



Review: [Untitled]

Reviewed Work(s):

Varieties of Czech: Studies in Czech Sociolinguistics by Eva Eckert
Hana Filip

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Koschmal is to be commended both for editing this collection of essays and for contributing two submissions himself. *Perspektiven Sorbischer Literatur* is a worthy contribution to Sorbian studies.

Charles Wukasch, Austin Community College

Slavko Janevski. *The Bandit Wind*. Intro. Milne Holton. Trans. Charles Simic. Struga Series of Macedonian Poetry. Takoma Park, MD: Dryad Press, 1991. 61 pp., \$15.95/\$8.95.

Slavko Janevski arrived on the Macedonian literary scene as a poet in 1945 with a short collection of poems titled *Крвава нуза* (*Bloody Necklace*). Together with Aco Shopov, Blaze Koneski and Gogo Ivanovski, he belongs to the first postwar generation of Macedonian poets, writing in a language that was officially recognized only in 1944. Most of the poets of this generation were preoccupied with the war and the celebration of Macedonian nationhood.

The contents of this selection of Janevski's poems is divided into three parts. The first part contains poems from his earlier period (through 1951): "The Song of the Eternal Sailor," "Silence," "Bottomless," "Small Secret," and "Laughter of the Lonely Bandit." The second section includes eight poems from the collection *Евангелие по Итар Пејо* (*The Gospel according to Sly Peyo*): "Ancient Inscription," "Turban and Crown," "Climent," "The Song of the Monks from Leshok," "The Song of Sultan Murad," "Brothers from Salonika," "Those Killers of Our Piece of Mind," and "Sly Peyo Talks about Something Else." The third section includes eight poems from a sequence in the collection *Каинавелија* (*The Tale of Cain*), titled "Анатомија" (Anatomy). This collection represents a sampling from the various periods in the development of Janevski's poetry.

The inspiration for Janevski's poetic style comes from the Surrealist movement. The poems teem with images that are extremely complex and difficult to visualize, which makes it quite challenging for any translator to convey into English. In this bilingual edition the poems were skillfully translated by the distinguished poet and translator Charles Simic. This collection was edited by Milne Holton, who is also the general editor of the Struga Series of Macedonian Poets. Holton includes a short introduction, which deals mainly with Macedonia and its troubled history. The only major shortcoming in this book is the lack of a good biographical background on Janevski as a poet, and on his contributions within the Macedonian literary tradition.

Several typographical and translation errors also mar Holton's introduction. The Macedonian title of the collection *Poems* is "Pesmi," not "Pesme." Also on page xii, the Macedonian title of the collection *Lyrics* should be "Lirika," not "Lirike." On page xiii, in the second paragraph, the title of the novel *The Village Behind the Seven Ash Trees* should be "Selo zad sedumte jaseni," not "sedunite." In the same paragraph, the title of the collection *The Gospel According to Sly Peyo* should be "Evangeliје po Itar Pejo," instead of "Evangeliје po star Pejo." Be that as it may, this book is a welcome addition to any library specializing in Macedonian and Balkan literature.

George Mitrevski, Auburn University

Eva Eckert, ed. *Varieties of Czech: Studies in Czech Sociolinguistics*. Amsterdam-Atlanta: Rodopi, 1993. 285 pp., \$58.50 (paper).

This volume consists of a collection of eighteen papers by scholars working in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and the United States. It is a pioneering contribution to the new discipline of Czech sociolinguistics and reflects recent socio-political as well as research trends unfet-

tered by the political changes in Czechoslovakia after the 1989 Velvet Revolution. As Eva Eckert points out in her introduction, freedom of speech has brought about a resurgence of new forms of speech that has revived interest in Czech language usage and provided linguists with exciting new research material. Political freedom has also lifted former restrictions imposed by the Communist regime on the subject matter and methodology of linguistics.

The papers are divided into four general areas: Language Norm and Codification; Varieties of Czech in Literature—Case Studies; Common Czech and Czech Dialects; and Czech in Contact with Other Languages. According to the prevailing view of the last forty years, there are three main varieties of Czech: Standard Literary Czech (*spisovná čeština*), Standard Spoken Czech (*hovorová čeština*) and Common Czech (*obecná čeština*). The papers in the first section clearly show that this tripartite division is currently undergoing a thorough reevaluation. Jiří Kraus (“Does Spoken Literary Czech Exist?”) discusses the split in the Czech linguistic community and the general public between opponents and defenders of Standard Literary Czech as it is currently encoded, for example, in *Pravidla českého pravopisu* (Czech Orthographic Rules). Defenders urge the cultivation of Standard Czech, especially as a means of public and formal communication. One of their main arguments is that the spoken variant, Standard Spoken Czech, is acceptable to all speakers, whereas Common Czech is often negatively evaluated in the mass media due to its strong association with Prague. Contrary to Kraus, František Čermák denies the existence of Standard Spoken Czech. Čermák argues against the current primacy of the Literary Standard and in favor of the primacy of the spoken language, one of the basic tenets of modern linguistics since de Saussure that “has yet to be admitted” in Czech linguistics (33). Petr Sgall and Jiří Hronek (“Speakers’ Attitudes Towards Code Switching”) distinguish two kinds of factors in code switching: those determined by the speaker’s personality (personal relationship to the Standard, local origin, temperament, adaptability, age) and those determined by the speech situation (private vs. public discourse, speaker’s relationship to the audience, subject discussed). Louise Hammer concludes that the intra-sentential code switching from Prague Colloquial Czech to Standard Czech is a means of highlighting information (by indicating irony, in-group membership, intimacy or formality, etc.) and, at the same time, provides clues to the speaker’s attitude toward the topic or other participants in the conversation. Zdeněk Starýs paper (“The Forbidden Fruit is the Most Tempting or Why There is No Czech Sociolinguistics”) pursues the thesis that the theory of language cultivation, one of the main contributions of the Prague Linguistic Circle in the late 1920s and 1930s, is the main culprit for the lack of Czech sociolinguistics. Despite its emphasis on language functions in various communicative situations, the theory of language cultivation shared a defense of the Standard code with the tradition of purism, which it vehemently opposed. Its domination of Czech linguistics is ascribed to B. Havránek, one of its architects and “the First Linguist” (*první představitel lingvistiky*) in Communist Czechoslovakia.

