Appendix

EUROPEAN ROMANTICISM AND CZECH NATIONAL REVIVAL

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"Romantic poetry is a progresive universal poetry", wrote Friedrich Schlegel. One of the earliest (1799) definitions of Romanticism in his *Athenäum* Fragment No. 116 identified the new art with a power integrating, mingling and fusing diverse aspects of nature, culture and everyday life. As "the prospect ... of a boundlessly developing classicism" the new writing was opposed to all so far existing, "complete" types of poetry. Unlike them, Schlegel maintained, Romanticism would embrace "all that is poetic, ... from the greatest art system that enfolds further systems down to the sigh, the kiss uttered in the artless song by the child creating its own poetry." Due to its immense dynamism and scope romantic writing was believed to produce "an image of its age," and, at the same time, to become the expression of "a prime law that the poet's caprice brooks no law."[1] Generations of critics have read this passage as a manifesto of modern art which could overcome the decay of civilization by developing a new spiritual unity founded on individual creative freedom.

Schlegel's utopian message has retained its attraction chiefly because of the dynamic and multidimensional notion of universality: not as an attribute of a single system, but as a common issue of incessant negotiations between the individual and the universe, morals and art, randomness and laws of composition. Given this framework, hardly anybody would now connect Schlegel's thoughts with a project of a *national* culture.

The lack of interest in the culturally specific features of romantic universalism may have at least two causes. On the one hand, the persistence of romantic ideals of uni-

versality in the twentieth century art and criticism has been so great that even professed anti-Romantic trends (e.g. Modernism or New Criticism) can be said to have adopted or assimilated key romantic notions of imagination and organic unity. In this way, Romantic idioms became absorbed into a number of universalist discourses of modernity. On the other hand, traditional "Discriminations of Romanticisms" (to quote the title of the well-known essay by A.O.Lovejoy) concentrate rather on the diversity of *general* romantic stances or discourses than on the regional or national differences between figures and idioms of general romantic "language."

These differences may become more important in the course of comparative study: not only as signs of cultural specificity, but also as limits of Romantic universal projects and proclamations. In contrast to the Enlightenment, Romanticism had not been shaped by an international community of intellectuals and could not cultivate a uniform system of values like that designed by the Encyclopaedists. Therefore so many of its manifestations are of national and regional character. Only considerable cultural and social *differences* among these local forms may be said to establish the complex *identity* of European Romanticism.

In spite of a great influence of the Enlightenment in its beginnings, the Czech national revival (a cultural emancipatory movement between 1770 and 1848 against the supremacy of German-speaking population in the Kingdom of Bohemia) had fairly soon displayed its romantic character in many different features and gestures. For instance in the secularized myth of the Resurrection (transformed into the figure of the "awakening" of the nation and its "rising" to a new, "eternal" life), in the opinions that the beauty, richness and ancient origin of the language were the chief evidence of the integrity and sovereignty of the nation, in the monumentalization of oral folk culture and its transformation into the basis of the new literature, in the spread of romantic historicism which had influenced the orientation of the projects of cultural identity and solidarity between the Czechs and other Slavonic nations. This is but a beginning

of a long enumeration which we would prefer to discontinue, for this article was not intended to become a survey of the romantic features of the nineteenth-century Czech nationalism. Instead, we will examine aspects of Romanticism in diverse cultures in order to find contextual relations which constitute the romantic nature of the Czech revival. In this respect, complex links between the Enlightenment universalism and romantic nationalism in German culture may be of special interest.

Universal romantic poetry is announced by the Jena romantics in the wake of the French revolution, which, according to Novalis, had caused the Enlightenment to degenerate into "secular Protestantism" and pseudo-religious jacobinical ideology.[2] Speaking of new Europe, Jena romantics used to emphasize the German contribution to the general cultural development:

> Neither Hermann nor Odin but Art and Science are the true German national deities. Only think of Kepler, Dürer, Luther, Böhme and then of Lessing, Vinckelmann, Goethe and Fichte. Virtue does not apply in morals only; it is also effective in arts and sciences which have their rights and duties. And this spirit, this power of virtue characterize the German approach to arts and sciences.[3]

Apart from the Enlightenment notion of virtue as a universally valid moral constant, the passage contains a new view of this concept. Echoing Herder's thoughts on the national character of humanism, Schlegel finds the "power of virtue" in the freedom of individual creation and in reponsibility towards mankind. He also defines these qualities as the shaping forces of German national character. But in contrast to Herder who mourned over divided Germany and thought it unable to produce an authentic national culture[4] the early German romantics turned to the vision of united Christian Europe as to the archetype and simultaneously the main objective of cultural universalism.

Consequently, the national programme of early German Romanticism is characterized by merging of universalistic and nationalistic ideas. While the former include the free-

dom and boundlessness of artistic creation, general humanism and European orientation of culture and religion, the latter comprise romantic historicism and romantic opinions of national language. The last named issues deserve a detailed discussion.

