian lifestyle was a sort of Dada long before Dadaism. (5)²¹⁹

Pytlík characterizes anecdotes about Hašek as a guilty pleasure, but at the same time, by comparing them to both medieval literature and the historical avant-garde, he makes the case for their canonical importance. The historical Till Eulenspiegel, known in Czech as Enšpígl, was a medieval German peasant whose pranks and antics gave rise to humorous written texts dating back to 1500. That Eulenspiegel was not a literary author but the hero of a genre of anecdotes points to the division between, on the one hand, Hašek’s literary output and, on the other hand,

Boučka, Gustava Rogera Opočenského, Josefa Macha, Františka Langra, Jiřího Mahena, Franty Sauera, Eduarda Basse, Josefa Mayera, Karla Šnora aj.”

Except for the section of Langer’s memoir dealing with the Party of Moderate Progress, none of the books referenced in this chapter are available in English. All translations are therefore my own.

²¹⁸ Facetiae and fabliaux are genres of short, usually vulgar humorous tales or jokes. Poggio Bracciolini’s bawdy *Facetiae*, from 1470, is considered the first printed book of jokes.

²¹⁹ “Nemohu si pomoci, ale mám rád anekdoty a historky o Jaroslavu Haškovi. Připadá mi, že v těch krátkých, úsporné vyprávěných příbězích, jež připomínají středověké facetie nebo fabliaux, je Hašek tím, čím skutečně byl: rozmarným, veselým Enšpíglem předválečné Prahy, potácivým bůžkem starých vináren a hospůdek, humorným idolem z dob, kdy ‘bouralo se vesele Rakousko to zpuchřele.’

Tak ho znali i jeho čtenáři, kteří vycítili, že Hašek byl jedinečný člověk, jenž humor sice psal, ale ještě více žil. Proto předběhl o tolik svoji dobu. Hašek byl oživlý mýtus a jeho bohéma byla jakýmsi dada dávno před dadaismem.”

his persona as a character from well-known anecdotes. Pytlík thus suggests that the corpus of Hašek anecdotes exists independently of his fiction; they comprise a text about prewar Prague. Here it is important to recognize Pytlík's periodization. Although the book spans Hašek's entire life and concludes with the text of "Dušička Jaroslava Haška vypravuje," his characterization of Hašek as the "Eulenspiegel of prewar Prague" subtly concedes that the funniest and most canonical stories all occurred before Hašek's transformative experience abroad. Pytlík goes on to acknowledge that the "real" Hašek was more complicated, and that there was a tragic side to his life and personality. He pays lip-service to the Communist censors by characterizing Hašek as a "bojovník a revolucionář" ["fighter and revolutionary"] (5), and this brief concession allows Pytlík to proceed with his project unencumbered by either narrative complication or political mandate. After the two-page foreword, the reader gets what she wanted: a whole book of funny stories about Hašek.

The publication of these books speaks to the enduring appeal of the Hašek legend to multiple generations of readers. But they also represent the way the legend crystallized into an easily digestible format. The reduction of Hašek's complicated and contradictory life-story into a series of jokes is a process that began immediately after his death and continued for the next half-century. In perhaps a deliberate attempt to appeal to Hašek's readers, this simplified version of his life echoes the picaresque format of *Osudy*, in which one adventure follows another without any character development. In *Osudy*, however, the flatness of characters is an anti-psychological, modernist technique. When the same style appears in the memoirs, the form is rather divorced from this function. The simplified version of Hašek, moreover, survived in the minds of his readers in spite of other attempts to demystify the author, such as the revisionist "corrective" memoirs. It's astonishing that, despite the enduring appeal of Hašek's work and the

myriad books about his life, there has not been a biography of him written in Czech or any other language in the last forty years, and the prominence of the Hašek legend certainly suggests itself as a possible roadblock. Because the story of Hašek's life is so steeped in half-truths and exaggerations, it is difficult for scholars to separate the threads. At the same time, the ready availability of so many books telling the now-canonical version of Hašek's life-story seems to almost render further biographical research unnecessary. Indeed, a nuanced biography will require a careful consideration of the Hašek legend as such, and it is my conviction that the Hašek legend is not a barrier to an accurate understanding of the author's life, but rather an integral part of it.

2. Autobiographical fiction

Kuděj's *Ve dvou se to lépe táhne* and Sauer's *Franta Haban ze Žižkova*, both from 1923, initiated some of the practices which shaped the conventional image of Hašek. Coming out so soon after Hašek's death, Kuděj's and Sauer's books may have been designed to fill the marketplace void created by the author's passing, like Karel Vaněk's unauthorized sequel to *Osudy*, which Hašek's publisher Adolf Synek released shortly after the author's death. Even if that were the case, the simple humor of these autobiographical novels does not match Hašek's appeal. Perceptive readers of Hašek's fiction have long noted the darkness inherent in his humor. But whereas in Hašek's literature, darkness and humor are entangled, even the best of the Hašek memoirs can do little more than alternate between the two moods. The categorically gloomier corrective memoirs are perhaps not written expressly to appeal to Hašek's fans, not only because they complicate the typical image of the beloved author, but also because they do not attempt to evoke the feeling of reading a funny new Hašek book.

Zdeněk Matěj Kuděj, author of *Ve dvou se to lépe táhne*, is a fascinating figure in his own right. A fiction-writer, he also produced journalism, travelogues and translations, notably of Charles Dickens and Sir Walter Scott. He became friends with Hašek when both were young writers associated with anarchist politics, although they bonded more over shared experiences than political philosophy. Kuděj was Hašek's frequent travel partner, tramping with him throughout Bohemia and in the Carpathian region in the pre-war era. Kuděj claims that he and Hašek had the idea of collaborating on a joint-memoir when Kuděj came for a visit in Lipnice in June 1922, implying that Hašek died before he was able to write his part (7). In this way, Kuděj asserts that his authority, even mandate, to write this book comes from Hašek himself.²²⁰

Ve dvou se to lépe táhne is an autobiographical novel, but it belongs in a survey of Hašek memoirs not only because of its factual basis but also, indeed especially, because Kuděj's depiction of Hašek as a quick-thinking trickster became the standard image of the author.²²¹ It opens with Kuděj, Hašek and two other men, all of them artists in their early twenties, living together in an apartment that is owned by one of the men's mothers, an organic commune which is often held up as a youthful idyll in Hašek stories. With the landlady's return immanent, Kuděj and Hašek decide to go traveling. What follows is a picaresque narrative of their adventures in small towns across Bohemia.

The structure and humor of the book is very similar to *Osudy*, and Kuděj's portrait of Hašek greatly resembles Švejk. For example, a great deal of the book is set on train cars, where

²²⁰ Kuděj followed this title with two sequels: 1927's *Ve dvou se to lépe táhne, ve třech hůře* and 1930's *Když táhne silná čtyřka*.

²²¹ Incidentally, while most of the books have novelistic qualities, at least one memoirist also wrote a novel about Hašek. In 1934, Václav Menger wrote the non-fiction account *Jaroslav Hašek doma* [*Jaroslav Hašek at Home*] and the novel *Jaroslav Hašek, zajatec číslo 294217* [*Jaroslav Hašek, Prisoner Number 294217*]. In 1948 he returned to non-fiction with *Jaroslav Hašek v zajetí* [*Hašek in Captivity*; the title is a reference to Hašek's novella *Dobryj voják Švejk v zajetí*]. More recently, Irena Doušková wrote a novel based on Hašek: 2014's *Medvědí tanec* [*Bear-dance*].

Hašek annoys and scandalizes their fellow passengers and the conductors; like Švejk, he often barely escapes punishment. Much of the character development occurs via dialogue. Like Švejk, Kuděj's Hašek constantly sings and satirically proclaims his exaggerated support for the monarchy. In an early scene at the Prague train station, Hašek implores Kuděj to purchase first-class tickets because “‘that emperor guy looks so sad,’ said Hašek, pointing to the corner where there hung a portrait of old Franz Joseph – ‘and I’d like to do something nice for him’” (11).²²² When a bystander cautions him not to speak so carelessly in case a secret police officer happens to be present, Hašek responds exactly like Švejk might, with hyperbolic enthusiasm masking an insult: “How the hell have we gone so far, that a person can’t even vent to his patriotic feelings? I am a faithful subject of His Greatness, and he takes such special care of us from morning ‘til night, to the point that he’s completely befuddled” (Kuděj, 11).²²³

Although the novel is narrated by Kuděj, Hašek is the main character and hero. He is the champion of a lifestyle untethered by such inconveniences as responsibilities, goals or values. For this reason, the picaresque form serves admirably, as each chapter ends with the definite conclusion of the latest episode, such as the men carrying on to the next town. Insofar as Kuděj functions primarily as Hašek’s foil, their relationship resembles that of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza. Ideas for where to go and what to do, plus the punchlines of sometimes elaborate jokes, are all attributed to Hašek alone, while the Kuděj-figure is barely developed as a character. With Kuděj constantly left to pay the bill, calm the authorities or otherwise clean up Hašek’s mess, their friendship can seem a bit one-sided. It’s helpful, then, to distinguish not only between

²²² “‘on je ten císař pán takovej smutnej,’ řekl Hašek, ukazuje do kouta, kde visel obraz starého Františka Josefa – ‘a já bych mu chtěl udělat nějakou radost.’”

²²³ “Což pak jsme to už dotáhli tak daleko, že člověk nemůže dát průchod svému vlasteneckému citění? Já jsem věrný poddaný Našeho Veličenstva, který se tak pečlivě o nás stará od rána do noci, až je z toho celý popletenej.”

Kuděj the character and Kuděj the author, but also Kuděj the posited author, for whom the Hašek-character really is a hero. As we shall see, later memoirists revealed that a friendship with Hašek was not always fun.

Unlike Kuděj's book, which has Hašek as the protagonist, Franta Sauer's book *Franta Haban ze Žižkova* is an autobiographical novel in which Hašek features as a side character, albeit an important one. Here the protagonist is Franta Haban, a stand-in and sometimes pseudonym for Sauer. A journalist and fiction-writer, Sauer was a member of the same bohemian, vaguely anarchist circle as Kuděj, as well as the cabaret world of Emil Artur Longen.²²⁴ When Hašek began writing *Osudy*, he and Sauer formed their own publishing outfit to bring the book out, mainly because established publishing houses would not work with the reprobate author. Sauer's novel covers his whole life up to that point, but more than half of the chapters deal with Hašek, in part because their social and business relationship was important to Sauer and, probably, in part because the inclusion of Hašek boded well for the book's commercial success. Throughout the book, Sauer reprints texts by Hašek, including both war journalism and short stories. While these inserted texts help develop his narrative, they have the added bonus of appealing to readers eager for Hašek's words. At times, the book resembles a Hašek anthology with extensive biographical commentary.

Sauer shares with Kuděj a proclivity for long scenes of dialogue that add to the novelistic feel of the book. Sauer's innovation is to depict Hašek as an already legendary figure. Although the narrator Haban recalls meeting Hašek when he was a young man and a "serious anarchist"

²²⁴ Haban was also an actor. In 1931 he acted in four films, each of them produced by an interconnected group of Prague performers. He appeared as "the Drunk" in Martin Frič's *Čapkovy povídky* [*Čapek's Tales*]. That same year, Frič directed the first film adaptation of *Osudy*, starring as Švejk Saša Rašilov, who appeared in 1931 with Sauer in Svatopluk Innemann's *Poslední bohém* [*The Last Bohemian*]. Sauer's other two performances of that year were in films directed by Emil Artur Longen. This ensemble filmmaking illustrates the spirit of collaboration among the artists in Sauer's circle.

(217), the book takes place later, opening with the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic in October 1918. Sauer is thus able to comment on Hašek's reputation at a later stage in its development, touching on the premature rumors of Hašek's death and on public sentiment when the author returned to Prague. The narrator delights in illustrating the extent of Hašek's notoriety. Much of the second half of the book is devoted to Haban's efforts to establish an ad hoc publishing house to produce the first edition of *Osudy*. In reality, Sauer was involved only temporarily with this venture, and was not terribly successful. In 1921, he helped Hašek produce serial sešity (booklets) of the first volume but was overwhelmed by the work of producing and distributing the books, not to mention "managing" the increasingly erratic Hašek. In 1922, after only one year of this business arrangement, Sauer sold the outfit to the experienced publisher Synek.

Perhaps Sauer's main innovation in the genre of Hašek memoirs was to exaggerate, indeed exploit, a friendship that was only briefly important in Hašek's life. While it is true that Sauer was a major figure in Hašek's life for a year or two, their relationship ended conclusively more than a year before Hašek died. But by the time Sauer wrote this memoir, his friend Hašek had become the more famous of the two, so it made good business sense to dwell on their relationship. František Langer wrote that because Hašek became fast friends with everyone he met, many people claimed to have been part of his "inner circle," especially after his death (56). In fact, very few people got to know Hašek on an intimate level, and fewer still were permanent fixtures in his life. Yet the abundance of books about friendships with the author suggests that he was well-loved, and well-understood. Authors like Josef Pospíšil, the Czech Red Army veteran who titled his memoir of the Russian Civil War *I Knew Hašek*, are indebted to Sauer's approach.

Although the autobiographical novels are entertaining to read, they fail to illuminate any of Hašek's internal contradictions or to challenge the image of him as a happy-go-lucky jokester. Additionally, the authors of these books use literary devices that underscore the artificiality of the texts in a way that is distracting rather than provocative. One example is reconstructed dialogue. Some memoirists include long passages of dialogue, presented as if, during the writing process, they had recalled conversations verbatim years after they took place. This is particularly problematic in the context of a memoir about an author. Although Hašek himself was a master parodist, his prose style is unmistakable; a fictionalized conversation with him, therefore, reads like an unintended parody. The novel form of Sauer's and Kuděj's books shields them from the charge of unreliable memory, but the dialogue that appears in later memoirs smacks of artificial reconstruction.

Of all the contrived qualities of the articulatory Hašek memoirs, the most significant one is a tendency to make Hašek resemble Švejk. For example, some memoirists depict Hašek as constantly singing; according to Sauer, Hašek sang poorly but knew the words to every song (222). The Hašek of these novels is an irrepressible cut-up, improvising, joking and playing with everyone he meets. Similar to the scholarship that conflates Hašek with his characters, these memoirs illustrate why Hašek's use of autobiography in his fiction must be approached carefully. To read Švejk as Hašek leads one to read Hašek as Švejk, and this limits even the most basic understanding of both, to say nothing of our appreciation for Hašek's inventiveness.

Sauer's and Kuděj's novels reflect only one aspect of the author; conviviality and playfulness come across as his dominant characteristics. While all the Hašek memoirs describe the author's humor, the more compelling ones also treat his tendency towards melancholy and even cruelty. The most obvious effect of this is that it produces a more realistic, three-

dimensional portrait of a complex individual. But the inclusion of Hašek's less Švejk-like attributes has weightier implications too. In public spaces, and probably in his fans' imagination, Hašek was a joking presence. In private, though, the picture could be much different. The memoirists who depict Hašek's dark side, of whom Longen is chief, thus demonstrate their real intimacy with him. Such memoirs are naturally less "amusing"; the emotional demands they make of the reader are too great for lighthearted entertainment. But Hašek's personality, and the reality of relationships with him, was complex and often dark. Books like those written by Kuděj and Sauer shed little light on Hašek's inscrutable character, but rather peddle a simplified, digestible version of it – the unproblematic articulation of the Hašek legend.

3. Corrective memoirs

The first attempt to challenge or correct Hašek's image came only five years after his death from someone inside his own camp. Emil Artur Longen's *Můj přítel Jaroslav Hašek* [*My Friend Jaroslav Hašek*] first published in 1928, is a veritable tell-all. Working together with his wife, the actress Xena Longenová, Emil Artur Longen became one of the most important figures in pre-World War II Czech cabaret culture. He also left his mark on cinema as an actor, director and screenwriter. His Hašek memoir is one of two fascinating autobiographical books he published. The other is *Herečka* [*Actress*], which chronicles Xena's struggles for professional success and mental health. He published it in 1929, one year after her death by suicide.²²⁵ Like Hašek, Longen was a celebrity in his day. He became friends with Hašek during the Party of Moderate Progress prank, and they collaborated on cabaret shows.

