

LITERARY LANGUAGE DEATH AND LITERARY LANGUAGE REVIVAL: A CASE STUDY OF CZECH

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1. INTRODUCTION

The objective of this study is to determine the factors operating in the decline and revival of literary languages in general, and of the Czech literary language in particular. The aim is to examine the ways in which literary and spoken languages influence each other. In other words, how does the literary language give a speech community an identity that enables it to resist assimilation, and how do the speakers respond to attempts to suppress their literary language? We thus analyze language primarily in the context of nation building, in order to show how the growth of a literary norm is an integral part of this process.

2. LANGUAGE DEATH AND LITERARY LANGUAGE DEATH

The death of a spoken language is a phenomenon separate from, but not altogether unconnected with, the death of a literary language. Literary languages, such as Latin, were in common use long after the spoken languages (vernaculars) had changed structurally and morphologically.¹ These changes were so far-reaching that it was no longer possible to view the emerging spoken languages as dialects of the same language. It is possible, furthermore, for spoken languages to exist without a literary form. But a spoken language will undergo decay most frequently in situations of bilingualism where it occupies a definite socially subordinate position and it does not possess an active literary form (Dressler 1982: 324).

Linguistic subordination of one speech community to another is, therefore, a key factor in most situations of linguistic decay. Such a situation may lead the speakers of the subordinate speech community to evaluate their own language less favourably than the dominant language. As a result, the speakers of the subordinate language restrict its

¹ In recent years scholars of various persuasions have turned their attention to dying languages within several subdisciplines of linguistics and anthropology. In particular they have examined what decaying languages may reveal about simplification processes, whether phonological (Dressler 1972), morphophonological (Dorian 1977), morphological (Dorian 1978; Dressler and Wodak-Leodolter 1977), or syntactic (Hill 1973; Dorian 1973). Because of the reductive aspects of language death, comparisons with pidginization (Trudgill 1976-77; Dorian 1978) and with language acquisition (Voegelin and Voegelin 1977) have appeared. Sociolinguists have developed an interest in what Fishman (1964) called "language maintenance and language shift", and language shift is often the cause of language decay. See Dorian 1981: 3-4.

use for reasons that may include their accepting the attitudes of the dominant social group and wishing to assimilate to them linguistically after they have already undergone bilingual primary socialization. The subordinate language is thus reduced to 'folklore'. Central governments usually play an important part in this process, encouraging the speakers of the subordinate language to accept the dominant language and reject the subordinate one.

Invariably these responses to the subordination of one language to another result in reducing the number of speech situations where the individual will find himself using the subordinate language, frequently restricting its use to immediate family relations. These types of communications often involve a minimal vocabulary and a very simple structure. This normally results in the subordinate language losing its former lexical and morphological complexity.

This in turn has a negative feedback on the speakers of the subordinate language, causing them to make negative sociopsychological evaluations of their language. The subordinate language thus even further loses its ability to function as a vehicle of prestige. Many of the speakers of the subordinate language, therefore, also find it increasingly difficult to continue using the language as a source of identity.

3. LITERARY LANGUAGE

The appearance of a generally used literary form of the subordinate language can, however, reverse the process of language decay. The planners of a literary language can enrich the linguistic structure of the subordinate language by creating stylistic options comparable to those of the dominant language. This gives the subordinate language more of the appearance of a language of educated people, thereby increasing its prestige function. As the subordinate language becomes more prestigious, it becomes increasingly possible for an individual to identify with it.

At this point we have a situation of widening linguistic horizons for the subordinate language. In most cases this results in the creation of a new linguistic elite speaking the subordinate language that comes into conflict with the old linguistic elite speaking the dominant language. Often, there is also conflict with the central government, where the linguistic revival comes into conflict with its centralizing policies.

The limitation of this study is the fact that it deals with a historical period during which there were no synchronic studies conducted in linguistics (synchronic linguistics only gained popularity in the twentieth century). Therefore, there were no studies done on spoken Czech during the late eighteenth century, when the language underwent the greatest decay. Nevertheless, we can make limited synchronic conclusions based on certain observations from persons living at the time. (These observations will be dealt with in more detail in section 4). In addition, the definition of literary language death is limited to 'lack of literary activity', and will therefore not provide any detailed description of the stages of literary language death.

4. THE HISTORY OF LITERARY CZECH: OVERVIEW

One of the central themes for a person studying the history of the kingdom of Bohemia has been the conflict between speakers of German and speakers of Czech. This

conflict has often been presented as a continuous ethnic or racial discord that began in the ninth century with the first surges of the German *Drang nach Osten* and did not end until the entire German-speaking population was forced to leave Bohemia at the end of World War II. If one were, however, to analyze what social groups were the primary bearers of German culture at different periods, the situation becomes more complicated. I believe that one is, in fact, not looking at a single conflict, but rather at many different conflicts wherein diverse social groups have identified themselves for various reasons with either the German or the Czech language. Thus one finds that at times the bearers of the German language are the nobility, at other times the townsfolk (*měšťané* 'burghers'), at still other times the Jews, and more recently the Nazis. In fact, we are not dealing with the clash of two separate nationalities, but with a linguistic problem. In this study I intend to examine the role that language has played in Bohemian society.