According to Friedrich Schlegel, "a historian is a prophet facing backwards."[5] History is not linear; it always relates to its origins and transforms them into future ideals. Though the early German romantics may identify the origins of history with European cultural categories like the antiquity and the Middle Ages, Athenian democracy and Christian chivalry, it can be proved that they often use them to describe or to evaluate the cultural and political situation of *contemporary* Germany, especially with respect to France. Thus, for instance, Friedrich Schlegel shows in his *Gespräch über die Poesie* how contemporary German culture radically returns to the legacy of the Golden Age of Athenian arts and how it can even surpass the achievement of this period in a successful synthesis of poetry and philosophy.[6] Similarly, Novalis draws parallels between Germany and ancient Rome which do not just return us to a common origin of European political history, but - in spite of their transformation by the play of romantic irony - bear distinct traces of authoritarian, nationalist discourse:

> The Capitol had been marked by a cry of the geese long before the Gaels came. The instinctive inclination of the Romans to global politics can also be found in the German *Volk*. The best thing gained by the French from their Revolution is a share of German nature.[7]

Referring to the common origins of European culture and civilization German romantics often underline national and nationalist implications of universal values. And vice versa, national and nationalist topics may in their reflections acquire a universal frame of reference.

Paradigms by no means dissimilar to early romantic notions of history and myth can be found already in the work of J.G.Herder and his followers - leaders of diverse national revival movements. Their reflections often conflate the

origin of history, the central value of a culture and the "golden mean" in a system of universal values.[8] In doing so, they prepare the ground for new trends like Panslavism which combines a universal humanist scope with nationalistic bias thus creating an alternative to critical thought and cosmopolitanism of the Enlightenment as well as to the ideologies of centralized state power.

While Herderianism and romantic historicism transform the universal categories of the Enlightenment and give them specific national meanings, later romantic theories of "national language" are directed against Enlightenment universalism. This becomes apparent at the very birth of Indo-European (or "Indo-German") philology and Slavonic studies and is directly expressed in reflections of the relations between language, morality, national traditions and customary law.

For instance, in his Preface to *Deutsche Rechtsaltertümer* (1828) Jacob Grimm recalls how the study of German language and literature helped him to overcome the feeling of emptiness caused by the enforced learning of Roman law during the Napoleonic wars, which brought to Germans nothing but "disgrace and humiliation." Neither the language nor the law, he contends, are subject to political changes, if they bind together past and present values, tradition and innovation, freedom and necessity, generalizations and particulars. This establishes their unique *national* character which cannot be deduced from any of the universal notions of the Enlightenment (e.g. from the idea of social contract). Linguistic emancipation initiated by Lessing and Klopstock must therefore be consummated by the revival of the German law which represents, in spite of its fragmented state and surviving tribal features, the necessary alternative to the scholarly system of Enlightenment jurisprudence based on the Roman law. It is important that Grimm does not use any theory to explain the necessity of this change. The only cause he refers to is *ethnocentric*: the feeling "in our body and blood." The alienation of the national character is then constructed historically as a result of the *repression* of this emotion in the misguided efforts of German princes to

imitate their Roman predecessors by adopting a legal system which could not retain traditional Roman virtues, for it had been corrupted by Byzantine influences in the Justinian Code and adapted to suit the practices of foreign, Italian and French jurists.[9]

Grimm's views of language and law demonstrate that the project of organic national culture no longer relies on the interpenetration and reciprocity of universal and national factors as it was in the case of Herder or in the thought of the early German romantics. National unity can be ideologized, constructed as a "historical necessity," and, at the same time, reduced to the single central principle - empirical *and* mystical emotion of belonging to a common body and soul of the nation. This principle is widely different from Herder's "golden mean" or from the "universal progressive poetry" of the early romantics: it cannot be justified by authentic cultural experience for it is always already fixed in the supraindividual structures of language, ethics, laws or folklore. In comparison to Herder's notion it gives an unequivocal, ideological meaning whether to a unique creative gesture or to a universal system.

Similar features characterize a Czech programme of language-based patriotism developed by Josef Jungmann (1773 - 1847), one of the main leaders of Czech nationalist movement in the first half of the nineteenth century. The earliest publication of Jungmann's thoughts in the form of two dialogues "On Czech Language" (1806) shows that he drew more from contemporary German nationalist journalism than from Herder and his followers. But the best known formulation of the programme, which appeared in the article "On the Classic in Literature and the Importance Thereof" (1827), suggests analogies of a different kind. Like the "progressive universal poetry" described by Friedrich Schlegel as "a boundlessly developing classicism,"[10] Jungmann's notion of the Classic finds support neither in the present state of Czech culture, nor in any of the preceding historical periods. The term itself is an attribute of an ideal "Classic Age" in which

everything that is presently classic in national literature lives also in the talk of common people, is taken up by those who instruct the youth, thus everywhere equally elevating, inspiring and permeating the living and flourishing generation ...[11]

Both Schlegel's and Jungmann's notions of the Classic are founded on the comparison of the cultural development to organic growth and express a certain *intention* of the process. Hovewer there are considerable differences between them in the understanding of this intention. While the romantics of Jena privilege the creative potential of an individual, Jungmann often emphasizes the importance of a patient and continuous educational work. In addition to this he argues against traditional ideas of the "golden, classical age" and simultaneously repudiates the romantic notion of the genius giving laws to the future development. Instead of the "boundlessness" of individual acts which establishes the universality of culture in Schlegel's theory, Jungmann, like Jacob Grimm, believes in the activity of systems (education, literature, language) as the only way of renewing the threatened continuity of national existence.