In the afterword to the 1983 reprint of Longen's Hašek memoir, literary critic Štěpán Vlačín points out that Longen was attempting to break with the already formulaic mold of Hašek

²²⁵ Incidentally, Franta Sauer also wrote a book about the couple, 1936's *Emil Artur Longen a Xena*.

memoirs, to create a text of higher artistic standards. It is true that the text is a departure from those books that are basically strings of anecdotes arranged chronologically. In addition, Longen was interested in challenging the familiar image of Hašek as a sociable, laugh-a-minute bon vivant. He depicts Hašek as a greedy, exploitative brute, and the title *My friend Jaroslav Hašek* is an ironic commentary on both the popular image of the author and the many memoirs that created and reinforced it. In a chapter titled “Přátelství” (“Friendship”), Longen writes:

His friendship or camaraderie was manifested to a certain extent only in the form of companionship, in accordance with his mood and needs. He made fast friends with everyone over a glass of beer and in an intoxicating atmosphere, but Hašek’s new friend would certainly be surprised by the darkest disappointment, and finally in a certain way be conned by Hašek, and even cruelly punished or left to the worst fate, such as that encountered by drunks during a nightly brawl or in run-ins with the police. (77)²²⁶

While most authors of Hašek memoirs agree that after his return from Russia, Hašek became belligerent when drinking, Longen paints him as an abusive alcoholic even from his youth. By detailing Hašek’s friends’ early attempts to get him to stop drinking, Longen creates the impression that the people who cared about Hašek, himself and Xena included, recognized his dependence on alcohol as a threat to both his health and his creative abilities. Longen also reinterprets some of Hašek’s most famous pranks, drawing out the dark side of his compulsive deception. For example, Longen describes Hašek’s mystifications at the *World of Animals* magazine, which Hašek later immortalized in *Osudy*, as a mean-spirited trick played on earnest magazine readers that damaged the publisher’s finances and reputation and humiliated Hašek’s friend who had gotten him the job (78). Removing all humor from these anecdotes, at times

²²⁶ “Jeho přátelství nebo kamarádství projevovalo se do jisté míry pouze ve formě kumpánství, podle nálady a potřeby. Hned se s každým spřátelil při sklenici piva a v opojné atmosféře, avšak nový přítel Haškův jistě se podivil nejčernějším zklamáním, že nakonec byl Haškem určitým způsobem napálen, ba i krutě ztrestán nebo ponechán nejhoršímu osudu, jaký potkává pijáky při nočních rvačkách a srážkách s policií.”

Longen's version of Hašek's life becomes as exaggerated as any other of the memoirs. Instead of presenting his subject as an outsized clown, here he becomes an inhuman monster.

As an experienced author conscious of his craft, Longen makes innovative use of inserted texts. Longen presents three chapters in the book as the work of other contributors who wanted to share their memories of Hašek. The alternate posited authors are: a member of the Austrian secret police who kept a file on Hašek for years; a petty thief who became Hašek's friend; and, in a surprising cameo appearance, Franta Sauer.²²⁷ This device allows Longen to break up his own narrative, which frankly can be tedious in its bitterness, by introducing voices that differ from his own. The thief's chapter is written in working-class dialect, a shift in diction from the rest of the text that creates the illusion of authenticity. The Sauer character in Longen's book depicts Hašek as untrustworthy and cruel, a complete reversal from the happy-go-lucky version of Hašek that we encounter in Sauer's novel. This change suggests Longen's intervention, or invention, more than Sauer's own reconsideration. After all, Hašek was the hero of Sauer's book. For Longen, though, Hašek is the antagonist.

The most obviously fictional of these inserted texts is the secret policeman's chapter, "Paměti Vinci Špandy" ["The Reminiscences of Vince Španda."] The premise of this section is highly improbable, and it suggests that Longen invented Vince Španda altogether.²²⁸ In the beginning of Longen's book, he, his wife Xena, and their friend, the Czech-German writer Egon Erwin Kisch, are in Berlin when they receive word of Hašek's death. Discussing the news in a tavern, they are approached by a man who claims to have known Hašek before the war, having

²²⁷ For some other characters, Longen uses transparent pseudonyms: Josef Lada becomes Leda, Zdeněk Matěj Kuděj becomes Kurděj.

²²⁸ True, Hašek had frequent run-ins with law enforcement, for which evidence Pytlík painstakingly combed the police archives. But there is no Vince Španda, nor any name resembling it, in Pytlík's account.

been the secret policeman responsible for keeping tabs on him. Španda claims to have been in Berlin since 1918 when the collapse of the Austrian Empire put him out of a job (Longen, 38). It's a funny set-up, implying unintended negative consequences of the establishment of the First Czechoslovak Republic, such as unemployment for Austria's loyal secret police, and I read the Španda character as an encoded reference to Bretschneider, the officer from *Osudy* whose name has become synonymous with secret police work.

The narration then shifts to the notebooks that Španda supposedly preserved from his time on the force. In these pages, we find some of Hašek's by now legendary antics. For example, Španda first becomes aware of Hašek in 1911 when sent to investigate the actions of a disruptive new political party, the Party of Moderate Progress (9). Španda also happened to be on the case when Hašek registered at a hotel under a Russian name to see how quickly the secret police would react to the arrival of a possible spy (35). Longen inserts Španda into a famously cryptic episode in Hašek's life: his arrest and subsequent confinement in a mental hospital after a supposed suicide attempt on the Charles Bridge (29). Španda appears as a believable and sympathetic character who, in spite of his professional obligations, is fond of Hašek. But the incidents in Španda's notebook are all "canonical" Hašek anecdotes, suggesting that Longen invented Španda in order to tell familiar stories from a new, fictional perspective.

Assuming, therefore, that Španda is a fictional character, we can appreciate Longen's artistry in the device of the inserted text. For example, Longen by way of Španda draws an interesting conclusion from the supposed suicide attempt, an episode shrouded in legend in part because of the way Hašek recycled it in his own fiction. In early February 1911, after the newly married Hašek had been fired from *World of Animals*, he was stopped from jumping off the Charles Bridge by a hairstylist from the nearby theater. Police officers arrived shortly and took

him to the station, where he was examined by a staff doctor who had him committed to the Ústav u Svaté Kateřiny [the Institute at St. Catherine's], a psychiatric hospital in Prague. According to Parrott, who worked with newspaper reports and archival materials from the institute, Hašek initially told the police that he wanted to end his life, but in the morning, he claimed he had simply been black-out drunk, although neither the police nor the doctor noted intoxication in their reports (*Bad Bohemian* 96). Hašek did not resist being hospitalized and, according to his file, "he expressed a wish to stay on, to cure himself of alcoholism" (*Bad Bohemian* 96).

Hašek's short story "Psychiatrická záhada," published later that year in *Karikatury*, uses the premise of a mistaken suicide attempt to satirize psychiatry. The teetotaler Hurych is crossing Charles Bridge on his way home from an abstinence society meeting when he hears a cry from the depths of the Vltava. He leans over the balustrade to see if someone needs rescuing, when a passing hairstylist who assumes Hurych is trying to jump wrestles him to the ground. Police officers arrive and together they succeed in subduing Hurych and bringing him to the station where he is interrogated by the staff doctor. We're told that, "Police doctors summoned for rescued suicides use an interrogatory system which is the most important of psychiatric tools" (Hašek, "Psychiatrická záhada" 149).²²⁹ While the hairdresser and police testify to Hurych's suicidal intent, the doctor asks him about irrelevant factoids: "Do you know how many independent countries there are in Asia?" and "How much is six times twelve?" (Hašek, "Psychiatrická záhada" 150).²³⁰ But while Hurych insists he had no intention of jumping off the bridge, he becomes increasingly agitated by their questioning. In a final act of frustration,

²²⁹ "Policejní lékaři přivolání k zachráněným sebevrahům užívají tázacího systému jako nejdůležitější psychiatrické pomůcky." Hašek would revive this setup in *Osudy*, in the chapter "Švejk Before the Medical Commission," when doctors quiz Švejk on trivia in order to determine his mental state.

²³⁰ "Znáte nějaké svobodné státy v Asii?"; "Kolik je šestkrát dvanáct?"

Hurych lunges at his “saviors” and is then fitted with a straitjacket and deemed insane. “In the morning they brought him to the madhouse, where he has undergone treatment for a year and a half already, because to this date no doctors have established his awareness of his own insanity, which in psychiatry is the sign of an improving mental state” (Hašek, “Psychiatrická záhada” 150).²³¹

The version of this anecdote Španda tells, supposedly quoting from the police report, is humorous and therefore closer in tone to Hašek’s short story than to Parrott’s sobering reconstruction. Interestingly, this retelling includes the detail that the hairstylist worked in the theater, which Hašek omitted from his fictionalization, and in this version only, the hairstylist and Hašek are friends. This suggests Longen’s intimate knowledge of the episode, as if Hašek had personally shared the details with him. As Španda tells it, Hašek, leaning over the balustrade of Charles Bridge, is tackled by his hairdresser friend, and their tussle attracts the attention of the police. Španda reproduces the testimony given at the police station, but the quotations he draws are impossibly funny, such as this exchange:

Theater hairstylist: “Jardo, you wanted to throw yourself into the Vltava.”
Mr. Hašek: “No, I wanted to throw up into the Vltava.” (Longen, 30)²³²

Similar to “Psychiatrická záhada,” Hašek is effectively driven mad by the interrogation, or at least, he starts to perform insanity, as when the police doctor asks him to state his name and age and he answers “Jan of Nepomuk [...] Probably 518. I don’t remember precisely” (Longen, 31).²³³ Positioning Španda as both a police officer and Hašek’s friend makes it feasible that he would have access to the police files. It also allows Longen to follow the story further, into

²³¹ “Ráno ho odvezli do blázince, kde je ošetřován již půldruhého roku, poněvadž doposud u něho lékaři nezjistili vědomí duševní choroby, což dle psychiatrie jest známkou zlepšení duševního stavu.”

²³² “Divadelní frizér: Ne, Jardo, ty ses chtěl vrhnout do Vltavy.

Pan Hašek: Ne, já chtěl vrhnout do Vltavy.”

²³³ “Jan z Nepomuku [...] Asi pět set osmnáct. Určitě si to nepamatuji.”

Hašek's stay in the psychiatric hospital, where an attendant, when asked how long Hašek would have to stay, reveals, "He coulda gone the second day, but he didn't want to, cuz he wanted to sniff everything out so he could write something about it."²³⁴ Longen erases the idea that Hašek attempted to turn his state-mandated confinement into an opportunity for rehabilitation, instead relying on the old chestnut, "Hašek si dělá ze všeho žerty" ["Hašek makes a joke out of everything"] (Longen, 32). But he does insert a profound observation, one which is very much in line with Hašek's oeuvre: "Hey, that's how it ends for everyone like that, people who don't want to submit themselves to the rules, bringing depravity and roguishness out in the world. Either in jail or the madhouse" (Longen, 31).²³⁵ And of course, Hašek did eventually "write something about" his time in the psychiatric hospital: the unforgettable fourth chapter of *Osudy* Volume I, "Švejk Thrown out of the Lunatic Asylum."

Finally, the Španda character is perhaps a tribute to some of Hašek's preferred devices. Importantly, although the book is none too charitable to Hašek as a person, it does not denigrate him as an author. The funny-sounding name Vince Španda hearkens back to some of Hašek's own pseudonyms, like Antonín Kočka and Dr. Vladimír Stanko.²³⁶ Hašek also parodied other writers and genres when he inserted seemingly authentic documents into his fiction. And of course, Hašek's greatest parodic work is the Party of Moderate Progress, the project which brought him and Longen into acquaintance. Setting Hašek and Španda's fictional meeting at a

²³⁴ "Ten moh jít hned druhej den, ale nechce se mu, protože to tady všechno vočiňuje, aby o tom něco napsal."

²³⁵ "Hle, tak končí všichni podobní lidé, kerý se nechťejí podrobit pořádku a provádějí na světě neřesti a taškárství. Buď v kriminále nebo bláznici."

²³⁶ In part because of his fondness for pseudonyms, the complete extent of Hašek's works is still unknown, but one method of attributing his authorship is looking for silly and fake-sounding bylines (Ančík, 306).

Party of Moderate Progress rally seems to pay tribute to the origin of Hašek's friendship with Longen.

If Longen still felt any admiration for Hašek when he wrote this scathing memoir, it could only have been for his literary inventiveness. In reviewing Longen's book, the venerable literary critic F.X. Šalda concurs that Hašek was far from an upstanding person, but that does not detract from what he achieved in *Osudy*: "Compared to the dark, truly hellish life that Hašek led, *The Soldier Švejk* is something like a good-humored idyll, something like a lyrical intermezzo of happy self-forgetting" (Šalda, 79).²³⁷ Šalda suggests that Hašek lodged whatever goodness was inherent in him directly into *Osudy*, perhaps leaving none left for his personal conduct.

Longen's text is truly disturbing, especially compared to the other Hašek memoirs, in part because this version of Hašek is unapologetically unreliable to his friends and champions. In chapters bitterly titled "Dobří lidé a Hašek" and "Přátelství" ["Good People and Hašek" and "Friendship"], Longen describes the disappointment he and others experienced every time they attempted to help Hašek stop drinking, find work or settle into family life. Longen also dwells on Hašek's terrible treatment of women and suggests that Hašek was deeply misogynistic. He recalls that Hašek, who abandoned his first wife, said the following to a woman who had been left by her husband:

"How did you really imagine a guy would be? Maybe you thought that after work he'll hunker down at home and help you scrub the floors and wash the baby's diapers? All women are the same and then you're amazed when a real man skips out. A regular guy will never bother himself with any woman for long." (99-100)²³⁸

²³⁷ "Vedle temného, opravdu pekelnického života, který Hašek vedl, je *Voják Švejk* cosi jako dobromyslná idyla, cosi jako lyrické intermezzo šťastného sebezapomenutí."

²³⁸ "Jak jste si vlastně představovala chlapa? Snad jste si nemyslila, že bude po práci dřepět u vás a bude vám pomáhat mýt podlahu a prát pleny na děti? Všechny ženské jste stejné a pak se divíte, když vám opravdový mužský práskne do bot. Pořádný chlap se nebude se žádnou ženskou dlouho otravovat."

Of course, the length of this “quotation” is a signal that Longen may have taken liberties in reconstructing the dialogue. Nevertheless, he includes enough stories of Hašek’s poor treatment of Longen’s wife and both of own his wives to create the impression that Hašek was categorically cruel to women. But Longen also argues that Hašek was ultimately cruel to everyone, so perhaps his poor treatment of women was not specifically misogynistic, but only a part of his general misanthropy.

Still, the end of Hašek’s first marriage, though it was never legally formalized, is a particularly sad story. According to Longen, soon after the birth of Hašek’s son, the proud papa brought the baby to a bar to show him off to his friends. He then left the baby with the cook while he continued on to another bar. The cook brought the baby home at the end of the night, but Hašek did not come home for another three days (Longen, 75-76). In another writer’s hands, this story could easily take on the shade of a humorous Hašek anecdote, but Longen dwells on the pathetic image of an alcoholic father leaving his newborn son at a bar. He even describes how when the baby was first born, Mayerová was living with her family who forbid Hašek from even seeing the infant until he demonstrated that he could stop drinking, a promise that was obviously soon broken (73).