4.1 Bohemia and the Czechs

The Czechs first migrated into Bohemia from the Vistula river basin northeast of the Carpathian mountains at the time of the fall of the Roman Empire. At that time the region had been evacuated by its prior inhabitants, probably a Germanic people. At any rate, there does not appear to have been a forceful occupation of the territory. The Czechs, having installed themselves in their new homeland, called it *Čechy*, after the name of the *Čechové* lands near the junction of the *Vltava* [Moldau] and the *Labe* [Elbe] rivers. To outsiders, however, the land was still known by one or another variant form of Latin *Boiohemum*, which later appeared in German as *Böhmen*. This in turn referred to the *Boii*, a Celtic tribe that had once inhabited the region (Hermann 1975: 7). The conflict between German tribes and the Czechs did not begin until the year 800 approximately, when the last of the pagan Germanic tribes, the Lombards, were converted to Christianity by Charlemagne. As a result of this new religious justification, the course of the barbarian invasions was reversed (Halphen 1926: 109-112, see also Nicholas 1973: 45-48). What had been a westward push became what modern German historians describe as the *Drang nach Osten*, the drive to the east, the beginning of a prolonged conflict between ethnic Germans and Slavs. The Bavarians, supported by Charlemagne, drove the Slavs out of the Danube valley as far as Vienna, while the Saxons occupied much territory adjacent to the Elbe river, conquering and subjugating many Slavs in the process. But the Czechs, protected by Bohemia's natural border of mountains, held their ground (Wanklyn 1954: 146-48). In fact, this phase of the *Drang nach Osten* ended with the failure of the Germanic tribes to conquer Bohemia. In future centuries, Czechs and Germans would live for long periods at peace, sharing many cultural features, but each retaining their own language.

4.2 The Appearance of a Literary Language

The growth of towns during the Middle Ages resulted in the growth of new social classes, and created a need for a more educated population. The urban revolution in Europe north of the Alps began in an area roughly known as Flanders, which included much of northwestern France. One of the first literary vernaculars was, therefore, the so-called *langue d'oïl*, of which the French language was one of many dialects. As the urban revolution spread eastward, the *theudisce* or German language joined the ranks of the literary vernaculars (Wolff 1971: 134). By the thirteenth century, the literary German language began to be used also in Bohemia (Havránek et al 1957: 6). This was in part due to the fact that the urban revolution had arrived there, as well as the presence of large numbers of German immigrants. German written literature had, furthermore, found many sponsors among the nobility. But by the mid-thirteenth century, a xenophobic reaction had set in among the Czechs (Havránek 1957: 12). By this time, the urban revolution was well established in Bohemia, and it had begun affecting the local

population. As a result, the Czechs began developing a literary tradition of their own.

The adaptation of the Latin alphabet to a Slavic language, however, demanded an understanding of its phonology. Cosmas attempted to render Slavic place names with combinations of Latin letters that even confounded experts. By the thirteenth century a system was being developed that used groups of two Latin letters to represent phonemes that did not exist in Latin. This system is known as *digraphic*, or composite, e.g., the combination *ss* would represent *š*, *cz* = *č*, *zz* = *ž*, *rz* = *ř*. Czech was the first Slavic language to attain a written form using the Latin alphabet, using orthographic principles that it would later abandon; they would nevertheless be preserved in other Slavic languages that it influenced, most notably are the combinations <cz> and <rz>, which are still used in Polish (Mann 1957a: 152).

It was also during this period that another theme of Bohemian history would become apparent: the tendency for different social groups to rally around language as a symbol of group identity. In this case, as it would also be later, the languages involved were Czech and German. The speakers of Czech and the speakers of German occupied different social strata. In fact, I believe that these two languages are the one constant factor in Bohemian history. I do not, however, believe that the existence of these two languages necessarily entails the existence of two nationalities. Instead, we find that at different points in history, different people chose to identify themselves for diverse reasons as either Czechs or Germans. Thus, what appears to be a centuries-old conflict is, in fact, a series of dissimilar conflicts, in which both sides state their position in terms of language.

Czech speakers owe the origin of their identities to the reign of the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles IV (1342-1378), who was also King of Bohemia. As Prague became a capital city, the population mushroomed. This was the 'Golden Age' of Czech history. The University of Prague (*Karolinum*) was founded in 1348, attracting students from as far away as England. The university was divided into Czech, Polish, Saxon and Bavarian faculties, each one having a controlling vote (Betts 1969: 1-28). This was also the period when the medieval Czech language attained its highest prestige. The *Chronicle of Dalimil*, which was essentially a Czech version of the Cosmas chronicle, recounts the origin of the Czech people (Daňhelka et al. 1958). Other outstanding examples of the literature from this period are the *Alexandreis* and the *Legend of St. Catherine* (for further details, see Cejnar 1964).