The comparison shows the cross-cultural nature of the romantic aspects of Czech national revival. Obviously, these features are difficult to trace from the ethnocentric position which still characterizes Czech comparative studies. To underline the cross-cultural and intertextual perspectives we have attempted to approach Czech Romanticism from *the other side*, starting from related phenomena in other European cultures and focussing on the function of analogous elements in the Czech revival. These elements, or morphological signs, are not treated as mere referents of general structural models (we have seen for instance that the specific notion of the centre makes Herder's system differ both from the cosmopolitan universalism of the Enlightenment and from the ethnocentric universalism of romantic nationalists), for the identity of European Romanticism is not established by a coherent system of distinctions but results

from analogous features and orientations of its different cultural forms.

This general perspective offers a choice of at least two distinct methods. While one attempts to find a general tendency in an episteme, or a cultural epoch, a trend common to a majority of European "Romanticisms," the other deals with different paradigms of romantic discourses (e.g., historicism, nationalism, etc.) using them to describe the variety of romantic figures, idioms and notions. While the former way is typical of *cultural history*, the latter has features of *cultural semiotics*. Both methods will be discussed in some detail.

It has been accepted that the revolutionary transformation of art traditionally attributed to a few German, English and French romantics resulted from a number of deeper and long-term changes in the spheres of reading, public taste, national feeling and relations to feudal power. These changes had started more than a century before the beginning of the romantic period. Their common features were recently described by Marilyn Butler as the rise of "the country movement" and the subsequent development of "patriots into nationalists."[12]

The beginnings of the Czech national revival are in many respects similar to the British country movement. The movement starts in a province of the Austrian Empire with an emancipation of learning, education and cultural life in general. It is also caused by the emergence of a new literary public (consisting of villagers and lower classes who became literate due to the introduction of compulsory elementary education in the latter half of the eighteenth century). And it reacts to the general changes of taste towards the end of the eighteenth century, especially in drama and fiction.

Since its beginnings, the Czech revival nationalism put the greatest emphasis on the bond of each individual to the country which was understood both as the native, possessed and inherited land (territorial patriotism) and as the people (represented mostly by aristocrats and peasants). Early definitions of Czech identity had not yet been based on lan-

guage and therefore did not distinguish between German and Czech inhabitants of Bohemia. Patriotic ideology emphasized love and duty to the common country and the need to restore the ancient glory of the Kingdom of Bohemia. Later on, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, territorial patriotism had been gradually transformed into linguistic nationalism. But territorial claims had not lost their importance in this process. Similar to MacPherson's Ossian poems, one of the first serious and most influential works of Czech revival literature, the forged *Manuscripts of Dvůr Králové and Zelená Hora* (1817 1818), were an attempt to construct the Czech identity using stories of the remote past and to articulate the claims of the Czech speaking population on their territory appropriated by the Austrian Empire.

Like British patriotism, the *vlastenectví* of Czech revivalists combined contrasting features of political ideology and cultural attitude. There was a hidden tension between the statements of loyalty to the Austrian Emperor, who was simultaneously the King of Bohemia, and the aim of Czech patriots to stop the Germanization imposed by the centralizing policy of Viennese government and to establish cultural identity on the language used by lower classes. In the last mentioned respect, the Czech revival was much more radical than the British country movement and surpassed even the attempts of Welsh, Irish and Scottish nationalists at the emancipation of their mother tongues.

In contrast to the language emancipation which often resulted in nationalist policies and ideologies, the patriotism as a cultural stance had prepared grounds for various aesthetic programmes in Britain as well as in Bohemia. While William Wordsworth attempted to create a poetic language which would model and aesthetically transform vanishing structures of village life, the Czech poet František Ladislav Čelakovský (1799 - 1852) constructed the contemporary audience as a village community listening to a folk artist. This orientation makes his poems resemble the work of Robert Burns or *The Minstrelsy of Scottish Border* by Valter Scott.

However, patriotism as cultural stance was not limited to aesthetic transformations or reconstructions of village communities and the voices of folk performers. One of its major features was the universalisation of provincial values and their transmission into a different cultural context. Thus, thanks to MacPherson's adaptations, the provincial oral culture of the Scottish Highlands became a model of ancient poetry eagerly accepted by romantics from Paris to St.Petersburg. The development started by Ossianic poetry was internalized and further aestheticized in the prophetic poems of William Blake which are influenced by Macpherson's verse and imagery, and reflect also the efforts of Welsh revivalists William Owen Pughe and Iolo Morganwg to recreate the ancient religion of the Druids.[13] An interesting early peripety in this development is marked by the poems of Thomas Chatterton. Not only that the provincial culture of the Bristol region assumes a central position in the representation of medieval England but also, as Marilyn Butler shows in her analysis of "African Eclogues" (1770), the cultural difference between the region and the capital can be transformed into the *otherness* of an imaginary culture and a different race.[14] Due to this transformation, provincial culture can eventually free itself from local topography and tradition. And if its otherness is assimilated (referred to universal religion, ethics or myth), it becomes a space suitable for invention of national identity.