Without referring to Mayerová by name, Longen writes that after that episode, she left her husband for good (76). Longen also displays a great deal of sympathy for Hašek’s second wife Alexandra Lvova, better known as Šura. Longen and his wife grew quite close with Lvova and he describes her shock and disappointment at the Jekyll-and-Hyde transformation of her husband. Several Hašek memoirists remark that Lvova would beg her husband not to drink so much. Longen alone details how furious Hašek became when Lvova herself drank, even if it were only a single glass of wine among friends (128). Xena Longenová was also the occasional

victim of Hašek's mood-swings and cruel "pranks." For years Hašek had turned to the couple when he needed a drink, a meal or a few nights' lodgings, but their hospitality did not inspire graciousness or accountability in him. Nor did Hašek's behavior towards Longenová change in light of her worsening health, which to Longen represents a frightening lack of empathy. Longen writes that Longenová, sick of Hašek taking advantage of them, tried repeatedly to convince her husband to break off their friendship. Longen thus puts his wife in that category of "dobří lidé" ["good people"] who stood no chance against Hašek's rapacity and meanness.

For his own part, Longen is also defenseless against Hašek, but his susceptibility is rooted in something like unconditional love. Or at least, that is a narrative strategy that Longen deploys. Because his book so harshly critiques its subject, some explanation is sought for why their friendship lasted as long as it did. And indeed, Longen suggests that despite all the abuse, there was something entrancing about Hašek. He describes going to visit him in Lipnice, a trip he explains first by running through the various business matters they had to settle. But then he confesses:

But the main reason behind my decision for the trip was a fervent interest in Hašek. Never had I experienced such an urgent need to meet with Hašek as during that time, when we were performing [the Švejk play]. I thought of Hašek often and could not resist the unexpected compulsion to see him. (142)²³⁹

By implying that, in spite of all the abuse, Longen had some unreasonable and insurmountable fondness for Hašek, he claims the authority to tell the story of their relationship. On a more practical level, he also shields himself from the charge of opportunistically exploiting his relationship with the famous writer. There is a naked cynicism inherent in the premise of a tell-all memoir which Longen at least attempts to soften by implying that his relationship with Hašek

²³⁹ "Avšak hlavní podstatou mého rozhodnutí pro odjezd byl žhavý zájem o Haška. Nikdy jsem nepocítil naléhavěji potřebu sejít se s Haškem jako tou dobou, když jsme hráli Švejka. Myslil jsem často na Haška a neubránil jsem se neočekávanému nutkání, abych ho vyhledal."

was not primarily financial or creative, but emotional.

And yet, Longen's is one of multiple sources which demonstrate that during the last two years of Hašek's life, friendship with him was basically impossible. The final conflict between Longen and Hašek stemmed from a disputed contract. Longen commissioned Hašek to produce a new work, ideally about Russia and the Red Army, for his cabaret theater *Revoluční scena* [Revolutionary Stage]. Hašek agreed to the terms, but during the performances only read his previously published feuilletons, or else drunkenly attempted to improvise. Eventually, Longen fired Hašek. He writes that he later saw a poster advertising new work by Hašek at *Červená sedma* [Red Seven], the rival cabaret that Longen had left to establish his own theater. When confronted, Hašek claimed that Longen had only wanted him for his writing, whereas the Červená sedma team had appreciated his talents as a performer (131).²⁴⁰

Longen may include this anecdote about Červená sedma, which is uncorroborated by other sources, in order to justify a subsequent action he took. The two men broke ties after the cabaret business, and Hašek moved to Lipnice. Then, following the popular success of the first volume of *Osudy*, Longen produced an unauthorized dramatic adaptation, claiming that Hašek's unfulfilled contract gave him the right to do so (Longen, 134). When Hašek learned about this he was furious, but rather than demanding that Longen close the production, he asked for a cut of the ticket sales. Furthermore, he agreed to give Longen the rights to dramatize the entire novel once it was finished, believing that the work, epic in scope, would be more suitable for theatrical adaptation in its complete form (Longen, 145).

²⁴⁰ Hašek may have had a higher opinion of himself as an actor than anyone else did. He offered to play the role of his favorite character, the sapper Vodička, in Karel Noll's adaptation of *Osudy* (Parrott, *Bad Bohemian* 258).

Longen's unauthorized adaptation is a complicated chapter in the story of Hašek's life. We've seen other types of authorial intervention into Hašek's life, including Mayerová's uncredited contributions to his fiction, and Sauer's role in publishing the first booklet editions of *Osudy*. Each of these represents how members of Hašek's social circle had some stake in his legacy even while he was alive.²⁴¹ If the moral value of these actions is to be assessed, it might be on the basis of how closely they hewed to Hašek's own vision of his work. On the one hand, Longen's production represents a gross exploitation of the author's erratic behavior. As accusatory as Longen's book is, his tone verges on penitent in this section. Yet Hašek was not entirely innocent in this episode. Not only was he in breach of his original contract with Longen, but he subsequently sold the rights to produce a Švejk play to Longen's leading man, Karel Noll (Parrott, *Bad Bohemian* 258). On the other hand, Longen's adaptation was a watershed moment in the dissemination of *Osudy*. Noll went on to play the good soldier in the first film adaptations directed by Karel Lamač in 1926. The most concrete evidence that Longen's production provided the key to subsequent translations and adaptations comes from the Czech-German critic Max Brod. Together with Ivan Olbracht, Brod was crucial in raising the prestige of Hašek's work. As Brod relates in his memoir *Život plný bojů* [*A Life Full of Struggle*], it was only after seeing Longen's play that Brod became convinced *Švejk* was a major work. His influential review of the play, originally published in German in 1923, concludes with the idea, "You won't leave the theater convinced that man is good, but you will have one beautiful certainty: man is indestructible" (Brod, "Dobrý voják Švejk" 28).²⁴² After seeing the play, Brod helped arrange

²⁴¹ Karel Vaněk's unauthorized sequel to *Osudy* perhaps belongs on this list, but as far as I know, he and Hašek were not personally acquainted, although Vaněk was invited to the 1924 memorial event. My concern here is rather the role of Hašek's friends and collaborators in shaping his legacy.

²⁴² "Z divadla neodcházíš přesvědčen, že člověk je dobrý, ale máš jednu krásnou jistotu: člověk je nezničitelný."

Grete Reinerová's German translation in 1926, which made the novel accessible beyond the Czech readership. Because Noll was literally waiting in the wings to dramatize *Osudy*, it was not entirely dependent on Longen to bring Hašek's characters to the stage. But Longen's production must have been an effective adaptation, true enough to Hašek's vision, to have resonated to such a great extent.

Longen clearly has an axe to grind, and his book borders on character assassination. As different as it is from the other Hašek memoirs, ironically it resembles some of what was written about Hašek during his lifetime: the journalism penned by Legionnaires aimed at discrediting him. Longen's book poses the question of whether we should, or can, love Hašek in spite of his problematic behavior. Here "Hašek" breaks down into two distinct but interconnected entities: the individual, a private person, and the legend, which is both a public persona and a collective construct. These entities overlap to construct his identity as an author. Certainly, his friends and professional acquaintances may have struggled in their personal relationships with Hašek. The first generation of Hašek's readers had to balance the appeal of his writing against what they knew about his life, or how much they cared about the norms he flouted. For today's readers, the question of Hašek's political orientation is mainly important for historical context. But other aspects of his character may still trouble readers today. If we accept the premise that his pranks and mystifications are part of his body of authored texts, we must reckon with the problem of the people he targeted, even victimized, in these stunts. And if we cling to the image of Hašek as a gargantuan drinker, we must balance that against an informed view that alcoholism wrought havoc on his relationships and his physical health.

One cannot read Hašek's fiction seriously without forming a sense of him as a person because, as I have shown, he used the material of both his life and his reputation in crafting his

fiction. Even a casual reader of *Osudy* may become aware of its autobiographical nature; any introduction to the novel or footnotes could hardly fail to mention Hašek's war service or highlight the episodes in the book drawn from the author's life. If the reader is enchanted with Hašek's questioning of the nature of truth, and his refusal to adhere to social and political norms, is she obligated to consider the full extent of this irreverence? Does championing Hašek as a freewheeler also mean accepting him as an opportunist, a bigamist, and an immoralist? In the current political climate, attempts to celebrate art while simultaneously condemning the artist are increasingly difficult to defend, especially when the image of the artist figures prominently within his art.²⁴³ *Můj přítel Jaroslav Hašek* brings these issues to the forefront, problematizing the embrace of a sometimes autobiographical author whose true biography is, at least at moments, reprehensible. Longen admired Hašek's work but was wary of the image he saw emerging to accompany the critical prestige of *Osudy*. His memoir argues that loving Hašek the author does not require us to love Hašek the person, but unlike the early establishment critics who decried Hašek, Longen's love is lost for personal, not political reasons. Longen's project is to debunk the Hašek legend while not discrediting Hašek's artistic achievements. *Můj přítel Jaroslav Hašek* takes the greatness of Hašek's fiction for granted, thus supporting my argument that the Hašek legend was so robust, scrutiny of the author was a separate issue from scrutiny of his works.

Longen's title *Můj přítel Jaroslav Hašek* is intentionally ironic, but titling Vilma Warausová's book *Přátelé Haškovi a lidé kolem nich* (*Friends of the Hašeks and the People Around Them*) was probably an editorial decision intended to make the book marketable to Hašek fans, along the lines of Pospíšil's *I Knew Hašek*. Warausová's book is really a memoir of

²⁴³ I'm thinking, of course, about the reckoning, brought on by #MeToo discourse, with artists like Woody Allen, Louis CK, Michael Jackson and R. Kelly.

her friendship with Hašek's first wife Jarmila Mayerová. Like Longen, Warausová is interested in debunking the Hašek legend by bringing to light the despicable aspects of his personality, which for Warausová, comes out primarily in Hašek's treatment of Mayerová. But Warausová has another aim which makes her unique among the authors of these books: to draw attention to Mayerová's contribution to Czech literature, including but not limited to her collaborations with Hašek, and to argue for the importance of women's concerns generally.²⁴⁴

In Hašek's fiction, women appear only as side characters. In *Osudy*, for example, a novel with a huge cast of characters, nearly all the women in the main plot are domestic workers, prostitutes and unfaithful wives, although more women are introduced via dialogue and oral storytelling. In the Hašek memoirs, women are likewise treated primarily as the butt of jokes. In her memoir, Warausová rehabilitates Mayerová, whom the legend reduces to a stereotypically demanding bourgeois woman. For example, Parrott characterizes Mayerová as "more than a little prudish; she was nervy, timid and superstitious...highly strung and neurotic" (*Bad Bohemian* 86). Of the married, twenty-three-year-old Mayerová, fed up with her alcoholic husband, Parrott writes, "like most girls, she wanted stability and a home...where she could arrange things as she wanted them and be a little house-proud" (*Bad Bohemian* 89). Warausová's book predates Parrott's by more than a decade so her attempt to rehabilitate Mayerová was not entirely successful. Nevertheless, the feminist goal of her work is clear. Like many accounts of Hašek, Warausová's book begins: "Much has been written Jaroslav Hašek." Uniquely in this corpus, hers goes on, "About his wife Jarmila, very little" (7).²⁴⁵

²⁴⁴ I am grateful to František Podhajský, editor of the recent volume *Fikce Jaroslava Haška*, for recommending Warausová's hard-to-find book. Podhajský considers it the best source of information for lesser-known aspects of Hašek's life and I am inclined to agree. The fact that the book is rare and the domestic side of Hašek's life understudied are not coincidences, but rather speak to the male-dominated field of Hašek studies.

²⁴⁵ "O Jaroslavu Haškovi bylo toho napsáno mnoho. O jeho ženě Jarmile velmi málo."

Warausová's feminist politics are an undercurrent throughout this book and she weaves it into her friendship with Mayerová. The two met as girls at a school where the faculty included Eliška Krásnohorská (Warausová, 7).²⁴⁶ The education they received was not necessarily radical, though; one of their friends was expelled for possession of *Medřická*, a book which espouses "the right of women to single motherhood" (Warausová, 45).²⁴⁷ Warausová dwells on the details of their schooldays, recording information about classmates who, unlike Hašek's otherwise unremarkable male friends, do not appear in any of the other memoirs about him. Funnily enough, Hašek dated a number of the girls in Warausová's circle of friends, including, briefly, Warausová herself, so the omission of these women from other books about his early days gives an incomplete picture of his romantic life before marriage. But this is not Warausová's concern: she describes her education at length in order to illustrate how limited her opportunities were. When she points out that girls were not eligible for study at the preeminent Obchodní akademie [Commercial Academy], she invites a comparison with Hašek, who was completely uninterested in the education he received there. As it was, Warausová studied in a commercial school less prestigious than the Obchodní akademie, and Mayerová entered a teacher's college.

Warausová explains that it was difficult for married women to find work, as employers assumed that their husbands were the breadwinners, and opportunities for single women were extremely limited (66). This was of course an even greater burden for single mothers, such as Mayerová became after her marriage to Hašek dissolved. After finishing school, Mayerová taught herself to knit in order to earn money (42), and this income became vital when Hašek

²⁴⁶ Krásnohorská was one of the most important nineteenth-century Czech feminists. It is unclear from Warausová's account whether the school in question was the Minerva Academy, which Krásnohorská founded in 1890 as the first girls' gymnasium in Central Europe.

²⁴⁷ "právo ženy na svobodné mateřství." *Medřická* is the work of Božena Viková-Kunětická, the first female member of the Czech diet.

proved incapable of, or uninterested in, holding on to a steady job. Warausová's telling of the *Svět zvířát* episode is not "revisionist" like Longen's, but her focus is pragmatic and disapproving. Focusing on the personal and material repercussions of Hašek's prank, she reports without humor how Hašek was fired from this post soon after he and Mayerová were married (55). Readers of other accounts may recall that Mayerová's father had set the condition that she and Hašek not marry unless he was steadily employed. His being fired shortly after their wedding therefore suggests that Hašek had made that agreement in bad faith and indeed, Mayerová soon moved back in to her parents' home. Warausová's version of the spouses' separation after the birth of their son also differs somewhat from Longen's. Warausová concurs with Longen that Mayerová left for good when Hašek went on a three-day bender when he had just barely regained his in-laws' trust after the birth of his son, but in her version, Hašek did not take the newborn out to the bar with him (57-58).

In the end, both Warausová and Mayerová became accomplished authors, although Warausová presents this as if it were a matter of necessity rather than vocation. Between 1924 and 1944, Warausová wrote four novels and four three-act plays. For her part, Mayerová published, among other works, a novel and a few collections of short stories, including one bitingly titled *Povídky o slabých ženách a silných mužích a naopak* [*Stories About Weak Women and Strong Men and Vice Versa*].²⁴⁸ Warausová also makes the case that Mayerová played a crucial role in the creation of Hašek's body of work. The editors of the 1963 collection of writings from the Party of Moderate Progress credit Mayerová with having transcribed Hašek's speeches during the stunt, but according to Warausová, her involvement was integral for his

²⁴⁸ When I told a male colleague that Jarmila is quite a good author in her own right who has unjustly been left out of the canon, he retorted, "But you're not writing a dissertation about *her*!" Statements like that demonstrate why it's important to think through the mechanisms of celebrity, and its barriers.

fiction too. Mayerová often transcribed or even wrote the endings for stories that Hašek published in newspapers, a system Warausová describes as “umělecká spolupráce” [“artistic collaboration”] (55).²⁴⁹ This is consistent with the collaborative spirit of Hašek’s circle, but it was a male-dominated milieu. Perhaps the only other woman who was prominent within this group was Xena Longenová, also the wife of one of the male participants.