The papers in the second part focus on literary presentation of the spoken language. Charles Townsend claims that Landovský and Svoboda resolve discrepancies by constructing a code or grammar for the text they write that “is consolidated and becomes standardized as the writing proceeds” (96). Susan Kresin undertakes the daunting task of identifying the basic usage patterns of the demonstrative pronoun *ten* in several works by Hrabal, Kohout and Kundera. Among her many insightful observations is the rarely noticed use of *ten* in generic statements that are not universally valid. The papers by Zdena Brodská and by Mary Hrabik-Samal analyze the sources of difficulties in translating literary prose rich in non-standard varieties of Czech. Brodská shows how Ludvík Vaculík defamiliarizes his prose by using the Valachian dialect of North East Moravia, neologisms, paradoxes, plays on words and idioms, and altered versions of established grammatical constructions. His pithy, figurative and fastidious style resembles poetry. To the extent that Vaculík’s translators fail, Vaculík is successful, true to his motto that an easily translatable prose is unacceptable. For this success Vaculík, however, pays a high price: he is rarely translated and consequently little known outside of his circle of Czech readers.

The third section concentrates on the relation of Common Czech to regional or dialectal varieties of Czech. Marie Krčmová and Jana Jančáková dispute the widely held view that Common Czech is gradually becoming the standard Czech vernacular and show that regional dialects are resilient to Common Czech influence. This situation is reinforced in Móravia where Common Czech does not enjoy as much prestige and consequently is not as widespread in spoken speech as it is in Bohemia. However, George Cummins argues that common colloquial Czech and Brno city speech share many similarities that stem from the on-going shifts in phonological and morphological features in the speech of the South Moravian capitol.

Five papers in the final section concentrate on language change in language contact situations. Eva Eckert focuses on the change from Czech to English between 1860 and 1960 in Texas. Jaromira Rakusan investigates the sociolinguistic functions of foreign borrowings, especially from American English, in two nineteenth century Chicago Czech texts. Gero Fischer predicts that the survival of colloquial Viennese Czech beyond the next generation is uncertain. Pavel Jančák compares lexical data concerning Czech in Střelín and Daruvar and shows that Croatian (in Daruvar) has had significantly greater impact on Czech than German (Střelín in today's Poland). Ivor Ripka focuses on certain lexicographic and phraseological differences and similarities between Czech and Slovak. Vit Bubenik's article on Czech in Canada addresses first language acquisition in a language contact situation. He shows that both sociolinguistic factors and typological differences between English and Czech often contribute to the delayed mastery of Czech and to the eventual shift to English in the second generation.

Varieties of Czech will be useful to a wide audience of linguists, literary critics and language teachers. To be sure, Bohemists in the Czech Republic and abroad will already be familiar with many general points made in it. Nonetheless, for anybody interested in Czech sociolinguistics this book will be a welcome addition as a source book of great historical and informative value. First, it provides insights into the pressures of socio-political forces on language as a means of communication as well as an object of academic research in what used to be Czechoslovakia, in the new Czech Republic and in Czech communities abroad. Second, it bears testimony to the formation of a new research field. Third, the collection covers a considerable wealth and variety of Czech language data, including transcriptions of actual dialogues, passages from contemporary literary works, examples of dialectal and regional usage and of varieties of Czech abroad. Appendices and summaries in Hammer, Townsend and Cummins' articles provide a good overview of Common Czech characteristics. Although there is room to quibble over details of individual analyses and Czech-English translations, the studies generally provide sufficient data and formulate claims clear enough to be tested by alternative hypotheses. For those uninitiated into the varieties of Czech, the terminology, which slightly varies from one author to another, may seem at first confusing, despite Eckert's efforts in the introduction to clarify it. Since the book is a contribution to an evolving field, this is to be expected and not a serious flaw. As a counterbalance, most papers are distinguished by considerable informative value, numerous explanatory footnotes and valuable bibliographical references. In sum, the book is an important contribution to the developing field of Czech sociolinguistics.

Hana Filip, University of California at Berkeley

William W. Derbyshire. *A Basic Reference Grammar of Slovene*. Columbus: Slavica Publishers, Inc., 1993. 154 pp., \$16.95 (paper).

There has always been a need for reliable teaching materials in the "minor" (read: "non-Russian") Slavic languages, and given the near-total dearth of Slovene textbooks for English