The culture of Czech revival identifies itself with the otherness of the Slavs. The common ancestors of many East and Central European nations are often represented as a great ancient culture, equal to Greece and Rome. Similar to the Greeks of Lord Byron, they are mourned as a nation deprived of its lands and subdued or even exterminated by foreign invaders. This view of the Slavs most powerfully expressed in Ján Kollár's sonnet sequence *The Daughter of Glory* (Slávy dcera, 1824 1832) sharply contradicts the traditional, territorial patriotism which did not make any fundamental difference between the Czech (or "Slavonic") and German speaking populatiton of the Kingdom of Bohemia. In contrast to Chatterton's Africans, the Slavs are always

firmly connected with the cultural and political situation of the Austrian Empire and its neighbours. Thus, their otherness can not only be projected into visions of a glorious past and a future paradise but it can also be assimilated in the cultural and ultimately political programme of cooperation of all Slavic peoples in the Austrian Empire (the idea of *Austro-Slavism* formulated and defended by František Palacký, 1798 - 1876, a prominent Czech historian and nationalist leader), which should counterbalance the centralized state power.

In spite of these efforts to assimilate otherness and to make it a foundation of Czech cultural identity, the contemporary views of patriotism focus on the *sameness of language* understood in sacred terms as the spiritual life of the revived nation. This concept of *language patriotism* later develops into a nationalist ideology suppressing individual creativity and cultural otherness. However, it also effected a fundamental, romantic transformation of patriotic projects and institutions (philological study, the Czech Patriotic Museum) rooted in the encyclopaedic thought of the Enlightenment and in territorial patriotism. The most important result of this transformation is Jungmann's *Czech-German Dictionary* (Slovník česko-německý, 1834 - 1839), no longer a mere monument or an encyclopaedic work, but an instrument of Czech signification and linguistic creativity. In this way, the Czech tongue acquires a new mediatory function: apart from signifying national identity it brings into Czech culture various idioms and figures of romantic "language".

Such reflections may lead us to understand the connection between the cultural historic and cultural semiotic approaches to Romanticism. Both of them are characterized by changeable, dynamic notions of central values resulting from a complex semantic structure of their representations.[15] In the discourse of patriotism, for instance, the traditional link of the language to its territory can be variously weakened or even denied. This produces a symbolic system of the "national language" where the desired homegeneity of the nation is derived from representations of other cultures (the

revival Czech imitates Russian and other Slavic languages but excludes the so-called Germanisms). From this perspective, even the patriotic programme of the Czech revival can be treated as a specific use of language which mediates and transforms the idioms and figures of romantic "language."

One of these idioms is *historicism*: not as the already discussed philosophical framework of the romantic project, but as a thematic and morphological feature of a great number of romantic works. It is well-known that the literary historicism which emerged in the second half of the eighteenth century is characterized by the introduction of bizarre (pseudohistoric) and terrifying settings of mostly phantastic tales. The Gothic novel, *Rittererzählung, Schauerroman, le roman noir* and *le roman terrifiant* did not search for the meaning of history. They presented exaggerated emotions or, at best, symbolized the elementary or archetypal forms of human behaviour (good vs. evil, faithfulness vs. treason). Czech revivalist fiction first imitated German *Rittererzählung* as a fashionable genre. But already in the first adaptations and imitations, Czech personal and place names had been substituted for the original German appelations, thus indicating a different language and territory. In this way, Prokop Šedivý (1764 - before 1810) wrote the tale *Mnislav and Světivína, or the Account of the First Inhabitants of Okoř Castle* (M. and S. aneb Příběhové prvních obyvatelů okořského zámku, 1794), which demonstrates another feature of the revivalist transformation of historicism. It is a simple attribution in the sub-title of the tale - "Ancient Czech Chivalrous Narrative" which makes its action significant with respect to an international genre as well as to a specific national culture.

However historicism does not assert itself only in fiction, but mainly due to the increased interest in historiography. In František Palacký's opinion (influenced, among others, by the study of one of the creators of the Ossianic myth, Hugh Blair) historiography should have distinct literary qualities which should enable it to assume the role of the "insufficiently developed national epic."[16] Apart from a surprising erudition and innovative methods of source stu-

dy, comparable with contemporary German, French and English historians, Palacký's major work, *The History of the Czech Nation in Bohemia and Moravia* (Dějiny národu českého v Čechách a v Moravě, 1848 - 1876), is remarkable for its literary qualities whose major aim is to evoke "the spirit of the age." In his search for the meaning of national history Palacký also employs semantic dichotomies of romantic "language": his opposition between the "democracy" of the Slavs and German "feudalism" has its analogies in the contrast typical of contemporary French histories between "feudal" Germanic Franks and the Gallo-Roman population representing the future Third Estate.