A loyal friend to Mayerová, Warausová seems to have remained angry with Hašek even when he and Mayerová reconciled. She describes how Mayerová maintained hope that Hašek would return to her after the war, after it was known that he had joined the Red Army, and after the multiple false reports of his death. But when he finally turned up in Prague in the company of his new wife, “prý Kněžna Alexandra Lvova” [“the alleged princess Alexandra Lvova”], it was the greatest disappointment of Mayerová’s life (Warausová, 75). Nevertheless, the estranged spouses began seeing each other again, and Hašek got to know his son, although the boy was not told that Hašek was his father (Warausová, 76). In her loyalty to Mayerová, Warausová is somewhat hostile towards Lvova, who, she claims, intrigued to keep the former couple from meeting, including by pretending to be pregnant (82). Warausová records how, after Hašek’s death, Mayerová sued Lvova over his estate, maintaining that Mayerová wanted a share of the fortune from *Osudy* only in order to provide for her son. Warausová is right to stress Mayerová’s claim to child support, especially in light of the enormous legacy Hašek unexpectedly created at the end of his life, but her complete lack of sympathy for Lvova, who is herself a victim of Hašek’s unreliability, reveals the limits of Warausová’s feminist outlook. Rather than view Lvova as competition, Warausová might have considered the fundamental imbalance of Hašek’s new marriage to this very young woman who followed him from Russia. When looked at

²⁴⁹ Hopefully future research will identify the stories that Jarmila co-authored, so that she be given the credit she deserves.

dispassionately, or from a perspective critical of patriarchal social organization, one sees that Mayerová may have had more in common with Lvova than either did with Hašek.

Despite her strong opinions about him, Warausová does not portray Hašek as a one-dimensional person. In fact, her knowledge of the inner workings of his relationship with Mayerová gives her a unique insight into his two-sided nature, the disjunction between the man and the legend. She writes, “In front of Jarmila, he was himself, a subtle, sensitive person. For everyone else, he was Hašek” (44).²⁵⁰ But Hašek is not the hero – or antihero – of Warausová’s book. Ultimately, it’s a book about Mayerová, and Warausová’s friendship with her, the feminine inverse of the Hašek memoir. But even though Warausová focuses on Mayerová as an autonomous, noteworthy person, she cannot escape the fact that it is Mayerová’s involvement with Hašek that ultimately legitimizes Mayerová as a subject worthy of inclusion in an autobiographical account. A book about Mayerová is still a book about Hašek’s wife. Warausová concludes her memoir by writing:

And Hašek valued her work and certainly would have wished that it not be forgotten. After all – if every great man has a woman, who stood beside him, whom he loved and appreciated – for Hašek that was his Jarmila. (85)²⁵¹

It’s surprising, at the end of such a demystifying book, to see Warausová describe Hašek as “a great man.” And yet, here too, we see a clean division between Hašek as a praiseworthy author in the public sphere and Hašek as a blameworthy person in the private sphere. Like Longen, Warausová admires Hašek’s fiction, and intervenes only into the legend. It’s ironic, then, that as much as Warausová does to knock Hašek off his pedestal, her book still essentially relies on his implicit judgment in determining what, and who, is important.

²⁵⁰ “Před Jarmilou byl sám sebou, jemným, citlivým člověkem. Pro ostatní byl Haškem.”

²⁵¹ “I Hašek její tvorbu cenil a jistě by si přál, aby nebyla zapomenuta.

Vždyť – má-li každý velký muž ženu, která stála vedle něho, kterou miloval a uznával – a byla to u Haška jeho Jarmila.”

Longen's and Warausová's books addressed themselves to the Hašek legend in order to reveal the legend's casualties, which included Hašek's friendships, his marriage, and his relationship with his son. By presenting revisionist versions of his famous pranks, they depict life in the dark shadow of the legendary Hašek. Each makes a few minor concessions to the author's charm; Warausová admits that in private, Hašek could be sensitive, and Longen's books betrays his eternal returns to their friendship. But on the whole, both depict Hašek as someone so reckless and destructive that a second legend is born: Hašek as heartless monster. František Langer's Hašek memoir, the most artistically and intellectually satisfying of the bunch, is a different kind of intervention into the legend: it's an attempt at humanization.

A storywriter and playwright, Langer had much in common with Hašek and encountered him at several formative points in his life. Trained as a medical doctor, Langer served in the Czechoslovak Legions and went on to become an accomplished dramatist and prose-writer. His 1935 play *Jízdní hlídka* [*Mounted Patrol*] concerns a small group of Czech Legionnaires trapped in Russia after the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic. A work of Legionnaire literature more subtle than its counterparts, the play happens to feature a volunteer-soldier named Hašek, but this character is not based on the author. Langer's reflections on Hašek's work, life, and times are perceptive and insightful. Indeed, of all the Hašek memoirs, Langer's book has unique literary merit beyond its documentary value; Langer's reader, even if unfamiliar with Hašek, can take this text as an insightful coming-of-age story set against the World War.

Langer's memoir *Byli a bylo* from 1963 begins with "Vzpomínání na Jaroslava Haška" ["Remembering Jaroslav Hašek"]. Subsequent chapters cover, among other Czech luminaries,

Masaryk, the Čapek brothers, and Langer's brother Jiří.²⁵² But in this book, as opposed to other Hašek memoirs, anecdotes about famous people are not the draw. Rather, Langer's memoir seamlessly blends autobiographical episodes with commentary on literature and history. Langer's memoir appears more reliable in part because he strictly delimits his scope, writing only about episodes for which he was present, and avoids reconstructing dialogue in favor of summarizing conversations, with only the most memorable phrases quoted.

Langer never caricatures his subject. Instead, he depicts Hašek as a tragi-comic figure marked by paradoxes. For example, Hašek never seemed to have any money, despite publishing constantly. He was celebrated for his "legendary and gargantuan personality" (Langer, 31; see note),²⁵³ which included the drinking habit that eventually, perhaps inevitably, cost him his life. Langer's Hašek is by turns open and inscrutable, funny and pathetic. The most famous section of this chapter is Langer's description of the Party of Moderate Progress, of which he was a founding member. Richly detailed and exuberant, this is the best first-hand account of that legendary prank. Because it captures the spirit of the live performances, Langer's text is even more entertaining than the collection of Hašek's writings from the stunt, published posthumously in 1963. But small moments in the chapter make a big impression too. A tender episode concerns Hašek's friendship with Langer's mother, an aging, lonely and hard-of-hearing woman into whose ears Hašek would shout his stories loud enough to make her laugh (16). Years later, when a much changed Hašek returned from Russia, he promised Langer he would still visit his mother (Langer, 80).

²⁵² Jiří Langer is also a celebrated author who wrote in Czech, German and Hebrew. Interested in Jewish mysticism, he is best known as the author of *Devět bran* [*The Nine Gates*], a collection of stories drawn from his experiences among the Chasidim in Galicia.

²⁵³ "legendární a gargantuonské osobnosti." Here Langer describes Hašek as a Rabelais character, whereas Max Brod began the tradition of comparing Hašek's writing to that of Rabelais. In my opinion, both comparisons are apt.

In a gesture to establish authenticity, Langer admits that the two were not very close friends, an unusually candid confession for the author of a Hašek memoir. As young men they were in the same social circles and later they encountered each other a few times during the war. Langer describes their encounters during these periods but does not exaggerate his level of intimacy with Hašek. Whereas their social similarities bound them, their personalities and politics separated them. At every point where the two men find themselves together, Langer is serious and responsible, while Hašek's position is clownish, ironic or simply enigmatic. They both attended meetings of young anarchist writers, yet Hašek was always intent on turning the conversation away from politics and aesthetics, and irreverently gave the impression that he never read anyone else's work (Langer, 13-14). Later, they twice encountered each other during the war, both times in passing. Hašek's position, and indeed affiliation, was in constant flux, while Langer, as a military doctor, rose smoothly through the ranks of the Czechoslovak Legions until being offered a diplomatic position.

Apart from the section on the Party of Moderate Progress, the documentary value of Langer's memoir comes out most in the details of his wartime encounters with Hašek. Most of the memoirists skip over his military and Russian period entirely, having not been there themselves. The communist period produced many detailed accounts in Czech and Russian, especially of his Red Army service, including biographies by Jaroslav Křížek and Stanislav Antonov, and Josef Pospíšil's memoir *Znal jsem Haška* [*I Knew Hašek*]. But the authors' reliability is compromised due to their need to explain Hašek's actions through a Marxist-

Leninist lens. Langer's Hašek is neither a model socialist, nor the easily accessible, and therefore marketable, one-dimensional character of interwar memoirs.²⁵⁴

They meet only twice during Langer's military service; at each encounter, Hašek is in a new phase of his life, practically a new person. Hašek's only constant characteristic is a warm and affectionate attitude towards Langer. Hašek makes a strong impression as a *Družina* recruiter when they meet in Kiev the summer of 1916, when he delivers an anti-Austrian recruitment speech that Langer finds extraordinary for two reasons. First, it represents a new phase in the historical development of the Czech nation as a political entity; Langer has never seen someone speak out against Austria in public without being arrested. And second, Hašek, "who was always against militarism, against nationalism, and in general always against something, for the first time spoke for something" (Langer, 67).²⁵⁵ Langer notes Hašek's natural skills as an orator, which served him here as when he was candidate for Party of Moderate Progress. But now he was putting those skills towards work that was hopeful, earnest and constructive. "To byl jiný Hašek" ["That was a different Hašek"] (67), Langer says.

Their greatest moment of intimacy comes during their second wartime encounter, when both are stationed in Ukraine. Hašek needs a medical examination and Langer, as *šéflékař* [chief doctor], volunteers to perform it. Afterwards, Langer invites his old friend to spend a few days sharing his quarters (69). The encounter is intensely personal, as professionally-mandated physicality gives way to genuine intimacy. Many of the memoirists describe periods of time when Hašek stayed with them, which could range from a few nights to a few months. But these

²⁵⁴ Langer's memoir was published during a period of relative liberalization in the early 1960s. 75 years old when he wrote it, he was a respected member of an earlier generation of authors. Hence his book is free of ideological gestures.

²⁵⁵ "který byl vždycky proti militarismu, proti vlastenčení, a vůbec vždycky jen proti něčemu, poprvé mluvil pro něco."

visits were confined to Prague, and usually organized around alcohol-fueled carousing. The nights in Langer's quarters were quiet and private; Hašek was sober and the two men drank only tea (70). This episode, or at least Langer's version of it, is the perfect encapsulation of his project: to sympathetically separate the larger-than-life legend from the person. In this section of the text, we see how Langer's work as both a medical doctor and a writer comes together to create a uniquely sensitive depiction of Hašek as mere mortal.

Langer describes a clear division between Hašek the man, the author and the mythic personality, writing, "So already over the course of his life, more than Hašek the writer, he became Hašek the myth, as his precursors Eulenspiegel and Nasreddin became myths" (10).²⁵⁶ Like Pytlík, Langer places Hašek in the company of Till Eulenspiegel, also adding to their ranks the medieval Turkish philosophical storyteller Nasreddin, who appears in an enormous corpus of satirical anecdotes as a trickster or holy fool. Hašek, Eulenspiegel and Nasreddin are all historical figures who became known not exactly through their own actions, but through the practice of repeating humorous, exaggerated stories about them. That Eulenspiegel and Nasreddin stories continue to be told centuries after they lived gestures towards a possible future for the Hašek anecdote, not to be overshadowed by Hašek's literary fiction.²⁵⁷ Langer writes that while Hašek's prodigious publishing amplified his legend, in fact, anecdotes about him were told even in places where he was not read or known as an author (57). Langer observes that the legends about Hašek, which were passed by word-of-mouth, were "a part of his oeuvre" (57).²⁵⁸ He also

²⁵⁶ "Tak už za svého života se Hašek více než spisovatelem Haškem stal mýtem o Haškovi, jak se stali mýtem jeho veselí předchůdci Enšpígl nebo Nasreddin."

²⁵⁷ There is another surprising connection of which Langer was probably unaware. A humor festival dedicated to Nasreddin takes place every July in Akşehir, where he died. Similarly, Lipnice hosted a Hašek humor festival from 1958 until 2013. There is also a Eulenspiegel festival in Passau, but it features music rather than comedy.

²⁵⁸ "kusem jeho tvorby."

likens the anecdotes to Hašek's speeches as a candidate for Party of Moderate progress.²⁵⁹

Langer has in mind the oral quality of both sets of texts, but he does not comment on the shared collective authorship, even though he himself took part in both. This may be because, in spite of the group milieu, Langer's emphasis is Hašek's singularity.

In the final section, when Hašek had decamped to Lipnice, Langer recounts a rumor that Hašek was being sequestered against his will by his publisher. Some of the former members of the Party of Moderate Progress toyed with the idea of a mock-heroic rescue mission. By then, though, they were forty-year-old army veterans, and nobody was up to the antics of two decades before (85) – except, implicitly, for Hašek, who was carousing his way to an early death. Langer never makes the contrast between himself and Hašek explicit; indeed, any outright comparison would inevitably be condescending towards Hašek. Langer makes clear the differences between Hašek and himself, all the while depicting Hašek with love, empathy and respect.

After abandoning the prankish, half-planned “campaign for Hašek's liberation” (85), Langer expresses remorse over failing to visit him in Lipnice. Langer imagines how Hašek spent the final days of his life: lying in a bed he had installed in the kitchen, not eating but sending to the nearby inn U České koruny for the beer he used to self-medicate. Langer claims that none of his old friends traveled to Lipnice for the funeral because they learned of his death only after reading about it in newspapers (87), and yet his own regret at missing the funeral is palpable. The fact that the Lipnice Sokol chapter paid for his funeral is, in Langer's mind, Hašek's last great prank: “The joke, really the irony of this idea consists in the linking of two such contradictory images as Hašek and Sokol, which in reality could never have met in earnest”

²⁵⁹ Langer's memoir predates by two years the publication of the *Politické a sociální dějiny Strany mírného pokroku v mezích zákona* [*The Political and Social History of the Party of Moderate Progress Within the Limits of the Law*], which combines the speeches transcribed by Jarmila with Hašek's manuscript for a larger project and other short texts he authored during that era.

(87).²⁶⁰ Langer concludes this section with another contrast, this one contained within Hašek himself. After describing in wretched terms Hašek's final days, Langer jumps to a characterization of his body of work: "These thousand Hašek humoresques, his adventures, anecdotes, jokes, his Švejk – and now this terrible end of Hašek's path through life!"²⁶¹ Here we see Langer struggling to reconcile Hašek's legendary public face as originator of anecdotes and author of humorous literature with the private and pitiful human, suffering in death. Langer offers no moral about a life spent in wandering and consumption, nor any glib platitude about the immortal life of art. Instead, the contradiction remains unresolved, and the text becomes a meditation, as poignant as *Pagliacci*, on the private anguish that can underscore public comedy.

Langer's book is a true memoir, a record not of events as they happened, but as the author, with the passage of time, has come to understand them. At one point, he even obliquely critiques the genre of Hašek memoirs, suggesting that a lot of Hašek's friends, though colorful personalities, were untalented as writers. Langer suggests that these would-be authors who responded to the popular demand for texts about Hašek would have done better to produce a work like Eckermann's *Gespräche mit Goethe* (57). For Langer, even the impact of *Osudy* has changed; he ends his Hašek memoir with the words, "if someday I once again take his Švejk into my hands, it will not be that book at which I can laugh so freely, as I laughed before" (88).²⁶² Langer's reckoning with Hašek has complicated his reading of *Osudy*, and he can no longer separate the novel from the biography.

²⁶⁰ "Vtip, vlastně ironie této myšlenky spočítávala ve spojení dvou tak neslučitelných představ, jako byl Hašek a Sokol, které se ve skutečnosti nikdy vážně nemohly setkat."

²⁶¹ "Těch tisíc Haškových humoresek, jeho příhody, anekdoty, vtipy, jeho Švejk – a teď ten hrůzný konec Haškovy cesty životem!"

²⁶² "vezmu-li ještě někdy jeho Švejka do rukou, nebude to kniha, nad kterou se budou moci svobodně pochechtávat, jako jsem se nad ní smával dřív."