4.3 The Hussitic Literary Language

All was not well, however, in Bohemia under the reign of Charles IV. He tended to prefer to have German speakers in all important royal positions. This became more evident during the reigns of Charles' successors. One of the critics of the policy of favouring Germans was Jan Hus, a professor of theology in the Czech section of Prague University, who preached in Czech at the Bethlehem Chapel (Held and Hus 1979: 57-73). When Hus was burned at the stake at Constance, after being promised safe conduct, violence replaced theological arguments. The violence, furthermore, quickly took on an anti-German character, as Czech mobs began attacking German towns in Bohemia and murdering German priests (Nyrop 1981: 12).

Jan Hus, however, was more than just a religious reformer; he also tried to turn the vernacular of Prague into a vehicle of the ministry. To this end, he produced the first treatise on Czech orthography, called *De orthographia bohémica*, in which he introduced the modern 'phonetic' or 'diacritic' spelling, which uses one letter per sound. He used dots (as consonant modifiers) written over letters representing sounds not existing in

Latin; for example *š* (= *š*), *ž* (= *ž*) *č* (= *č*), and *ř* (= *ř*). He also introduced the acute accent (*čárka*) to distinguish long and short vowels. In addition, he tried to purge the spoken language of Prague of German loanwords and to eliminate archaic forms. Jan Hus, however, would remain until the nineteenth century only one of several influences on the Czech language. Digraphs continued to be used along with diacritics. By the fifteenth century, furthermore, diacritic hooks had virtually replaced the Hussite dots. Many palatal fricatives, however, continued to be represented by the pre-Hussitic digraphs in combination with the diacritic hooks --as in <čz> (Mann 1957a: 152-153).

The real standardization of the classical literary Czech was not the work of Jan Hus, but was due to the Reformation, and the translation of the Bible into Czech. This was done at the end of the sixteenth century, by the Protestant sect known as the Moravian Brethren, *Jednota bratrská*. This version of the Bible was to form the basis for a version of literary Czech, known as *bibličtina*. The *Kralice Bible*, as it was called, thus had an effect on the Czech language, as had the Lutheran Bible on German. But unlike literary German, classical literary Czech was not destined to survive (Číževskij 1971: 71).

The *Kralice Bible* also reflected a number of changes that had occurred in the spoken Czech language by the sixteenth century. The aorist and the imperfect forms of verbs had disappeared. Their function was taken over by the old perfect tense. At this point aspect became an important feature replacing tense. Thus, the function of the former aorist *vedech* 'I brought' would be expressed instead by *Já jsem vedl*, whereas the function of the former imperfect *vediech* was taken over by *Já jsem vodil*. Furthermore, the dual number disappeared from the Czech language with only a few exceptions (mainly when referring to paired parts of the body): *oči*, instrumental plural *očima* 'eyes'; *uši/ušima* 'ears'; *ruce/rukama* 'hands'; *nohy/nohama* 'legs'; *dvě/dvěma* 'two'; *obě/oběma* 'both' (surviving dual forms in modern Czech).

In 1620, the armies of the Czech Diet were defeated by the Hapsburg King, Ferdinand of Styria, at the Battle of White Mountain. The defeat spelled not only the eradication of Protestantism in Bohemia, but also destruction of the entire Czech ruling class. In their place came a foreign nobility originating from every European nationality imaginable, but sharing one trait in common: they used German as a lingua franca (Kerner 1969: 69). But the Germanization of Bohemia did not begin with the Battle of White Mountain. For a century already, the Czech Diet had been electing kings of the Hapsburg dynasty, who were not only Catholic, but also German. The Hapsburgs had in turn protected the German-speaking towns and the Catholic religion. Thus, by the time of the Battle of White Mountain, German speakers were well-established in Bohemia. As a result of the Battle of White Mountain, however, Protestantism was defeated, and in the baggage trains of the Hapsburg armies came Jesuit missionaries. Protestantism survived, however, among Czech refugee communities in Moravia and Slovakia. Here the language of the *Kralice Bible* continued to be a major literary vehicle, despite events in the heartland of the Czech language. It is, therefore, no surprise that the people who would later be instrumental in reviving the Czech language were Protestants from these communities.

4.4 Decay of Literary and Spoken Czech

The circumstances that brought about the decay of the spoken Czech language fit into Dressler's model for language death, starting with social subordination and resulting in linguistic decline. Although the Czech language survived in its many dialectal forms in the rural areas, the former prestige dialect of Prague was undergoing rapid decay by the 1780s. In both the decay and in the revival of the spoken language, the literary language played a key role. From its medieval origins, the literary Czech language was

an important element in the linguistic identity of Czech speakers. The decline of the literary language after 1620 was in turn an important factor in the decline of the spoken language, and the subsequent revival of the literary language at the beginning of the nineteenth century preceded the general revival of the spoken language.