A similar quest for the meaning of history taking place both at the symbolic level of romantic "language" and at the lexical level of a native tongue characterizes one of the first works of Czech historical fiction, *The Radiance over the Pagans* (Záře nad pohanstvem, 1818) by Josef Linda (1789 - 1834). A "great theme" of Czech culture, a clash between Christian universalism tinged with patriotism and rebellious nationalism, is personified in the conflict of two historical characters, St. Venceslas and his brother Boleslav. Even this representation however is motivated by the effort to produce exquisite literary language.[17]

Another feature of romantic historicism, the interpenetration of "national history" and a narrative of private life typical of Valter Scott's novels appears in the short story "Točník Castle" (1828) by Václav Kliment Klicpera (1792 - 1859). In accordance with Scott's understanding of the private story as the "poetry" of history Klicpera draws the contradictory character of King Venceslas IV. as a split personality of the romantic *Zerrissener*. Thus he establishes a representational practice further developed by Karel Hynek Mácha (1810 - 1836) in his novel *Křivoklad Castle* (1834). Here the theme of *Zerrissenheit* becomes an emblem of romantic historicism. The characters of the weak king and his executioner (a bastard son of a glorious monarch) *present* the dilemmas of of national history (ask the principal questions about the fate of the Czech people) and, simultaneous-

ly, *represent* contemporary romantic heroes - the *Doppelgänger* and *Zerrissener*.

But romatic *Zerrissenheit* in the culture of the Czech revival soon oversteps the confines of historical fiction and becomes an issue in the critical debate about Byron's influence on Mácha's work. Reading now the reviews of Mácha's epic tale *May* (Máj, 1836), which charged Mácha with nihilism and lack of interest in the nationalist cause, we can see how the question of the universality of romantic language becomes articulated in the culture of the Czech revival. On the one hand, a conflict emerges between the universality of "the man prophesied by the Romantics" (who, in Harold Bloom's words, is "a central man," but cannot become a central value because it is always in the process of being begotten and has not yet "fleshed out his prophecy,"[17]) and the contemporary ideal of the patriot. On the other hand, the Czech revival, as well as other romantic movements, is characterized by the secularization of the universal language of the myth. According to Virgil Nemoianu, this is a "secularization of a secularization." While the first secularization transforms the Christian myth of the fall and redemption into the romantic myth of cosmic change (in the conclusion of Novalis's *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, prophetic books of William Blake or Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*), the second secularization transposes the *romantic* myth into everyday reality and disintegrates it into representations of practically solvable problems. In other words, a desperate outcry in one of Mácha's sonnets "Eternal nothing! I throw myself in your lap." can resound simultaneously with patriotic rhetoric of Josef Kajetán Tyl (1808 - 1856) comparing literature to the "pipes pumping the spirit of life into the body of the nation." And the Byronic desire "to mingle with the universe" can be recast as a nationalist requirement that an intellectual should merge with, or rather *into*, the folk:

> Deuce take these narrow-hearted self-lovers! I feel myself being tightly confined even in this grand temple of art and my greatest desire is to

dissolve each member, each particle of myself in the folk.[18]

Similar phenomena are described by Virgil Nemoianu who calls them "the taming of Romanticism," its transformation into *Biedermeier*.[19]

However, it is necessary to add that in romantic idioms and figures even "the secularization of the secularization" described by Nemoianu cannot erase the levels of meaning characteristic of more universal symbolic systems. Thus, the culture of the Czech revival can sometimes produce remarkably stratified romantic representations containing paradigms of the "language" of European Romanticism. For instance, in "Záhoř's Bed" (Záhořovo lože), a tale in verse by Karel Jaromír Erben (1811 - 1870), the figures of romantic pilgrim, outlaw and Titan are first confronted with each other to be united in the end; the verse form evokes Byron's Spenserian stanza, i.e., the relationship to romantic lyrical epic. The counterpart of this cluster of romantic signs is the chronotopic and value structure of the poem's world whose order is moulded by the images and ideas of popular Christianity and derived from the central representation of the Saviour on the Cross. Similar patterns are found in the work of other younger authors of Czech revival literature, in the fiction of Karel Sabina (1813 - 1877), in the poetry of Václav Bolemír Nebeský (1818 - 1882) and especially in the work of Karel Hynek Mácha.