Most biographical readings of *Osudy* and Hašek's other works look for moments when the author is hinting at his own legend, heightening the humorous effect for those familiar with his life. For Langer, the opposite effect is achieved. For him, re-reading the novel evokes memories of Hašek as he knew him then, and as he understands him now. In Langer's reading, the legend obscures the novel's meaning, its darkness, its gravitas. Indeed, when we reduce Hašek to the jolly, carefree hero of simple anecdotes, his authorial persona and potential are likewise limited. This figure of the author might be a humorist, but it's hard to think of him as a novelist, especially when implicit value judgments are attached to those characterizations. But the opposite is also true. Langer shows that when we confront Hašek's darkness, it can be hard to enjoy his humor.

Langer's book is invaluable on a number of counts: as a testimony of a tumultuous era, as a thoughtful depiction of a relationship with a remarkable and inscrutable individual, and finally, as an account of Langer's own development as a thinker. Interestingly, in this text Langer never describes his own career as writer, except to mention the cabaret skits he contributed to the group that formed around the Party of Moderate Progress. If we compare this to Sauer's book, the careers of the two memoirists are in an inverse proportion. Sauer exaggerates his relationship to Hašek and his own literary career, while Langer deemphasizes both these elements. The goal of each memoirist accounts for this divergence. Sauer's book presents a portrait of Hašek designed to satisfy readers' expectations, that is, Hašek's readers. But Langer's book pleases a different type of reader, one looking for a sober and mature recollection of early-twentieth-century Prague.

The memoirs that I have termed "corrective" each do their part to unpack the Hašek legend. In each case, the Hašek legend represented a barrier to the memoirist's vision. For

Longen, it was unhappy memories of a difficult relationship. For Warausová, it was a detailed and sympathetic portrait of women's lives. And for Langer, it was a coming-of-age story set against monumental political changes, messy and meandering. These three authors were handling complex material, inconsistent with a unidimensional depiction of Hašek. But the version peddled by Sauer and Kuděj continues to dominate the public imagination. We might say that someone reminds us of Hašek if he is funny or mischievous, certainly not because he is dark and tormented. And in my experience, I have found that Hašek fans will talk only briefly about his fiction, before switching, inevitably, to the funny stories that seem to make up his life.

These two versions coexist because they are both, to some extent, authentic, both based on biographical fact. The dual versions are rival historical interpretations of the same set of data, with certain elements emphasized or deemphasized to support the memoirist's argument. Even Langer was not immune to Hašek's reputation as a scamp; we see this in an episode in the small Ural town of Miassy, when Langer encounters some Ukrainian women, laughing about someone they just met. They describe him as a "bolšoj šutník" [шутник, jokester] who smelled of "samohonka" [самогон, moonshine], but cannot remember his name. Suspecting that it might be his friend, Langer asks, "what was his name and did it perhaps sound something like Hašek. They say yes, yeah of course, they start to remember, finally they shout for him, 'Comrade Gašek!'"²⁶³

The autobiographical novels and the corrective memoirs are united in one important aspect: they were all authored by professional writers. This argues for a certain awareness of writerly methods they used, including literary devices, allusions and a sense of Hašek's place in literary history. Thus, both groups of books can be seen as self-aware entries into the discourse

²⁶³ "jak se jmenoval a neznělo-li to nějak jako Hašek. Že prý ano, no ovšem, vzpomíná si, vždyť na něho volali: 'Továryš Gašek!'"

of the Hašek legend. The contrast between the articulators' and the interventionists' approaches to writing, indeed the very diversity of the genre, shows how the production of the Hašek legend was collaborative and intentional for thinking about Czech literary culture and the literary marketplace. The third group I will treat represent authors aloof from, or indifferent to, these broad concerns, but who were nevertheless deeply interested in Hašek's legacy.

4. Extra-legendary memoirs

The final pair of texts I will consider show how the Hašek legend was handled by people outside literary institutions: his scribe Kliment Štěpánek and his second wife Alexandra Lvova. Fans of Langer, Longen or Warausová may pick up their memoirs out of interest in those authors' work, but Štěpánek's and Lvova's books are primarily utilized by *haškologové* [Hašekologists] for their documentary value. I, however, propose approaching these books together with the autobiographical novels and corrective memoirs as literary works whose authors had a stake in Hašek's legacy. They were written as entries into the emerging discourse that would define the Hašek legend.

They are distinct from the other categories for two reasons, one extrinsic, one intrinsic. First, both Štěpánek and Lvova met Hašek towards the end of his life and were, alone among the memoirists, witnesses to his demise and death. Their relationship with Hašek was therefore fundamentally different from those who associated with him primarily before the war. Second, because Štěpánek and Lvova are non-professional writers, they lacked the writerly awareness described above. Or at least, they appeared to. Both Štěpánek and Lvova strike a pose of authorial naïveté, stressing their ignorance of Hašek's works and reputation. These facts impede the authors' ability to comment on the Hašek legend as such, and effectively absolve them from

the obligation to do so. Because they were outside Prague's artistic bohemian culture, both by geography and profession, they were not exposed to the collective mythologizing of pre-war Hašek. Nor did they critically consider *Osudy* when creating their versions of Hašek. Whereas Hašek resembles Švejk in the articulatory memoirs, and the authors of corrective memoirs struggle to reconcile the great work of art with its sometimes ignominious author, these memoirs do not show the influence of *Osudy* as a work of art.

Kliment Štěpánek's *Vzpomínky na poslední léta Jaroslava Haška* [*Memoirs of the Last Years of Jaroslav Hašek*] is a sober response to the sensationalistic tendencies in both kinds of Hašek memoirs, and an under-appreciated resource. When Štěpánek was twenty-four years old, he worked as Hašek's scribe in Lipnice. In what is presented as an addendum to the original manuscript, he explains that he wrote the bulk of it in 1927 at the request of Eduard Bass, a writer and former member of the Party of Moderate Progress, who was preparing an anthology on Hašek. Bass wanted Štěpánek to detail the final year of Hašek's life, but the proposed project never materialized.

Indeed, Štěpánek's experience as one of two witnesses to Hašek's final year gives him authority to write this memoir. He also assumes an air of moral authority with regards to Hašek's increasing social isolation. Although he met Hašek only at the end of the author's life, and the basis of their relationship was professional, the two grew close precisely at the time Hašek and his other friends, including those who would later go on to author memoirs, fell out of touch. Štěpánek explains that he decided to finally publish his text in response to the other Hašek memoirists who were besmirching their subject or capitalizing on their association with him, namely Longen and Sauer. So, although Štěpánek was not a professional writer, he was consciously intervening in the polemics surrounding Hašek's legacy. He charges that Longen's

motive for writing his memoir is purely financial and not based on love for his late friend; in this way, he suggests, *Můj přítel Jaroslav Hašek* is a similar undertaking to Longen's unauthorized dramatization of *Osudy*. Štěpánek similarly criticizes Sauer, who sought to profit off a friendship that had all but disintegrated by the end of Hašek's life, and argues that Sauer exaggerates his role in distributing the first volumes of *Osudy*. He correctly notes that Sauer's book gives the impression that Sauer and Hašek were the very best of friends. In reality, as Štěpánek uniquely could attest, Sauer was one of many Prague bohemians who lost touch with Hašek once he moved to Lipnice.

Štěpánek's bitterness towards Hašek's fair-weather friends is understandable given the unique position he occupied in the author's final months. In his afterword to the book, Václav Lacina writes that although Štěpánek was hired to perform the straightforward tasks of a *písař* (scribe or amanuensis), even calling him a "human Dictaphone," in time he became the author's confidant and "collaborator in the best sense of the word" (48).²⁶⁴ Lacina writes that, although *Osudy* remains unfinished, even less of the book would exist had Hašek not found such a dedicated, hard-working *písař* to push him to write (49). Maybe Lacina exaggerates Štěpánek's importance in bringing *Osudy* to fruition in order to argue for the importance of the memoir, and yet the twenty-four-year old clerk's work ethic was certainly not a hindrance to the production of the novel. And Langer, commenting in his own memoir on Štěpánek's book, writes, "In Štěpánek Hašek found his right hand, clerk, secretary, and most importantly friend, such as he never had in his entire life" (87).²⁶⁵ It's debatable how influential Štěpánek was, but it is as a witness that he makes his greatest contribution to our understanding of Hašek's authorship; the

²⁶⁴ "spolupracovníkem v nejlepším slova smysl."

²⁶⁵ "V Štěpánkovi našel Hašek svou pravou ruku, písaře, sekretáře, a hlavně přítele, jakého asi neměl po celý život."

greatest documentary value of the book is the information it contains about the unusual process by which Hašek wrote his masterpiece.

Throughout the book, including the addendum which appears to have been written by a much older Štěpánek, the tone is straightforward, giving the impression of naïveté. In a remarkable departure from all other Hašek memoirists except Lvova, Štěpánek claims that he was completely unfamiliar with the author before making his personal acquaintance. Crucially, therefore, Štěpánek was also ignorant of the Hašek legend at the beginning of their acquaintance. When he first heard news of Hašek's arrival in Lipnice, for example, Štěpánek recalls garbling the rumor; the celebrity he expected to see was the prominent singer and actor Karel Hašler (8).²⁶⁶ Štěpánek gives no indication that he had previously read any of Hašek's stories, and his innocence extends to the broader circle of Prague's bohemian luminaries. His description of Longen as "ředitel pražského divadélka Adrie" ["the manager of the little theater Adria in Prague"] (9)²⁶⁷ leaves Longen's larger cultural importance unremarked. Similarly, he sees Panuška as a painter of Lipnice landscapes, not, for example, a member of the distinguished Prague art society Mánes. Štěpánek touchingly notes that Panuška's sons are also fond of Lipnice (7), as if his book is making a case for the town itself. Štěpánek's distance from the world of Prague bohemians had a profound consequence for his working relationship with Hašek, because he was not mystified by the author or his legendarily unconventional lifestyle.

²⁶⁶ A fascinating figure, Hašler worked in theater, cabaret and film, but was best known for his rousing up-tempo songs. They praised Masaryk and the Czechoslovak Legions and denigrated communists, and gave rise to a genre known as *hašlerky*. In 1941 he was arrested by the Gestapo, sent to Mauthausen and tortured to death, punishment for his Czech nationalism (CSFD.cz).

²⁶⁷ In Prague, small form theaters, which often present variety shows consisting of songs, one-acts and other genres germane to cabaret, have been a popular alternative to the higher brow official stage since the early twentieth century. But Štěpánek's use of the word *divadélko* to describe Adria does not necessarily mean that he was familiar with this theatrical subgenre. Rather, it seems to connote that Adria was an unofficial venue, or even more literally, a small theater.

Štěpánek's ignorance of Hašek's reputation meant that he approached the author simply as a disorganized boss, rather than as an artist whose unpredictability was essential to his genius. In other words, Hašek's charisma had no power over Štěpánek. When Hašek first hires Štěpánek, they agree on a daily working schedule of two shifts: nine to noon and three to five. But when Štěpánek arrives at nine the next morning, his boss refuses to get out of bed. The nine o'clock start-time was, it seems, aspirational, as Hašek usually slept until the afternoon (Štěpánek, 15). Štěpánek would spend his first daily shift visiting with Panuška or observing Lvova's Czech lessons, but he was increasingly anxious to get to work. Although hired to work primarily on *Osudy*, Štěpánek also took dictation on other short stories that Hašek published in Prague newspapers like *Tribuna*, *Rudé právo* and *České slovo*, which provided Hašek with necessary income.

When they finally got to work on the novel, the improvisational process Štěpánek observed was extraordinary, especially considering the scope of *Osudy*. Hašek occasionally consulted a map, for example for the chapters when Švejk and his regiment travel across Hungary and Galicia (Štěpánek, 17). But otherwise he used no sources, not even for the many literary and historical references that pepper the novel. Nor did he rely on notes or any other form of pre-writing. Hašek dictated extemporaneously for two or three hours at a time, sometimes laughing so hard at his own jokes that he had to take a short break to regain composure (Štěpánek, 18). He particularly delighted in scenes involving toilet humor, and, as previously noted, the sapper Vodička. Quartos filled quickly with text, and at the end of every session, Hašek sent his day's pages off to his publisher, retaining only the last half-written page so he would know where to begin the following day (Štěpánek, 17). Štěpánek recalls that if ever this final fragment was accidentally sent to Synek or lost, Hašek would easily rewrite it in from

memory and continue dictating with no time lost (Štěpánek, 18), a remarkable feat especially for a heavy drinker.²⁶⁸ Štěpánek's description of the writing process in Lipnice explains why the first volume, which Hašek wrote by hand in Prague where his publisher was based, has been preserved in its entirety, but only fragments of the later volumes remain; there is no complete handwritten manuscript.²⁶⁹ Details of the writing process also shed light on the increasingly sprawling style of the later volumes of *Osudy*. Whereas the first volume is composed of brief episodes, and each chapter has a legible structure and self-contained narrative point, the composition unravels as the book goes on. The later volumes are no less humorous, insightful and memorable, but structurally they bear the imprint of Hašek's improvised dictation and, perhaps, increased alcohol consumption.²⁷⁰

Accounting for Hašek's drinking habits became an important part of Štěpánek's duties. For Štěpánek, Hašek's drinking was not an intrinsic part of his legendary character, as it was for so many of his pre-war friends, but simply an impediment to both of them doing their job. In addition to delaying the morning shift while Hašek slept off the damage from the night before, the afternoon shift was sometimes rushed when Hašek was expecting company, although Štěpánek claims that in these instances they simply filled the requisite number of pages faster (18). Štěpánek was often sent to buy alcohol for his boss, and this probably increased when

²⁶⁸ Langer also notes Hašek's incredible memory, especially for recalling details from things he'd read (17).

²⁶⁹ All that remains of Hašek's manuscript is available for viewing in a meager archive at the Památník národního písemnictví [the Monument of Czech Literature] in Prague which also contains some correspondence and photographs of the unsmiling author.

²⁷⁰ In this way, the second half of *Osudy* evokes Hašek's earlier great work of comic improvisation: The Party of Moderate Progress. Because of its satirical nature, Parrott argues that the Party is the civilian counterpart to *Osudy* (1979, 120). But to date, nobody has made a serious comparison of the oral quality of both works, stemming from Hašek's original live delivery of the texts. The works are also connected in the important role played by scribes, under-appreciated in both cases. What Štěpánek did for *Osudy*, Hašek's first wife Jarmila did for the Party of Moderate Progress.

Hašek moved from the hotel U České koruny to a little house he bought across the town square in autumn 1922. Štěpánek recalls attempting to negotiate Hašek's drinking, especially in 1922 when his progress on the novel began to slow. In this instance Štěpánek comes to resemble those "dobří lidé" that Longen describes: champions of Hašek who earnestly believe that if they could help him control his drinking, he would realize his potential as a writer. In contrast to Longen, however, Štěpánek never expresses disappointment or anger. On the contrary, Štěpánek is guided by obligation, admiration, and finally pity. Štěpánek was intimately familiar with Hašek's financial troubles and worsening health, perhaps in even greater detail than was Lvova. Responsible for Hašek's correspondence, much of which at that time consisted of requests for payment, Štěpánek knew the author's "tužby a bolesti" ["longings and pains"] (30). Štěpánek avoids passing judgment due to his own sympathy and, probably, the straightforwardness and short duration of their acquaintance.

Štěpánek's book is also distinguished by his respectful portrait of Lvova. That he too refers to her as "kněžna Šura" ["princess Šura"] (9), I think, suggests that he genuinely believed the rumor about her aristocratic origins, especially because he lacked the ability to recognize it as a typical Hašek mystification. His is a great departure from accounts that are limited to Lvova's arrival in Prague, when she spoke only Russian and operated under a mistaken, even ridiculous, notion of who her husband was. When Štěpánek's employment begins, Lvova confides in him her worry that Hašek had lost his taste for work (Štěpánek, 14). In other Hašek memoirs, Lvova comes across as clueless, helpless and hopeless, and seems to spend most of her time begging "Jaroušek" not to drink. Štěpánek, however, portrays her sympathetically. In part this is thanks to the Czech lessons she took at Lipnice, which enabled her and Štěpánek to communicate. To Štěpánek, the "kněžna" was not one of Hašek's elaborate pranks; she was his boss's wife, and

she had her own “tužby a bolesti.” Štěpánek confesses that during Hašek’s final days, he felt too embarrassed to face Lvova in her distraught state (38). He may not have realized what a huge departure this was from the typical representation of Lvova, and yet Štěpánek does for her what Langer does for Hašek: he humanizes her.