The primary cause of the decline of the Czech literary language after the Battle of White Mountain was outright suppression by the conquering army and the Jesuits who accompanied them. This consisted of massive burnings of books for their supposedly heretical doctrines, which in fact meant any book in the Czech language.² It also meant the Latinization of all the Czech institutions of higher learning, reducing Czech to use only in the primary schools.³

More fundamental to the future of the Czech literary language, however, was the loss of a native Czech-speaking educated elite, consisting of the classes that "might have been the active bearers of a cultivated linguistic tradition" (Bělič 1953: 193). Some of the members of these classes had fled into exile after the loss of their political autonomy. It has been generally accepted by scholars that the population in Bohemia diminished from about 1,750,000 to about 950,000 (Míka 1976: 535-563; see also Teich 1981: 145). Twenty-five percent of the nobility, twenty-five percent of the bourgeoisie, and most of the Czech intelligentsia (among them *Jednota bratrská* [Moravian Brethren])--approximately 36,000 families--were exiled or emigrated voluntarily (Kerner 1969: 68). Most of the members of the upper class, however, chose to remain in Bohemia, but also to assimilate themselves to the conquerors, which meant, among other things, to favour the German language in all situations.

The implications that this had for the spoken Czech language were profound. Czech became a language spoken mainly by peasants and servants, with the consequent lower sociolinguistic evaluation of spoken Czech. This in turn resulted in the sociolinguistic restriction of the use of spoken Czech, meaning it became an unacceptable language to be used in polite company. Palacký (1865: 40) wrote in his autobiography: "...Kdokoli nosil slušný kabát neodvážil se tak snadno na veřejných místech promluvit česky." [Whoever wore a decent coat did not venture so readily to speak Czech in public place]. (See also Zacek 1970: 17.) Consequently, Czech was spoken in fewer types of speech situations, resulting in impoverishment of structure and vocabulary. Speakers of Czech began to show increasing lack of stylistic options, and started to make extensive use of German lexical borrowings. In the middle of the 19th century there was a Czech-German jargon in use by the lower classes. This jargon was probably also spoken a century earlier.⁴

These factors, in turn, caused Czech to become a language that was inadequate for performing the higher social functions. Czech speakers would find themselves thus forced to switch into German when discussing anything but the most elementary subjects.

² The Jesuits, led by Antonín Koniáš, collected and burned many Czech books, including the Czech translation of the Bible (Hermann 1975: 69).

³ Up until 1780 Czech was still used sporadically in schools; however, beginning with 1780 the language was no longer tolerated in the gymnasia and after 1788, in order to gain entrance to these schools, the pupils had to know German (Kerner 1969: 351-52).

⁴ Alois Jirásek satirized this speech in *Filosofská historie* (1877). The following exchange may be cited as a typical example of this jargon: ...'Že by prý pan Vavřena byl hezký a hodný, že, kdyby nebyl tak stolz, so könnte man ihn austehen.' 'O, to je závist a Eifsucht' (Jirásek 1942: 17). See also Auty 1956: 244.

Educated persons were, furthermore, unable to express themselves in any language but German. Even the early Czech nationalists tended to write and speak more German than they did Czech.⁵

One can say, therefore, that the spoken Czech language was most threatened by decline in those places and during those times when Czech speakers were in the most direct contact with German speakers. More specifically, spoken Czech was most threatened during the late eighteenth century, during the period of greatest centralization and government-sanctioned Germanization, and immediately prior to the revival of the literary Czech language. It was most threatened, furthermore, in urban areas, especially Prague, which was the cradle of the literary Czech standard and the 'prestige dialect'.

5. THE CZECH LITERARY REVIVAL

The modern Czech literary language owes its origin to the Czech National Revival during the first part of the nineteenth century. This was itself an outgrowth of the period of Romantic nationalism. The particular concern for language displayed by some of these nationalists reflected the desire on their part to revive a literary language that had historically been used in the territory of Bohemia. The spoken Czech language had, however, evolved considerably since that time, a fact that forced the linguistic revivers to compromise their original objectives and create a literary language which approximated the spoken standard more closely. The compromise was, nevertheless, not complete. To this day, there is a clear bilingualism detectable in Czech between the literary norm and the spoken usage, which was derived from the Central Bohemian dialect.

The Czech National Revival is inextricably intertwined with the revival of the Czech literary language. Although nationalism is a nineteenth-century phenomenon, the roots of modern Czech nationalism can be traced to the late Middle Ages (probably not later than the early fifteenth century). During its long development the expression of nationalism reflected the character of the different historical periods. In the Middle Ages religion was the primary reason for establishing a literary standard for Czech, whereas modern nationalism, especially since the mid-nineteenth century, was of a more secular nature, as political autonomy and the 'romantic' nationalism were of major importance to the promoters of the Czech literary language. The Middle Ages and the nineteenth century had several points in common:

- a) the growing resentment of the Czech speakers toward the German speakers (and vice versa);
- b) the concern with language, the choice of a common dialect (Central Bohemian), the setting of norms, resolving the problem of orthography and the opposition to German loanwords.