Mácha's poetry and prose contains penetrating reflections of the central cosmic and metaphysical problems of Romanticism. Mácha combines the uniqueness and individuality of romantic art with frequent and generally known figures of romantic "language," which Jan Mukařovský used to call the "communal property" of Romanticism. These figures can also be called romantic *topoi* and described as emblematic motifs of characters (the pilgrim, the outlaw or criminal, the monk), architecture (the ruin, the castle, the monastery, the tomb or the grave, the ancestral hall), landscape configurations (the cliff or the summit of a mountain, the lake) and the states of nature (the night) organizing the space

and time in romantic works. In Mácha's texts these *topoi* may have at least three different functions. They *present* the cosmic and existential orientation of Mácha's poetry as the mark of his attachment to European Romanticism and of his opposition to the idyllic and sentimental features of Czech revival literature. As the emblems they mediate and *represent* general, philosophical themes of romantic (and earlier) art (e.g. those of cosmic time and of the temporality of human acts and products in the *topos* of the ruin or of life as a continous search in the paradigm of the pilgrimage). Finally, they *connect* these general meanings with Mácha's own romantic notions of time and being, the present and the past. In his novel *Křivoklad Castle* for instance Mácha used the attributes of castle architecture known already from the Gothic novel. But the architectural space does not merely evoke the past and the nationalist values derived from it. It also represents the contradicitons of the heroes' minds and hearts resulting, as shown above, from the clash of the problems of Czech history with the dilemmas of the romantic self. Another example is Mácha's sketch "The Evening at the Bezděz Castle" where the specific context, or rather configuration, of the *topoi* of the castle, the tomb, the monastery, the hilltop and the night becomes, together with philosophical reflection about the ages of human life, a part of the representation of "youth" as the subjective existential experience of "otherness" and as a universal feature, the "otherness" of romantic imagination.

It is important that the layered meaning of romantic emblems does not have a distinct hierarchic order (as e.g. in "Záhoř's Bed" or in the poem *The Antagonists*, Protichůdci, 1844, by Václav Bolemír Nebeský). To be more precise, Mácha's texts are characterized by the whirls and intermittent radiation of meaning (both of the high romantic themes and of the revivalist visions of the nation's past) rather than by its distinctly drawn layers. The ruins and the castles are not mere romantic *topoi* with traditional meanings into which Mácha's meditations are projected thematizing the temporality of the present moment, its traces in the memory and of the monuments of the past. They are also *Czech* cast-

les, the monuments of glory which can be evoked by romantic imagination, and the mementos of modern decay. This is the framework of Mácha's patriotic approach to the general themes of national history and individual identity. In his work, the past is not always glorified, for even historical events bear distinct traces of vanishing glory.

Mácha makes the figures and idioms of the romantic "language" penetrate his references to actual Czech places and circumstances without adapting them to the local data. Thus, his landscape depictions contain both the features of typical of any romantic work and standardized sceneries of the "Czech homeland" developed into clichés by later authors. The extremes of Mácha's Romanticism, its cosmic and patriotic dimensions, meet and function together on the common territory, in the self-same figure of romantic "language." Separately they exist only on the level of *presentation*, i.e., of the declaration of the poet's relationship to the revival movement or, on the other hand, to European Romanticism.

From the perspective of cultural semiotics, Mácha's work represents the highest stage of the development of the literary language in the revival period as well as the overcoming of the contradiction between nationalism and universalism in the realm of the general romantic "language." From the viewpoint of cultural history, an evident departure from the notion of the romantic patriot which was the ideal of humanity not only for the revivalists, but also for some early romantics (like William Wordsworth who came to acknowledge "the *vox populi* which Deity inspires" as the criterion of sincerity), to the divided self of the Czech romantic poet. The *Zerrissenheit* so much criticized by *Biedermeier* literati and Hegelians as a superficial attitude and destructive mood may become the mark of a radical approach to the authority of ethnocentric discourse, because it casts doubts on the identification of the individual with a group whose identity is given by the feeling of common language, traditions, body, blood. In his *Zerrissenheit* Mácha refuses this identity as a *binding* and *infringing* code of the revival culture. For him, national identity is the matter of *ob-*

ligation and *commitment*: the question is how to express the cultural identity of an individual who feels her or his relationship to the supranational and cosmic events and who does not want to perceive and evaluate them *only* in the national, or, vice versa, merely in the supranational, contexts. This individual course of continuous dilemmas, contradictions and oscillations indicates the orientation of Czech Romanticism towards authenticity. Everyone who in the Czech lands had felt an affinity to Romanticism had to deal with it as a personal problem.

But the question of the relationship of the Czech revival to European Romanticism cannot be reduced to the search of national identity in Mácha's work. This large complex of problems has been mostly evaded or bypassed by Czech historians of culture who wanted to avoid ideological and political controversies. This article has not been intended to give a survey of various solutions of the question of Czech Romanticism. But at least one example should be given demonstrating a basic orientation of these approaches: the solution of "the Czech Question" proposed by T.G.Masaryk, the founder of Czechoslovakia and its first president.