Štěpánek does not intentionally ignore the Hašek legend, but he does embrace his ignorance of it. On the one hand, this means that he is unable to comment on the full scope of the author’s persona. But on the other hand, he is liberated from the generic conventions of the Hašek memoir, which essentially demand that the memoirist either reproduce the legend or repudiate it. In any case, Štěpánek is more than a “human Dictaphone.” His book represents an alternate reality, one in which Hašek’s life, and death, are not cloaked in legend. The information he presents is illuminating but, as it turns out, without the legend, Hašek is a far less compelling character. In the “ignorant” view Štěpánek presents, Hašek comes off as an entertaining but lonely man with a good sense of humor, a bad drinking problem and a lousy work ethic. Ironically, this portrait isn’t too different from the one painted by Longen, with whom Štěpánek is nominally polemicizing. But Longen was also a more experienced author than Štěpánek, able to persuade his readers through the use of myriad literary devices. The biggest difference between them as authors of Hašek memoirs, however, lies elsewhere: Longen had a clear sense that Hašek was a literary genius and a legendary personality, and Hašek mystified him.

Like Štěpánek, Lvova had no prior knowledge of Hašek’s work or reputation. On a personal level, Lvova dealt with far more extreme consequences than Štěpánek did for her ignorance of Hašek’s past. But in comparing the two texts, I find they are united in their major lacunae: silence about Hašek’s pre-war pranks and, even more remarkable, a lack of commentary on his fiction. Lvova, however, does have a sense that Hašek was split between his public and

private personae, but her particular way of understanding this was unique. She alone locates the Hašek legend in the space in between Hašek and *Gašek*. For Lvova, Gašek was a sober, hard-working, Russian-speaking communist journalist whereas Hašek was frivolous, lazy and decadent. Gašek was the version she first met, married and preferred, and to her, the beer-guzzling, prank-playing Hašek was the inauthentic version.

Alexandra Lvova is a remarkable figure who has been unjustly minimized and mischaracterized in Hašek scholarship. Her complexity and humanity are incompatible with the Hašek legend, which reduces her to a punchline. In many of the other Hašek memoirs, including ones generally sympathetic to her, Lvova is the subject of ridicule and humiliation. Memoirists universally refer to her as “kněžna” or “prý kněžna” (“the princess” or “the alleged princess”) and so did the press. A photo of Hašek with his new wife taken a few weeks before his death ran in a Prague newspaper with the caption “Jaroslav Hašek se svou ‘knežnou Šurinkou.’” [“Jaroslav Hašek with his ‘princess little Šura’”]. The photo shows them seated together at a dining room table, his face Sphinx-like but hers wary and even slightly terrified. The origin of the princess nickname is unambiguous: this is how Hašek jokingly introduced her when they first arrived in Prague. But, as I will shortly explain, this was a cruel joke which has been preserved in the historical record at the expense of Lvova’s true identity and values. Lvova was an unwilling contributor to the Hašek legend, and ultimately a victim of it. By recognizing her text as an essential entry in the corpus of Hašek memoirs, we can restore the voice of the figure who has the most to gain from a careful analysis of the legend.

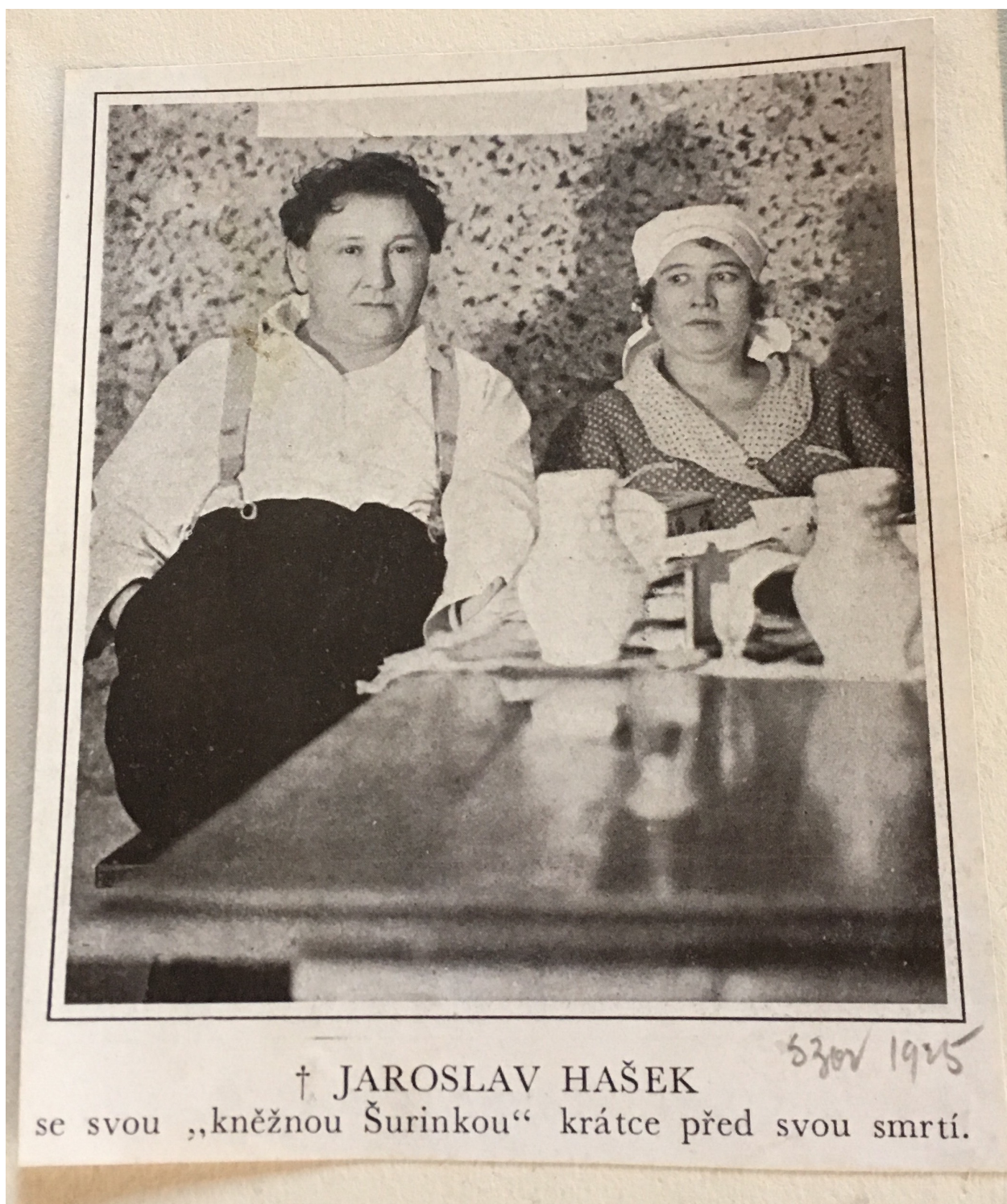


Figure 3. The caption reads, “Jaroslav Hašek with his ‘princess little Šura’ shortly before his death.” Photographer unknown. 1922. Památník národního písemnictví, Prague.

Lvova began studying Czech as soon as she arrived in Prague and remained in Czechoslovakia after Hašek's death. (I have been unable to ascertain how she supported herself during those years, in part, I suspect, because Hašek scholars have historically not taken her seriously. Hašek's estate did, however, continue to generate revenue after his death because of the enduring popularity of *Osudy* which, except for the period of Nazi occupation, has never been out of print.) In 1965 the journal *Průboj* published a thirty-page memoir under the title "Jaroslav Hašek: Vzpomínky Šury Lvové-Haškové" ["Jaroslav Hašek: Memoirs of Šura Lvova-Hašková"]; it seems to have been produced by dictation with the help of a journalist named Jiří Častka. Later that year, the same text ran in the magazine *Svět sovětů*, retitled "Můj život s Jaroslavem Haškem. Z vyprávění Aleksandry Garvilovny Lvové-Haškové" ["My Life With Jaroslav Hašek. From the Narration of Alexandra Gavrilovna Lvova-Hašková"].²⁷¹

Lvova's memoir details the entirety of her relationship with Hašek, beginning with their initial meeting in her hometown of Ufa in 1919. She was twenty-three, employed as a printer; he was thirty-five and starting a job as editor of the newspaper *Naš put'* [*Our way*] (Lvova, 2; 4). Lvova's description of Hašek in Russia is astounding. She describes him as a hard worker, always in a good mood, and, she stresses repeatedly, absolutely opposed to the consumption of alcohol. In sections that evoke Langer's memoir, she writes of how much Hašek charmed her mother (5). To some extent, Lvova's description of Hašek during this time period accords with other accounts. Olbracht as well as Langer commented on Hašek's seemingly complete transformation during his Russian period.

²⁷¹ I am grateful to David Muhlena, Director of the National Czech and Slovak Museum and Library in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, who provided me with a digitized version of this hard-to-find text.

Lvova insists on her total ignorance of Hašek's life before he entered the Red Army. Unfortunately, her disavowal of all knowledge of Hašek's pre-war life may have contributed to scholars' dismissal of her; her avowed ignorance is so comprehensive, it becomes hard to believe. In the paragraph that follows a description of their wedding, Lvova declares that she knew nothing of Hašek's first marriage. Nor, she adds, did she know about his writing career (12). Perhaps naïvely, perhaps strategically, Lvova maintains that Hašek's failure to disclose this information was part of his dawning political consciousness. She repeats what she claims is the explanation he gave her after his lie had been exposed: before the war and his exposure to the Revolution, he had no sense of responsibility for himself or others. His first marriage, like his silly writings, had no purpose behind it (Lvova, 21-22). Lvova confesses that she was deeply hurt when she learned about his marriage to Mayerová (12). But throughout the text, she maintains that he kept it from her not in order to deceive her, but because he had mentally repudiated his bourgeois former life.

An important aspect of Lvova's character is her working-class background and commitment to communism, both as a young woman and apparently into the mid-1960s when she dictated this text. Insofar as it is connected with profound emotional experiences, the ideological content of her text is more sincere than other communist-era Hašek scholarship. More than forty years have elapsed since the events she describes, and yet Lvova speaks with fervor about both her readiness to believe Hašek's explanation of his own radical evolution, and her disappointment when Hašek abandoned his political work upon returning to Prague. This is why it was so cruel that on the night they arrived, Hašek told all his friends, in a language she could not understand, that she was a princess fleeing the Bolsheviks. At the end of the night, when one of Hašek's Russian-speaking friends explains why everyone laughed when she was

introduced, she was simultaneously humiliated and, because she was proud of her proletarian pedigree, enraged (Lvova, 19).²⁷² Later, living in a Prague hotel, she is desperately lonely but refuses to associate with the other Russian guests because they had come to Czechoslovakia in order to flee the revolution (Lvova, 20).

While Lvova offers some valuable commentary on Hašek's motivation for and process of writing *Osudy*, there's actually no evidence in the memoir that she ever read the novel, such as quotations or references to characters. This is to say that she seems to have *remained* uninterested in Hašek as an author. She did not have a stake in the Hašek legend as a cultural product, in part because she was completely aloof from the world of Czech literary culture. Her ignorance of Hašek's pre-war writing is the most obvious example of this, but not the only one. Like Štěpánek, she fails to register the prominence of literary people with whom she came in contact, including the Longen couple, who became close friends. And as she was often the subject of his pranks, she had no great admiration for Hašek as a jokester either. Nevertheless, Lvova did have the sense that Hašek was a two-sided person, but she divides the two sides into Hašek and Gašek.

To Lvova, Gašek and Hašek are two different people, and her writing suggests that Gašek is the truer form, while Hašek emerges through the corrupting influence of alcohol and bourgeois society. To her, the transformation is decisive and comprehensive, like Jekyll and Hyde. Because the text is in Czech, not her native Russian, the difference between Hašek and Gašek is orthographically visible. In Russian-language writings and translations, he is always Гамек (which, among other implications, limits the interpretive possibilities of the Bugulma Tales). She explains how in Russia, "I met Jaroslav Romanovich Gašek. That's how the name Jaroslav

²⁷² Incidentally, Lvova cannot recall the friend's name, but cross-referencing the episode with *Byli a bylo* suggests that it may have been František Langer.

Hašek sounded on all the documents given to him by the Red Army” (6).²⁷³ When not using his first name, she refers to him as Gašek until their arrival in Prague. Their spontaneous welcome party at Café Union, when Lvova was presented as a princess, is well-documented, but only she perceives the pathos at the end of the night, when the couple check into a hotel and, in the hotel register, she sees him for the first time write his name in Czech. “From that time, Jaroslav Romanovich Gašek was once again Jaroslav Hašek” (19).²⁷⁴ In the rest of the memoir, she alternates between referring to him as Jaroslav and Hašek. But another change in him occurs when they decamp from Prague to Lipnice. She writes, “Hašek in Lipnice and Hašek in Prague, that was a huge difference” (25).²⁷⁵ Lvova describes the beginning of their time in Lipnice as an idyllic reprieve. Hašek became amiable again; he was drinking less and working more. To Lvova this feels like a return to the early days of their relationship, and she says, “In Lipnice Hašek again became pleasant, laughing Gašek” (26).²⁷⁶

Lvova is not the only person to draw a firm line between Hašek and Gašek. She recalls an incident back in Russia when Hašek himself made a similar comment: “Once in Ufa he met with some former acquaintance and said to him: ‘Gašek is not Hašek’” (5).²⁷⁷ Her division of him into two competing personalities is not along the lines of public versus private persona, or author and legend, but rather, of the person he becomes depending on the external, material conditions of his life, a distinction that may be a reflection of her Marxian orientation. When she describes him as

²⁷³ “jsem poznala Jaroslava Romanoviče Gaška. Tak znělo jméno Jaroslav Hašek na všech dokumentech vydaných mu Rudou armádou.”

²⁷⁴ “Od té doby byl Jaroslav Romanovič Gašek zase Jaroslavem Haškem.”

²⁷⁵ “Hašek na Lipnice a Hašek v Praze, to byl obroský rozdíl.”

²⁷⁶ “Hašek se na Lipnice zase stával příjemným, usměvavým Gaškem.”

²⁷⁷ “Jednou se v Ufě setkal se nějakým bývalým známým a řekl mu: Gašek není Hašek.” I am very tempted to suggest that this “former acquaintance” was Ivan Olbracht, who wrote an essay describing his shock when he visited Russian and heard about Comrade Gašek’s reputation, but alas, I cannot prove that this was who Lvova had in mind.

“a person of a double life but a singular mind” (31),²⁷⁸ she points to a core, ideal self that exists in both Gašek and Hašek, and ultimately finds expression in the author of *Osudy*.

Despite her immunity to Hašek’s writerly charisma, she registers a change in him when he begins working on *Osudy*. This too is consistent with Lvova’s appraisal of Hašek. Of his pre-war writing, she writes “He did not believe that it was literature, he himself considered it just ‘for laughs,’ as a means and an opportunity for a livelihood” (12).²⁷⁹ She recalls that when they returned to Prague, Hašek began to trace a line from his pre-war writing through his communist journalism and into a new ambition, explaining, “I can’t do anything other than write, and in this way I must go on living” (22).²⁸⁰ This suggests that Hašek understood his identity through the activity of writing, rather than some inalienable set of characteristics and indeed, writing is the single consistent element throughout his life of pivots. Lvova identifies Hašek’s new literary ambition with two emotional experiences. First, Lvova believes Hašek is bitter about the expectation that he will denounce his time in the Red Army and reduce the whole experience to a joke for the benefit of his bourgeois audience. This explanation provides the emotional interiority of Hašek’s silence about Russia, remarked on by other memoirists. Discussing the cabaret performances for which Longen engaged Hašek to perform monologues about Russia, Lvova quotes Hašek as saying, “What can I do? Make a ‘joke’ of all those cowards and traitors. That much they’d allow, because in Bohemia ‘jokes’ are not considered literature” (22).²⁸¹

The other component of Hašek’s new literary ambition is his growing sense of his own potential which, for Lvova, is connected with his pseudo-Russian identity as Gašek. Lvova

²⁷⁸ “člověk dvojího života ale jednoho myšlení”

²⁷⁹ “Nevěřil, že je to literatura, sám ji považoval jen za ‘psinu,’ za způsob a možnost obživy.”