However, the two periods had different societies; the Middle Ages were feudal, whereas the nineteenth century was characterized by industrialization.

⁵ Later generations commented: 'Němčina se vybijela němčinou' [German was used to drive out German] (De Bray 1980: 36).

Czech differed from certain other Slavic languages in that it had a previously established literary language. This was, however, extensively modified during the revival resulting in significant differences in orthography. These reforms bear the marks of the various reformers, in much the same way as was the case of other Slavic languages that had no prior literary forms. The names Dobrovský, Palacký and Šafárik mark the different stages in the evolution of Czech orthography. They are as important to literary Czech, in fact, as Vuk Karadžić is to literary Serbian, Ljudovit Gaj to Croatian, L'udovit Štúr to Slovak, and Franz Miklosich to Slovene.

The revival of literary Czech was, however, much more dramatic and rapid than it was with other Slavic languages during the same period. In the course of the nineteenth century, Czech-language literacy rose from zero to well over ninety percent. This can be attributed to the parallel economic developments brought about by the Industrial Revolution in Prague. The city grew rapidly as Czech-speaking peasants migrated to take urban jobs. Peasants and their children were exposed to primary, secondary and even higher education in the Czech language. They read Czech-language newspapers and attended Czech-language theatre. The people they looked to as their leaders, furthermore, were people who prided themselves in being Czech speakers.

5.1 Bohemia under Hapsburg Control

The Hapsburg control over Bohemia was uncontested after the Battle of White Mountain and remained so until the late eighteenth century. The old Czech nobility had been largely wiped out, and those who remained had been thoroughly domesticated. In their place came a colonizing population of people from different parts of Europe. To the extent that they spoke any language, other than their own mother tongue, they spoke German (Kerner 1969: 69). But the feudal system that had spawned the Czech nobility, and which drove them along the nationalistic course, remained essentially intact. Fiefs were redistributed; they were not, however, dissolved. The majority of Czechs remained subjects of one of the hundreds of miniature states that crowded the Bohemian countryside.⁶ They were subject to the lord's judgment, could not leave the manor without his permission, and had to maintain heavy payments to support him; he in turn had to support the king.

By the eighteenth century, the same nationalism that had been one of the hallmarks of the old Bohemian nobility came also to characterize this new nobility. They became marked by their inclination to be disloyal to the crown, and by their tendency to admire what they called the 'Bohemian Constitution' which they considered rightfully theirs. The only difference between the new Bohemian nobility and the old one was that they spoke primarily German, not Czech.

5.2 The Bohemian Nobility and Czech Nationalism

The new Bohemian nobility were, thus, by the eighteenth century definitely not hostile to the Czech language. Certain influential families, in fact, were of old Czech origin. Most significant of these were the Kolovrats, who had in the period since the Battle of White Mountain managed to preserve an enormous library of old Czech manuscripts, including some original writings of Jan Žižka, a disciple of Jan Hus (Mann

⁶ Bohemia had between nine hundred and fifty and a thousand manors. The manor in the eighteenth Century was 'a small constitutional, institutional, administrative, and agrarian state, a little self-sufficient economic world' (Kerner 1969: 274).

1957b: 81).

The crucial events that triggered the revival, however, were the reforms of Maria Theresa and Joseph II during the second half of the eighteenth century. In 1742, Austria suffered a serious military defeat at the hands of Prussia. Bohemia was briefly occupied. The Bohemian nobility, furthermore, showed a remarkable lack of loyalty to the Hapsburg crown. To a man, they swore an oath of fealty to Frederick II of Prussia. But the Prussians did not stay. They withdrew from Bohemia, keeping only most of Silesia and Lusatia. The new empress, Maria Theresa, was crowned in Prague. But she never forgave the disloyalty of her nobility, and during the rest of her reign she undertook reforms that not only strengthened the Austrian state, but attacked the privileges of the nobility. These reforms were pursued even further by her son Joseph II. But after Maria Theresa's death, an aristocratic reaction set in, which stimulated the national revival.

The primary direction of the reforms was to increase the role of the bureaucracy in governing the country and, thus, decrease the role of the nobility. In order to facilitate this, the two emperors introduced German as a language of administration. They also organized schools all over the empire to teach German and train future administrators. These schools were open to persons of all social origins. Also, to facilitate the learning of German and administration, the government encouraged the study of national languages (Kočí 1978: 146).

More than any other group, the Czechs took advantage of the opportunities available to them. Czechs enrolled in government schools in large numbers. So successful were these schools that a number of private schools were also founded to compete with them. By the end of the eighteenth century, in fact, it became common to find Czech tutors living in the homes of many wealthy and aristocratic families (Macartney 1969: 213-15). This was the Czech intelligentsia that would later exert an influence far beyond its numbers. It was especially the tutors who served in the households of old Czech origin, who would come to play an important role in the Czech literary revival.