Masaryk's approach is fundamental to the tradition of the syncretic interpretation of the revival culture. The aim is to explain the national revival as a general (both religious and secular) *humanist* movement faithful to the ethical tradition of the Moravian Brethern and Herder's idea of *Humanität*. This model simply excludes romantic subjectivism. But it is mainly directed against the romantic nationalism of the forged medieval *Manuscripts* which are thought to deny the chief values of Czech humanism, the patient everyday labour for the future and the respect towards the spiritual dimension of the here-and-now, because they mythologize the past and seek for national identity in the invented ancient age. However, Masaryk's interpretation is also orientated against the critical thought of the Enlightenment and its manifestations in the early revival.[20]

A symptomatic feature of Masaryk's evasive approach is his assessment of Mácha's major work, *May*. On the one hand, Masaryk marginalizes the problem of Mácha's Romanticism sub-

stituting for it the question of the authenticity of patriotic feeling which should be rooted in everydayness, in the life of "the Czech family." On the other hand, Masaryk reinstates Romanticism as the alternative to the "rather vague...enthusiastic rhetoric of Panslavism and patriotism" produced by the earlier revival projects (e.g., that of the Slovak Panslavist poet and scholar Ján Kollár):

> Mácha is significant because of his world which is new in comparison with that created by Kollár... In May he deals with a new problem, being somewhat influenced by Goethe and Byron. He introduces a unfortunate woman, a father who does not know his son and seduces his bride and the son despairing at eternity. This is Romanticism, one would say, but do you think that Mácha did not feel so? This is a problem of the Czech family...[21]

In Masaryk's teleological conception, the individual idioms of Romanticism must be renamed, as the continuity of Czech culture seems to demand it. But it is not merely because of this continuity: due to its syncretic nature and firm links with the humanism of Moravian Brethern, Herder and Slavonic tradition, the problem of national identity seems to have become more universal that any trend in the history of ideas or art. "The Czech question is the problem of the whole world, not only of ourselves." Masaryk wrote in 1905.[22] Today the question is no longer how to formulate and understand national identity as a universal historical mission. Rather, we should attempt to reflect our identity with respect to different forms of European Romanticism and European culture in general.

Notes

[1] English translation of Schlegel's *Athenäum* Fragment No. 116 quoted from *European Romanticism. Self-Definition. An anthology compiled by Lilian Furst*, (London and New York: Methuen 1980), pp. 4 - 5.

[2] Novalis, "Die Christenheit oder Europa," in *Werke in einem Band*, (Berlin und Veimar: Aufbau Verlag 1984), pp. 339 - 340.

[3] Friedrich Schlegel, "Ideen" (Nr. 135, *Athenäum*, Bd. 3 [1800]), *Werke in zwei Bände*, Bd. 1, (Berlin und Veimar: Aufbau Verlag 1980), pp. 280 - 281. (Translation M.P.)

[4] Johann Gottfried Herder, "Von Ähnlichkeit der mittleren englischen und deutschen Dichtkunst," *Sämtliche Werke, Bd. 9*, ed. B. Suphan, (Berlin 1877), pp. 528 - 530 (English translation quoted from René Wellek's *History of Modern Criticism 1750 - 1950, I. The Latter Eighteenth Century*, [New Haven: Yale University Press 1955], p. 191):

> Thus, from ancient times we have absolutely no living poetic literature upon which our modern poetry might have grown, as a branch upon the national stem; whereas other nations have progressed with the centuries, and have shaped themselves upon their own soil, from native products, upon the belief and taste of the people, from the remains of the past. In that way their literature and language have become national, the voice of the people has been used and cherished... Ve poor Germans have been destined from the start never to remain ourselves.

[5] F. Schlegel, "*Athenäum* Fragment, Nr. 80," *Kritische Ausgabe*, Bd. 2, p. 176.

[6] F. Schlegel, "Gespräch über die Poesie," (*Athenäum*, Bd. 3, 1800), *Werke in zwei Bände*, Bd. 2, p. 152.

[7] Novalis,"Blütenstaub, Nr. 64," (*Athenäum*, Bd. 1, 1798), *op. cit.*, p. 289 (translation M.P.)

[8] See Vladimír Macura, *Znamení zrodu. České obrození jako kulturní typ* (The Sign of the Birth. The Czech Revival

as a Cultural Type), (Praha: Čs. spisovatel 1983), s. 199 (Translated by M.P.):

> The concept of "the centre" is an important element of Herder's philosophy: it is a "happy centre," "the decree of the golden mean, " a positive value excluding extremes and unifying in itself all positive qualities of the given range of phenomena. It becomes manifest at most dissimilar levels of Herder's system. For Herder, the Earth is "a star" bound to "its centre," the Sun and simultaneously "one of the central planets... both by its position and by its size..." This central position of the Earth influences its forms of life...plants and animals, among whom the man is "the central creature"...But even in discussing the humans, Herder uses the category of the centre in an evaluative way, to distinguish the nations of "fair figure" inhabiting "the central zone of the Earth" which lies, as beauty itself, between two extremes..." Other Herder's uses of "the centre" may seem to contradict those already described. The question "Where is one's homeland? Where is the centre of the world?" is answered: "Where you stand!" The statements "the centre is everywhere" and "everything is in the centre" may differ factually and by their point-of-view, but they always connect the notion of the centre with variety, the unity-in-diversity and vice versa.