²⁸⁰ “Nic jiného než psát neumím, a tak se tím musím žít i dál.”

²⁸¹ “Co tedy můžu? Dělat si ze všech těch zbabělců a zradců ‘srandů.’ To mi snad dovolí, protože ‘sranda’ se v Cechách za literaturu nepovažuje.”

writes that Hašek “byl vždy vnitřně přesvědčen, že je, nebo bude spisovatelem. Tedy tvůrcem, umělcem” [“was always deep down convinced that he was, or would be, a writer. That is, a creator, an artist”] (23). Her text largely does not reflect the traditional Russian cult of the author, yet her use here of *tvůrce*, which evokes the Russian word творец, hints at it.²⁸² When Hašek dies, having proven his genius by writing *Osudy*, Lvova transforms him back into the version of himself that is not just Russian, but communist. She writes, “Zemřel Jaroslav Romanovič Gašek, skutečný umělec a komunista” [Jaroslav Romanovich Gašek died, a real artist and communist”] (31). For her, Hašek realized his potential, both creatively and politically, through his authorship of *Osudy*, and from this achievement emerged Gašek, his true self.

In order for Lvova’s transformation metaphor to work, however, she must ignore one of the plainest differences between Hašek and Gašek: drinking. Hašek died from alcohol-induced heart failure, a fate the teetotaler Gašek could have avoided. By the end of her memoir, then, the Hašek-Gašek opposition becomes more idealized than pragmatic. What began as essentially an administrative fluke (“I met Jaroslav Romanovich Gašek. That’s how the name Jaroslav Hašek sounded on all the documents given to him by the Red Army”) has become a signifier with meaning unique to Lvova as an author. Many people who knew Hašek before the war viewed his Red Army phase, and his reinvention as Gašek, as an aberration. Only to Lvova was Gašek authentic. Only to Lvova was Gašek the author of *Osudy*.

Just as Lvova’s conception of Hašek’s split personality is unique in the memoirs, so too is her account of the overlap between Hašek and Švejk. As I showed, earlier memoirists sometimes depicted Hašek as a Švejkish prankster, effectively remaking the creator in the image of his

²⁸² As far back as Lomonosov’s poem “Вечернее размышление о Божием величестве” from 1743, the word творец links authorship with divine creation. Lvova, however, seems no more interested in the specifics of Russian literature than in Czech, so that the evocation of Lomonosov is almost certainly unintentional.

creation. Lvova does something very different: her memoir bears witness to Hašek's own increasing identification with Švejk. She writes, "He lived completely in Švejk's captivity. He spoke of himself as if of Švejk. He compared everything he did with how Švejk would have done it" (29).²⁸³ Because of the unprecedented success of *Osudy*, Hašek may have suspected that his name would become synonymous with Švejk's. Or perhaps, although Lvova writes of this identification as a form of captivity, for Hašek it was really a kind of liberation. Out of his pained body and lonely life, Hašek could escape into Švejk, a character who, after all, is insensible to attempts at restraint. In the final days of his life, doctors tell him that he must stop drinking or he will never recover and "never finish writing Švejk. But Jaroslav did not believe this and said that he would die only when they allowed Švejk to die. And that would never be allowed, because Švejk will live in the Czech nation forever" (Lvova, 30).²⁸⁴

Lvova, alone among the memoirists, includes a scene of Hašek's death, and it is problematic. She writes that Štěpáněk attended to Hašek on his deathbed, but Štěpáněk, in his book, does not mention this; he writes only about calling Hašek's brothers with the news. This incongruity leads the reader to suspect that Lvova may have taken some liberties with this portion of her memoir. It is, however, a fascinating account that illustrates Hašek's increasing association with Švejk. Lvova writes:

On New Year's Day 1923 comes a crisis. The doctors are helpless. Jaroslav refuses medicine and has no desire to live. In moments of calm he cries over the fact that he will not finish writing Švejk, that he will leave me here in solitude. We try everything we can to rouse his desire for life. It's futile, he remains passive. January 3, at four in the morning, he sits up, he wants paper and a pen. He, who for a year has not held a pen in his hand, writes out his own will.²⁸⁵ At his deathbed were the two doctors, Štěpáněk,

²⁸³ "Žil úplně v zajetí Švejka. Mluvil o sobě jako o Švejkovi, vše co dělal přirovnával k tomu, jak by to udělal Švejk." The phrase "v zajetí Švejka" is probably accidental allusion to Hašek's 1917 novella *Dobrý voják Švejk v zajetí*.

²⁸⁴ "nedopíše Švejka. Jenže tomu Jaroslav nevěřil a říkal, že on umře jen tehdy, když dovolí umřít Švejkovi. A to že nedovolí nikdy, protože Švejk bude v českém národě stále."

²⁸⁵ Hašek had come to depend completely on Štěpáněk to take dictation.

Panuška, Invalid, and me. We want him to remember Jarmila and his son in his will. This he dismisses with the words, “Let Švejk die in peace.” He finishes writing and turns to the wall. “Švejk dies in agony.” (31)²⁸⁶

A few hours later, the doctors declared Hašek dead. Štěpáněk records the same time of death as Lvova: eight-thirty in the morning (Štěpáněk, 39; Lvova 31).

Hašek’s last words are not recorded by anybody else, so it’s impossible to know whether Hašek really used his dying breath to pronounce Švejk dead (not to mention whether there was ever any discussion about Hašek providing for his son and first wife). But it’s a fascinating declaration, even if it is imagined, and it can be parsed a few different ways. On the one hand, it may refer to the death of the project and Hašek’s acknowledgement that he would not live to finish the novel. On the other hand, it seems to bring Švejk fully to life in a way that exceeds even Hašek’s authorial powers. Švejk is a scapegrace, cheerful and undaunted by every situation Hašek invents for him. Perhaps in his final moments, Hašek felt he had brought Švejk to a point that was, finally, unendurable, as if his own immanent death were a trap from which even Švejk could not break free. But the most compelling interpretation is to read the statement as an expression of Hašek’s identification with Švejk, which means that his third-person statement, “Let him die,” has a first-person meaning, “Let me die.” This certainly seems to be Lvova’s idea. In that case, Hašek fully departs from the idea of his artistic legacy, which would have Švejk live on forever. Instead, Hašek becomes a product of his own authorial creation. In the pages of

²⁸⁶ “Na Nový rok 1923 nastává krise. Lékaři jsou bezradní, Jaroslav odmítá léky a nemá žádnou chuť žít. Ve chvílích uklidnění pláče nad tím, že nedopíše Švejka, že mě zde nechává samotnou. Všemi prostředky se v něm snažíme vzbudit touhu po životě. Je to zbytečné, zůstává pasivní. 3. ledna, ve čtyři hodiny ráno, se nechává posadit, chce papír a pero. On, který již rok neměl pero v ruce, píše sám svou poslední vůli. U smrtelného lože jsou oba lékaři, Štěpáněk, Panuška, Invalid a já. Chceme, aby v závěti pamatoval na Jarmilu a syna. Odmítá se slovy: ‘Nechte Švejka v klidu umřít.’ Dopsal a obrací se ke zdi. ‘Švejk těžce umírá.’”

Osudy, unfinished though they are, Švejk survives. But in Hašek's mind was the acute fear that the death of the author was synonymous with the death of the character.

A comparison of Švejk and Don Quixote is so common in Hašek studies, it's practically a cliché, but Lvova's account of Hašek's death is an under-utilized resource and no critic has yet commented on the similarities between this scene and the ending of Cervantes' novel. I maintain that Lvova was aloof from literary culture, so the resemblance of her description of Hašek's death to Quixote's is coincidental. Nevertheless, reading the two scenes side by side taps into larger implications about the relationship between the literal death of the author and the life of fictional creations. As I have shown, the Hašek legend was a literary text in its own right. Hašek's death could no more limit the circulation of the legend than it could the reprinting of *Osudy*. *Don Quixote*, too, ends with the author's attempt to put the genie back in the bottle.

In the final chapter of *Don Quixote*, the hero falls ill and suddenly regains his sanity. He renounces the literary genre of tales of chivalry and repudiates his own sallies as absurdities. After confessing to a priest, he calls for a scribe to make up his will, which includes paying Sancho Panza in full and bequeathing the rest of his estate to his niece Antonia on the condition that she never marry a man who reads tales of knights errant. He is able to put his affairs in order because, to the surprise of the reader and the other characters, he is no longer Don Quixote.

When he first awakes into his illness, he declares:

Good news, Señores! I am no longer Don Quixote of La Mancha but Alonso Quixano, once called *the Good* because of my virtuous life. Now [...] all the profane histories of knight errantry are hateful to me; now I recognize my foolishness and the danger I was in because I read them; now, by God's mercy, I have learned from my experience and I despise them. (Cervantes, 935; original emphasis)

This opposition is repeated throughout the chapter. “I was mad, and now I am sane; I was Don Quixote of La Mancha and now I am, as I have said, Alonso Quixano the Good” (Cervantes, 937).

For Quixote/Quixano, the line between creator and creation is redrawn, or perhaps, seen for the first time. Quixano realizes that he has invented, or authored, Quixote, and unleashed him into the world. With a clear head, he sorts out his legacy, literary as well as pecuniary. Another item of his will is that an apology be issued to Quixote’s enemy throughout much of the second volume, the author of the real-life spurious sequel, for having inspired him to write such nonsense.²⁸⁷ After the hero dies, the priest orders a death announcement printed to forestall any further histories being written. But the final words of the novel go to the author-characters, still very much taken by their subject. Quixote’s friend, the poet Sansón Carrasco, pens an elegy that ends “it was his great good fortune/to live a madman and die sane” (Cervantes, 939). And the closing statement comes from Cide Hamete Benengeli, the historian who has documented Quixote’s adventures. He writes:

For me alone was Don Quixote born, and I for him; he knew how to act, and I to write [...] my only desire has been to have people reject and despise the false and nonsensical histories of chivalry, which are already stumbling over the history of my true Don Quixote, and will undoubtedly fall to the ground. *Vale*. (Cervantes, 939-940)

The restoration of Quixote/Quixano’s sanity is shocking and, for me, heartbreaking. But the legend of Don Quixote clearly survives the man who gave rise to it. Quixano created Quixote, but he does not own the legend, and he cannot control it. The legend belongs to the witnesses, the authors, and ultimately, the readers.

²⁸⁷ Alonso Fernández de Avellaneda published *The Second Book of the Ingenious Knight Don Quixote of La Mancha* in 1614. His counterpart in the story of Hašek and Švejk is Karel Vaněk, author of *Osudy dobrého vojáka Švejka v ruském zajetí* [*The Fates of the Good Soldier Švejk in Russian Captivity*], although Hašek died before that book was published.

Lvova relates Hašek's death so that it seems like the opposite of Quixote's. Hašek renounces nothing and makes no amends. In fact, to hear Lvova tell it, he refuses to settle his estate in such a way as to rectify his relationships. Hašek, moreover, moves fully into the realm of his own imagination, conflating himself with the character he created. There is another important difference too. Cervantes' narrator tells us:

the truth is, as has already been said, that whether Don Quixote was simply Alonso Quixano the Good, or whether he was Don Quixote of La Mancha, he always had a gentle disposition and was kind in his treatment of others, and for this reason he was dearly loved not only by those in his household, but by everyone who knew him. (936)

As Lvova's and all the other memoirs attest, it mattered a great deal which version of Hašek one met. On some level, pre-war Hašek, Gašek and post-war Hašek all co-existed within the same person, but the differences between them are as stark as those between Quixote and Quixano. And yet, for all those divergences, the two scenes resemble one another in the mistaken notion that the death of the author (Quixano, Hašek) sets into motion the death of the character (Quixote, Švejk). These authors are naïve to believe that they can bury their characters. In *Don Quixote*, this is intentionally ironic, and while Lvova's text is less sophisticated, in her reconstruction of Hašek's death she explores this fascinating paradox of authorship. The author births her characters but cannot kill them. It would sadden Quixano and cheer Hašek to learn that, ultimately, the death of the author changes nothing. Hašek's tombstone, shaped like an open book, reads, "Památce autora Švejka" – "To the memory of the author of Švejk."

In the end, though, Lvova may have missed something essential about Hašek. She includes an incident in which the publisher Synek visits them in Lipnice and tells them that "all over Prague you heard the phrase, 'You're about as big an idiot as Švejk.' Of course [Hašek] didn't like that at all. Then he started to doubt whether he was even able to write the thing as he

intended it” (25).²⁸⁸ That Hašek second-guessed his abilities seems reasonable enough; *Osudy* was a far more ambitious project than anything he’d ever attempted before. But there is direct evidence contradicting Lvova’s assertion that Synek’s news displeased Hašek. As we have seen, the epilogue to Volume 1, the only part of the novel signed “Jaroslav Hašek,” ends with this paragraph:

I do not know whether I shall succeed in achieving my purpose with this book. The fact that I have already heard one man swear at another and say “You’re about as big an idiot as Švejk” does not prove that I have. But if the word Švejk becomes a new choice specimen in the already florid garland of abuse I must be content with this enrichment of the Czech language. (216)²⁸⁹

This disparity casts doubt on Lvova’s reliability, not so much as a witness to Hašek’s life, but as an interpreter of it. After all, Lvova does not seem to have much of a sense of humor. Literature about Hašek remembers her as a so-called princess, so that Hašek’s cruel joke at her expense overshadowed any sense of who she really was. But by writing this memoir, she reclaimed the authority to define and express herself. In the end, her memoir’s greatest value is the information it provides about its own author, a passionate and proud young woman whose life took a fascinating swerve. Like the legendary wives of the Decembrist revolutionaries in nineteenth-century Russia who followed their husbands into Siberian exile, Lvova was a reverse “жена декабриста,” following Hašek out of Siberia because of her devotion to him and to the politics she believed they shared. Her insight into *Osudy dobrého vojáka Švejka* is not that of a brilliant reader, but a supportive partner and a true believer. For her, the novel reconciled the idealized version of her husband, Gašek, with the husband she found she had, the very human Hašek.

²⁸⁸ “že po Praze se vžilo úsloví: ‘Ty jsi blbý jako Švejk,’ samozřejmě žádnou radost neměl. Začal tentokrát pochybovat, zda tedy vůbec umí napsat věc tak, jak ji myslí.”

²⁸⁹ “Nevím, podaří-li se mně vystihnout touto knihou, co jsem chtěl. Již okolnost, že slyšel jsem jednoho člověka nadávat druhému: ‘Ty jsi blbej jako Švejk,’ právě tomu nenasvědčuje. Stane-li se však slovo Švejk novou nadávkou v květnatém věnci spílání, musím se spokojit tímto obohacením českého jazyka” (Hašek 1953, I:235).