This tremendous receptivity that Czechs had to government popular education programs was a reflection of the wide-spread growth in the levels of education and skill of the Czech population in general, which was in itself one of the early indications of the beginnings of the Czech industrial revolution. Linguistically, however, it threatened more than ever the survival of the literary and spoken Czech language. For the first time, upward mobility was possible, yet in order to achieve it, one had to become Germanized. As Czechs rose on the social ladder, they would find themselves increasingly in situations where they were required to speak German. Most educated Czechs, in fact, communicated better in German than in Czech. Yet interest in the literary Czech language was growing.

5.3 The Revival of Spoken and Literary Czech

The Czech literary revival can be observed in three stages: Rationalism, Romantic Nationalism and 'Chauvinistic' Nationalism. The first two stages occurred almost simultaneously, but the Rationalists represented an older generation of thinkers, with ideas rooted in the Age of Reason. The revival of the literary and the spoken Czech language occurred paradoxically in those areas and during that period when it was the most threatened by the encroachment of German. The reasons for the revival can be attributed to the rise of nationalism throughout Europe following the French

Revolution.⁷ But this does not explain the particular circumstances surrounding Czech nationalism that generally arose parallel to German nationalism outside of Bohemia. The Czech nationalists had been able to take a language that many assumed was on the point of dying and turn it into the principal language of modern-day Czechoslovakia.

5.4 The Planning of Modern Literary Czech

Decisions about the promotion of a given language are mainly made for economic and political reasons and represent the ideas of those in political power. The Modern Czech language planning counts as a classical model of the 'Cultivation approach' (Paulston 1974: 4). Paulston views the question of language planning in terms of two different approaches: 1) the 'Language policy' approach; 2) the 'Language cultivation' approach. Paulston defines the 'Language policy' approach, as the 'policies conducted by governments concerning language', or 'the policies establishing an official language'. This type of approach may be generally accepted by the population at whom it is directed. Often, however, this approach is not accepted by the population at large. In any case, it affects the linguistic behaviour of the population concerned, not necessarily the government itself. Language policy may even result in a situation of conflict with an existing elite. 'Language cultivation', by contrast, is described as the approach whereby elites themselves engage in language planning. They collectively decide on a linguistic standard, which had been established by language specialists. The elites then adhere to the standard themselves. By force of example, therefore, the population at large comes to view that standard as 'correct' and imbued with all the positive qualities that they generally attribute to the elite itself. The government, however, if in a conflict relationship with the elite, may view such efforts of language cultivation as a threat to their power, besides the fact that it may be opposed to existing language policy efforts. What is, however, remarkable in Bohemia is that a large segment of the ruling class collectively decided to change the language habits beginning in the 1820's. Most of these members of the Prague elite were people who were German in education, and had supposedly, therefore, the greatest stake in maintaining German as the hegemonic language. One must thus view romantic nationalism as both the motive and the cause of the revival of the literary Czech language.

In the late eighteenth and throughout the nineteenth century, Bohemian scholars, with the support of several old Bohemian aristocratic families, were the 'planners' of Modern Literary Czech. One of the first tasks of these thinkers was to create a linguistic identity. Creating a linguistic identity involved primarily establishing a literary standard. Consequently, they also were the individuals to determine 'correct' speech, 'substandard' speech and 'dialect'. These thinkers had to solve several problems before implementing their language policy: a) whether or not the dialect used by Jan Hus for standardizing would be understood in other parts of Bohemia and Moravia; b) updating the grammar (aorist and the imperfect were no longer used in spoken Czech) and simplifying the orthography; c) creating a modern vocabulary and eliminating archaisms. This process took a relatively short time, not much more than fifty years, and Literary

⁷ As Joseph Zacek stated in his article on nationalism in Czechoslovakia: 'The Czech "rebirth" appears to have been both a part of the general continental emancipation that stemmed from the Enlightenment and the French Revolution as well as a specifically Bohemian and Czech reaction to the rationalistic and romantic stimuli from abroad.' French nationalism proclaiming '*Les droits de l'homme*' [the rights of man], and the pan-Slav nationalism were the major factors that stimulated this movement (Zacek 1969: 175).

Czech became a vehicle of the Czech National Revival.

In studying dialects, furthermore, the language 'planners' had to draw a boundary separating their dialects from the dialects of a neighbouring Slavic language. Usually these language boundaries corresponded to political boundaries. Czech nationalists did not make claims to Prussian Silesia, even though the territory had been part of the Czech Kingdom prior to 1740, and the inhabitants spoke a transitional dialect between Czech and Polish. Likewise, the present boundary between the areas speaking Czech and the areas speaking Slovak correspond to the pre-World War I boundary between the halves of the Dual Monarchy.