[9] Jacob und Vilhelm Grimm, *Über das Deutsche*, (Leipzig: Philip Reclam Junior 1986), pp. 122 - 123, 126.

[10] F. Schlegel, "*Athenäum* Fragment, No. 116." English translation quoted from *European Romanticism. Self-Definition. An anthology compiled by Lilian Furst*, p. 5.

[11] Josef Jungmann, "O klasičnosti literatury a důležitosti její," (On the Classic in Literature and the Importance Thereof, 1827), in *Boj o obrození národa* (The Struggle

for the Rebirth of the Nation), ed. F. Vodička, (Praha: 1948), p. 103 (Translated by M.P.).

[12] Marilyn Butler, "Romanticism in England," in *Romanticism in National Context*, ed. Roy Porter and Mikuláš Teich, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1988), pp. 38 - 40.

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 49.

[14] Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 45 - 46.

[15] See Marshall Sahlins, *Islands of History*, (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press 1985), pp. 143 - 151. In Chapter Five ("Structure and History") of his book Sahlins argues that the relationshiship between history as a dynamic movement and structure as the static order of a society is not antithetical and exclusive. "Every practical change" (e.g., the inclusion of the appearance of Captain Cook into the structure of myths and religious practices of Hawaiian aborigines) "is also a cultural reproduction." (p. 144) The fundamental question to be asked in this context is about "the relation of cultural concepts to human experience," or "how cultural concepts are actively used to engage the world." This is "the problem of symbolic reference." (p. 145). Sahlins deals with this problem in terms of structuralist philosophy (Ernst Cassirer), linguistics (Ferdinand de Saussure) and anthropology and maintains that our perception of the world is in fact its classification based on language and its existing concepts or signs. "The culture categories by which experience is constituted do not follow directly from the world, but from their differential relations within the symbolic scheme." And even this scheme does not necessarily have any starting point in reality. It "constitutes the possibilities of worldly reference for the people of a given society." Analogous features can be traced in Saussure's theory of the "arbitrary" language sign. According to him,

> the sign, as sense, becomes doubly arbitrary in reference: at once a relative segmentation and a selective representation. And from the arbitrary nature of the sign it follows that culture is, by its own nature, a historical object...It is historical because it is arbitrary: because it does not simply reflect the existing world; but, on the contrary, in ordering existing objects by pre-existing concepts, language would ignore the flux of the moment...Conversely...the system is arbitrary because it is historical. It recognizes the present, whatever it "really" is, as the past. (p. 148)

It is this double arbitrariness that may be said to constitute the historicity of a sign system. The historicity of "certain cultural orders called 'historyless'" may thus consists in their myths, rituals, traditions and customs. But, on the other hand, any cultural action in such a social structure involves "a risk of the categories in reference." It "is put in double jeopardy, subjectively as well as objectively: subjectively, by the people's interested uses of signs in their own projects; objectively, as the meaning is risked in the cosmos fully capable of contradicting the symbolic systems that are presumed to describe it." (p. 149) This situation is characterized by constant shifts and incessant revaluation of the meanings of individual signs. The taboos, for instance, "are notoriously polysemic: as virtual or in the society in general, they have many possible meanings. But when actualized, when ventured in a particular context..., 'tabu' is valorized in some selective sense. One meaning is foregrounded, made salient in relation to all possible meanings." (p. 149) The value of a sign in subjective use is also given by the specific interest of the user, in whose life the sign has a place as a symbolic object. " 'Interest' and 'sense' are two sides of the same thing, the sign as related respectively to persons and to other signs." (p. 150) Thus, "symbolic action is a duplex compound made up of an inescapable past and an irreducible present. An inescapable past because the concepts by which experience

is organized and communicated proceed from the received cultural scheme. An irreducible present because of the world-uniqueness of any action..." (pp. 151 - 152)

[16] Cf. Felix Vodička, *Počátky krásné prózy novočeské* (The Origins of New Czech Fiction), (Praha: Melantrich 1948).

[17] Harold Bloom, "Introduction", in: *Romanticism and Consciousness*, ed. H. Bloom, (New York: Norton 1970), p. 24.

[18] Josef Kajetán Tyl, "Po pěti letech" (After Five Years), *Spisy* (Collected Works), *sv. 3* (ed. J. a M. Otruba), (Praha: SNKLHU 1953), p. 148 (Translated by M.P.).

[19] Virgil Nemoianu, *The Taming of Romanticism. European Literature and the Age of Biedermeier,* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press 1984), pp.. 29 - 30.

[20] Robert Auty, "Changing Views on the Role of Dobrovský in the Czech National Revival", *The Czech Renascence of the Nineteenth Century*, ed. by Peter Brock and H. Gordon Skilling, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 1970), p. 20.

[21] T.G.Masaryk, "Problém malého národa" (The Problem of the Small Nation, 1905), in *Ideály humanitní. Vybrané spisy T.G.M.*, (The Ideals of Humanity. Selected Writings) *sv. 1,* (Praha: Melantrich 1990), p. 90 (Translated by M.P.).

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 88.