5. Conclusion

In the early 1950s, the communist League of Czechoslovak Writers attempted to define the terms of Hašek's legacy. This included the State Publishing House of Fine Literature, Music and Art (SNKLHU)'s efforts at publishing a ten-volume series of Hašek's complete works under the editorship of Zdena Ančik. Though more texts since have been attributed to Hašek, these editions are still considered definitive, in part because of their scrupulous and refreshingly non-ideological annotations. In 1953, the League of Writers hosted a program in honor of the seventieth anniversary of Hašek's birth (they might also have commemorated the thirtieth anniversary of his death, but the event was held in spring, near his birthday). The event was held in the grand Radiopalác on what was then Stalinova třída [Stalin Street] in Prague's Vinohrady neighborhood. It featured a lecture by Ančik and performances of various Hašek texts by actors from the National Theatre.²⁹⁰ Pride of place was given to the seminal theater artist and by then state laureate Jan Werich whose reading from *Osudy* concluded the event. It was certainly a spectacular program, but state control meant a sacrifice of the intimacy, humor and improvisatory spirit that characterized the 1924 memorial event. While more elaborate, the 1953 event was less reflective of Hašek's creative output.

Accompanying this event was an exhibit in the National Museum Library titled "Jaroslav Hašek největší český humorista" ["Jaroslav Hašek the Greatest Czech Humorist"]. A poster for the exhibit uses iconic Lada illustrations. Two mirror-image Švejk's face each other; the one on

²⁹⁰ One of the texts performed that night was "Šálek černé kávy," a version of a one-act play recently revived by the Harvard Slavic Department.

the left stands in front of a background of yellow and black stripes symbolizing the Austro-Hungarian past, and on the right, red and white stripes represent the Soviet present and future. Looking down over them both is a drawing of Hašek in Lada's unmistakable cartoonish style. Hašek, unsmiling and with his shirt unbuttoned to his belly, sits at a desk behind a stack of papers writing and smoking a long-handled pipe (a "čtenářská dýmka" or "reader's pipe"). An inkwell and half-full beer stein are on the desk in front of him. The image is not just iconic, it's iconographic.



Figure 4: Advertisement for exhibition. 1953. Památník národního písemnictví, Prague.

Today, the Hašek cult exists largely outside formal literary institutions. There is no independent Hašek archive, although the holdings in his file at the Monument to National Literature were the first to be digitized when the library began making their materials available online. In Lipnice nad Sázavou, the small house he lived in during his final year has been turned into a museum, but it is more modest than one might expect for such an important and popular author; it contains mainly reproductions and typical artifacts from his era.²⁹¹ Somewhat more illuminating is the nearby hotel and restaurant U České koruny, still in operation and today owned by Hašek's grandson. The dining room is a sort of shrine to Hašek decorated with rare photographs and memorabilia. There are also some statues of Hašek in Lipnice that I believe were financed by his descendants.²⁹² In Prague, a monument to Hašek was erected only in 2005. Installed in the working class Žižkov district where Hašek spent much of his life, it features an antiquarian bust mounted on a podium which slices through a metal horse made of industrial parts; it's a parody of an equestrian statue. Other informal memorials to Hašek are all over Prague: in the Švejk tchotchkes sold in souvenir shops and the Švejk-themed beer-halls that make up the largest restaurant franchise in the Czech Republic. Beginning in 1959 and continuing, if not quite annually, for many years, a Hašek humor festival was held in the summertime in Lipnice. The last one took place in 2013, probably because Hašek fans are in general an aging demographic.

2023 will be the centennial of Hašek's death. How will it be commemorated? Pushkin, perhaps the archetypal author whose legendary biography has been publicly commemorated, has

²⁹¹ In Russia there is another house museum dedicated to Hašek. It's in Bugulma.

²⁹² One was modelled after Hašek's grandson Richard. The statue is a giant head cut up into building blocks. Into each facet is inscribed, in different languages, the following quote from Volume III, chapter 4 of *Osudy*: "Život lidský, poslušně hlasím, pane obrlajtnant, je tak složitéj, že samotnej život člověka je proti tomu hadr" ["Human existence, beg to report, sir, is so complicated that the life of a single individual is nothing more than a bit of rubbish in comparison"].

been honored in statuary and celebration. Pushkin died in 1837, and by 1880, his birthday was celebrated in Moscow what was to be the first of a series of grand jubilees, coinciding with the unveiling of a monument to him; “between 1917 and 1987, 257 monuments to Pushkin were erected on the territory of the former Soviet Union.” (Sandler, 88). Successive versions of the Russian government have commemorated Pushkin with memorials that the poet himself would have seen fit; after all, Pushkin “памятник себе воздвиг.”²⁹³ Hašek, on the other hand, was not so assured of his own genius or importance. In any case, he almost never performed this kind of assurance in his writing; one notable exception is the exaggerated parodic text with which I began this dissertation, “Největší spisovatel český, Jaroslav Hašek” [“The Greatest Czech Writer, Jaroslav Hašek”]. Moreover, his genius was not declared by the literary establishment during his lifetime. And, importantly, Hašek himself was constitutionally anti-establishment. A grandiose state-sponsored monument would be anathema to the spirit of Hašek’s works. That being said, probably Hašek approved of the monuments to Pushkin. Longen recalls a private moment with Hašek when suddenly

under his breath he started to rattle off some Russian verse.

‘You speak Russian?’

‘Don’t interrupt. It’s Pushkin. (69)’²⁹⁴

The Hašek legend may be a simplified version of a complicated life, but the Hašek memoirs are far from monolithic. Perhaps it’s only by reading multiple texts in this curious genre that we get a sense of who Hašek was, an individual whose private self was in some ways the antithesis of his public persona, at least as he comes across in the famous anecdotes. While each

²⁹³ From the first line of Pushkin’s “Exegi monumentum”: “Я памятник себе воздвиг нерукотворный” [“I raised to myself a monument not made by human hands”].

²⁹⁴ “začal polohlasně odříkávat ruské verše.

‘Ty umíš rusky?’”

‘Nevyrušuj, je to Puškin.’” (69)

book illuminates some aspect of Hašek's life and personality, they tell us more about their own authors, their politics, historical context, and criteria for establishing friendship, genius, and legendary stature. If some memoirists are at times unreliable, it stems partially from their source material. As Chalupecký wrote, Hašek "fabuloval svůj vlastní život, a ta fabule přerostla skutečnost" ["made his own life into a *fabula*, and that *fabula* outgrew reality"] (201). This does not mean, however, that the memoirists are entirely liberated from the readers' expectation that they will write as accurately and truthfully as possible. On the contrary, it is best to approach these books skeptically, with an understanding of the authors' various biases and motives.

Yet for all their differences, the memoirs collectively do the work of constructing Hašek as an author. Some of them tell the story of the "Eulenspiegel of prewar Prague," but their true subject is the creator of Švejk. The death of the author made his life into an abstract thing, a story for others to tell, just as Sansón Carrasco and Cide Hamete Benengeli claim the authority to tell the story of Don Quixote. Authorial ownership is never monopolistic; it's inherently given to multiplicity and simultaneity. Any story can be told in myriad ways, and the more complicated the story, the more varied the retellings. But the question remains: what are the mechanisms of legitimization to tell the story of someone else's life? Are the memoirists authorized by having partaken in Hašek's escapades, by their awareness of his place in literary history, or simply by having known him? And can any one version of a life story ever be definitive, or do we always need multiple divergent sources to come to a full understanding?

Ultimately, a life story like Hašek's resists definitiveness for the very reason that he was committed to multiplicity, and to destabilizing our notion that there is ever a single, reliable, verifiable set of facts. There are multiple versions of his dual selves: public/private, Gašek/Hašek, author/character, man/legend. Each of these formulations illuminates some aspect

of his personality and the concerns in his fiction, and for that reason, each of the memoirists' conceptions of him is reasonable. This is not to say that all the books should be judged equally; some are more cogent than others in their argument about which version of Hašek, or which pair of Hašeks, dominated. But cogency is not the same thing as accuracy, and as Hašek's life and work show, an invented story well told can be more convincing than "the facts."

CONCLUSION

In this dissertation, I hope to have shown that Hašek's body of written work and the Hašek legend are not two entities that need to be separated for scholarly clarity, or that the latter must be suppressed so that the former may be appreciated. Instead, I propose a conception of both as literary texts, not at all in conflict for our attention or esteem. The written corpus and the legend are united in their commitment to the improvisatory method of cultural production, their disdain for institutional authority, and their championing of the inviolate, indestructible individual. This nuanced conception of the legend helps establish the extent of Hašek's self-awareness in constructing an authorial persona, while still allowing for his chaotic and even slapdash approach. Hašek was survived by his own authorial legend. What was once a set of oral anecdotes, the Hašek legend was told from many perspectives by memoirists competing for the best version of the author's life story: the most amusing, the most shocking, the most nuanced. Each memoir has its strengths and weaknesses, and in any case, Hašek's reader knows not to put too much trust in "non-fiction."

Tomashevsky wrote, "It was extremely important for the literary historian to occupy himself with the restoration of these legends, i.e., with the removal of later layers and the reduction of the legend to its pure 'canonical' form" (51). In contrast to the historical example of which Tomashevsky writes, I have been interested in precisely how those layers accumulated and when they became formalized. Understanding Hašek's self-mythologization opens new pathways for interpreting his works and their status in a variety of literary traditions. First and most obviously is his place in the Czech canon. His reputation remains that of the greatest Czech humorist who happened to write one of the greatest Czech novels. In 1983, the publishing house

Panorama released a commemorative set of Hašek postcards, and the packaging featured commentary on the author's legacy. It begins,

In 1983 we celebrate two anniversaries – 100 years from the birth of Jaroslav Hašek (4/30/1883) and 60 years from his death (1/3/1923). In the minds of many, he lives only as bohemian, loafing and lapping up drinks in bars, or perhaps playing bohemian pranks, and mystifying the public. *In reality however* he was an extremely diligent writer and journalist, who in his short life wrote in addition to a collections of poem, realistic juvenile sketches and multitude of feuilletons, more than 1200 stories and the globally celebrated and embraced though unfinished novel *The Fates of the Good Soldier Švejk in the World War*. (Corvinová, 1; emphasis added)²⁹⁵

Although that postcard set is nearly forty years old, this binary opposition between the bohemian mystifier on the one hand and the serious author on the other hand persists to this day. As part of the 1983 anniversaries, a commemorative hundred crown-coin was minted with an image of Hašek's face. Surely, this was a memorial to the “extremely diligent writer.” The other side of the coin shows the Czech coat of arms, a lion standing on his hind legs.

In 2023, we will again celebrate the anniversaries. This time it will be 140 years from Hašek's birth and 100 years from his death. It is still unclear how the date will be marked. I hope for a holistic celebration of the author, one in which the conflict between his silly and serious sides is finally settled. Because there is no conflict; they're two sides of the same coin.

I would now like to propose a further area of research in which my ideas about the Hašek legend may be profitably applied. More research remains to be done into Hašek's Russian period, both by *haškologové* and Russianists. One question is how the author may have conceived of himself during this period and how he understood his writing in the context of

²⁹⁵ “V roce 1983 slavíme dvě výročí – 100 let od narození Jaroslava Haška a 60 let od jeho smrti (3. 1. 1923). V povědomí mnohých žije jen jako bohém vysedávající a popíjející po hospodách, případně provádějící bohémské kousky a mystifikující veřejnost. *Ve skutečnosti to však* byl mimořádně pilný spisovatel a novinář, který za svůj krátký život napsal kromě sbírky básní, realistických mladistvých črt a množství fejetonů více než 1200 povídek a světově proslulý a objemný, ač nedokončený román *Osudy dobrého vojáka Švejka za světové války*.”

Russian literature. When he was called by the Russian variant of his name and began writing in Russian, did Hašek indeed begin to think of himself as a Russian author, as Lvova thought of him? We know from anecdotal evidence in the memoirs that he held Russian literature in high esteem. If there was a time in Hašek's life when he began to take himself seriously as an author, this may have been it. While it's true that he wrote no major works of fiction during this time, focusing instead on journalism and feuilletons, I have shown that for Hašek, the conventional distinction between these genres was both false and unnecessarily limiting. Moreover, as I suggested in my chapter on the Bugulma Tales, those stories seem to be some of the first fictional texts dealing with the Russian Civil War, making them significant for Russian literary history. And I'll record a completely subjective observation – Russian translations of the Bugulma Tales are *very* funny. How would it change our understanding of the Bugulma Tales if we approach them as works of Russian literature?

In fact, Hašek has in a sense been “claimed” by Russia because of his time in the Red Army. There is the house museum in Bugulma, and in the Frunzensky district of St. Petersburg, a statue of Švejk stands at attention on ул. Ярослава Гашека.²⁹⁶ Six other Russian cities, including Moscow, have streets named for Hašek, and there are four in Ukraine. In 2014, in honor of his 130th birthday, the National Library of Russia launched the online exhibition “Ярослав Гашек в фондах РНБ” [“Jaroslav Hašek in the Collections of the National Library of Russia”], where visitors can virtually browse the library's holdings of Hašek and Hašek studies in both Czech and Russian. The main page proclaims:

Hašek holds the absolute superiority among Czech authors in our country. The total quantity of publications of his books issued in our country exceeded 16 million items by 1989. Once the novel about Švejk was published in Russian in exactly one million copies,

²⁹⁶ Across the river, you can find a Švejk-themed Czech restaurant on Невский проспект, coincidentally right across the street from the National Library of Russia.

and still they were instantly bought up – because readers were fond of this sorcerer of humor and laughter [чародей юмора и смеха]. (“Jaroslav Hašek in the Collections.”)

These commemorations are in keeping with the traditional Russian cult of the author and the written word in general, and the presentation of Hašek in Russian has been handled with care. The classic Russian translation of *Osudy* is by Pyotr Bogatyrev, one of the co-founders with Roman Jakobson of the Moscow Linguistic Circle. But in fact, Hašek’s enchanting humor only partially explains his popularity in Russia. His service in the Red Army effectively legitimized him for a Soviet readership, to the extent that his writings were never censored by the communist government. This is extremely ironic considering the anti-authoritarian messages of both the Bugulma Tales and, of course, *Osudy*, although that novel could just as well be described as an attack on the monarchy, the clergy, the bourgeoisie, and the world war. Nevertheless, there is an interesting tension between the reason Hašek was allowed, enshrined and promoted (conformity to the Soviet system), and the reason he was and continues to be read (subversive, anti-establishment humor).

The case of Hašek in Russia has special biographical and politico-historical resonances. But everywhere Švejk has travelled, he’s been embraced in different ways and for different reasons. Bertolt Brecht, in exile in California, pitted the good soldier against the Nazis in 1941’s *Schweyk in the Second World War*. Max Brod fled Nazi-occupied Prague to Palestine, bringing memories of Longen’s dramatization to his new post as dramaturg at Tel Aviv’s Habima theater. Today Habima is the national theater of Israel, and an adaptation of *Osudy* remains in its repertory. Paweł Hulka-Laskowski translated *Osudy* into Polish as early as 1929, under the title *Przygody dobrego wojaka Szwejka podczas wojny światowej*,²⁹⁷ but today, Švejk’s biggest

²⁹⁷ In conversation, Professor Aleksandra Kremer pointed out that “wojak” is an archaic Polish word for soldier, redoubling the humor with which Polish-speakers associate the Czech language and adding to the impression of Švejk’s genuine idiocy.

imprint may be a three-floor beerhall on Plac Konstytucji in the Polish capital. U Szwejka is the largest restaurant in Warsaw. But not all Švejk traditions are national. 1934 saw the first edition of *La travivaĵoj de la brava soldato Švejk dum la mondmilito – Osudy* in Esperanto.

In the summer of 2018, I travelled across Europe visiting Švejk-themed restaurants. From Scandinavia to the Balkans, I found taverns where Švejk's name was on the door and Czech beer was on tap. In Athens I met Spiros Koulouris, who grew up in Prague but fled the communist regime and returned to his native city where, in 1982, he opened U Švejka, Greece's first (and probably only) Czech restaurant. Mr. Koulouris was one of the few Hašek fans I've met who knew the literature as well as he knew the legend. He was the only proprietor of a Švejk-themed restaurant I've met who doesn't drink. I asked him about the meaning of Švejk in twenty-first century Greece, but he brushed off history and geo-politics as minor details. "Wherever there is power," he said, "there must always be Švejk."

Humbly report, I hope he's right.

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