5.5 Rationalists and Romantic Nationalists

At the beginning of the nineteenth century there were two intellectual currents in Bohemia which were both inspired by the ideas of contemporary German thinkers. In contrast to the impassioned expressions of nationalism by the end of the century the ideas of both of these groups were quite tolerant of any opposing views. The first group was represented by the older generation of thinkers, whose ideas had roots in the Age of Reason (Hermann 1975: 92-93). Josef Dobrovský was a typical example of a 'rationalist' scholar. Born in Hungary, the son of a Czech army officer, who was himself a native of Hradec Králové [Koniggrätz], he was the primary instigator of the Czech National Revival. Dobrovský's interest in the Czech language was primarily antiquarian. He himself wrote all his life in either German or Latin. His own belief was that the Czech language was bound for extinction.

In 1809, Dobrovský published the first modern Czech grammar, the *Ausführliches Lehrgebäude der böhmischen Sprache*. In his work Dobrovský held up as models both the writings of Czech literature and the language of folk songs and tales. He departed significantly from the model of the *Kralice Bible*, however, in his orthography. Dobrovský also advocated the use of 'purer' Czech--that is, a version of the Czech language that used fewer German loanwords. He favoured finding Old Czech equivalents wherever possible, or borrowing words from other Slavic languages.

Dobrovský lived in an era when German was the hegemonic language in Bohemia. German was the language of most educated people. It was also the language of commerce and carried the most prestige. Czech speakers thus bore the stigma of lower class, which further encouraged the propensity for moderately successful persons to prefer German. But the French Revolution had changed many things, including the way people viewed lower class culture. A new generation would come increasingly to identify with the 'people' and, as a result, to change the hegemonic language from German to Czech before the end of the century.

The leader of the second group, the romantic nationalists, was the historian František Palacký, a Moravian of Protestant background. Palacký took an interest in the Czech language while studying in a gymnasium in Bratislava. In March 1818, Palacký and his schoolmate, Josef Šafárik, published an anonymous article, 'Počátkové českého básnictví obzvláště prozodie' ['The Beginnings of Czech Poetry, Especially Prosody'], in which they championed the prosodic style based on *časomíra* [vowel length] in place of the prevailing one based on *přízvuk* [stressed and unstressed syllables]. It was a bold attack on the older generation of Czech scholars like Dobrovský, who were influenced by the German poetic traditions based on stress patterns (Zacek 1969: 17).

In 1823, Palacký, having finished his studies, came to seek his fortune in Prague, which he looked to as the centre of 'Czechdom', but which he found to be a totally

Germanized city. He was accepted into the house of the Sternbergs, for whom he worked out a family history. In 1818, another influential Prague family, the Kolovrats, who were closely connected to the Sternbergs, had made public a family treasure of Old Czech books and documents. This collection formed the basis for the Czech (Bohemian) Museum, which attracted a number of scholars, among whom were many of Dobrovský's pupils. As a result of this, they also founded the *Časopis českého musea* [*Journal of the Czech Museum*] which published the findings of this journal. In 1828, Kaspar von Sternberg had Palacký appointed editor of this journal, and under Palacký's energetic direction the journal became a phenomenal success.

Palacký expanded the journal so as to include much broader subject matter than simply the findings of the Czech Museum. In fact, because relatively few people could write Czech, Palacký had to write many of the articles himself. Furthermore, Palacký found himself to be the arbitrator between two different linguistic tendencies, that of the *antiquarians* and the *innovators*. The former were frequently older Protestants who insisted on using all of the illogical forms of past centuries simply on the grounds that they were in the *Kralice Bible*. The latter were people like the lexicographer, Josef Jungmann, who indiscriminately absorbed foreign words (especially German) and coined neologisms. The influence of Dobrovský was strong at the Czech Museum, and the journal helped popularize his ideas about Czech orthography. Palacký's greatest concern was that masses 'first learn to think in a Czech way, then to speak and write Czech' (Zacek 1969: 20). Gradually other contributors joined him, including many of the leading literary and scholarly figures in Bohemia. When Palacký turned over the Czech journal to Šafárik in 1838, it was already a well-established organ.

The Sternberg and Kolovrat families were generous benefactors of the Czech Museum and they gladly sponsored many scholars studying there. Most notable of these savants was Josef Jungmann, who during the 1820s and the 1830s was assembling a German-Czech dictionary, which combined word lists made by Dobrovský with other word lists that he had coined, based on Russian and Slavonic equivalents.⁸ The purpose of this was to provide a Czech equivalent for every German word, and do away with the feeling of inadequacy Czech intellectuals felt when not using German. Although these wealthy patrons were very generous to Jungmann, their 'pockets were opened less wide' to Šafárik, who had followed Palacký's footsteps to Prague, where he found the study of Slavistics to entail a beggar's existence.

5.6 The Industrial Revolution

During the 1840s, there was growing tension in Prague due to the increasing numbers of displaced peasants who were migrating to the city. They formed a social group that was known at the time as the 'proletariat'. The condition of their life was extremely miserable (Carter 1973: 252). Many were unemployed, and those who worked did so under the worst possible conditions. Their frequent riots were usually accompanied by mindless destruction of machinery and attacks on visible scapegoats (Mendl 1947: 62 and Carter 1973: 265-266). Yet it is surprising that the most visible scapegoats at this time were Jews, not any group identified as Germans. They had as of yet to be imbued with the

⁸ To accomplish this task, Jungmann used the materials in Tomsa's Czech dictionary of 1790-99, Pelcl's word-list of the year 1800, and Dobrovský's German-Czech Dictionary with additions from Velešlavín's *Silva quadrilinguis* of 1558, and an incomplete seventeenth century vocabulary by Václav Rosa. The entries are supplied with German meanings and etymological notes (Mann 1957a: 5).

mythology of nationalism. In fact, although almost all of these workers were from Czech-speaking areas, language was a minor element in their personal identity.

The 'proletariat' was not a group with any coherent common outlook. They would, instead, look to the leadership of an elite for direction, and this elite would decide who the scapegoats were going to be. The elite that had the most influence over the 'proletariat' were those with whom they shared a common language: that is, the group of intellectuals and their supporters who were organized around the Museum. As a historian, Palacký was the builder of an ideology, that of Czech nationalism, based on the creation of a Czech-speaking elite.

Since his student days in Bratislava, Palacký wanted to see the day when Czech speakers ruled over German speakers. He resented the insinuation of inferiority that German speakers would make about Slavs. The general attitude of most German scholars, until the late 1950s, was that the Slavs owed their social and economic system to German colonization. Palacký wanted to set history straight by writing his own history that would contest the German speakers' claims. As an historian, he thus gave Czechs a pride in their past that made them want to build a better future. As a result, Czechs became increasingly resistant to becoming assimilated as they moved up the social ladder. Although nationalism had been present since the 1820s, its German counterpart was slower to develop in Prague. Few members of the German-speaking elite would be so foolhardy as to anger the lower classes by making claims of racial superiority. They tolerated Czech in addition to German. As Bohemia was still part of the Austrian empire, furthermore, there was little reason to believe that German would be totally pushed out by Czech. The two languages still occupied separate social spheres. Czech remained the language of the 'proletariat'--the lower classes--as well as of those climbing the social ladder. The 'old' rich and the Jews usually preferred German. German was also still the language of learning. Czech nationalists were often more fluent in German than in Czech.

5.7 The Spring of Peoples

Germans were not identified as a distinct social group, however, until the so-called 'Spring of Peoples', when a series of revolutions swept Germany and the Austrian Empire in March of 1848. During this period, the Austrian political system was plunged into a deep crisis which lasted until August, 1849. At this point in time, the Hapsburg dynasty had to deal with separate revolutionary governments established in Prague, Budapest, Venice, Milan and even in Vienna itself. In Germany, furthermore, the various revolutionary governments had formed a congress in Frankfurt-am-Main in order to form a unified state. They also invited delegates from Austria and Bohemia to join them. To represent Bohemia, they nominated none other than Palacký, and they appeared confident that he would accept their offer.

The original revolutionary manifesto was posted on March 6 in German and in Czech. The public responded to it *en masse*, and the language issue was not brought up. But the Frankfurt-am-Main question triggered a new explosion within days. Palacký responded to the offer to represent Bohemia with a public letter beginning with the words "I am a Czech of Slavic descent" (Pech 1969: 81; see also Urban 1982: 34). He stated, furthermore, that Austria had an historic mission of protecting the small nations of Europe. He thus came out as a powerful supporter of the government. The Vienna delegates did, however, send delegates to Frankfurt-am-Main, and many of the Prague delegates wanted to do likewise. Czech language newspapers responded to this, however, with a rain of abuse on Germans in general, and especially on their attempts to swallow up Bohemia. This had the double effect of isolating the supporters of the Frankfurt

Congress from the Czech-speaking public, as well as creating opposition by the lower classes and the new rich. This political tact is also significant in that it was the first time during the nineteenth century that German speakers are identified as a distinct nationality within the Czech Kingdom. The 'Germans', furthermore, seemed to gradually accept this national classification, and began increasingly, for the rest of the century, to develop and maintain their distinctness.

Of the Slavic nations that exist today, the Czechs of Bohemia-Moravia are unique in that they were subject to more than average attempts at Germanization, yet their language survived with very little trace of German influence. Germanisms, nevertheless, exist: in swear-words (*hergott*), certain foods (*knedlík* [German--*Knödl*]) and in certain expressions (*Já mám rád* [German--*Ich habe gern*]). These Germanisms, however, do not stand out, or otherwise call attention to the fact that the country had long been under German domination. Other Slavic languages that were less directly affected by German culture have, in fact, been more liberal in borrowing German words. In Russian, for example, the borrowing of German words, at times, actually received the official sanction of the tsarist government.

In the end, we find that Czech language did not decline as a spoken language, largely because its literary form was revived. Although it is true that in some simple societies spoken languages exist without a literary form, such is not possible in modern societies. We are all products of our education, and the further up the social ladder we are, the more this is true. Most of us could not hold a conversation for long without making references to vocabulary and using grammatical constructions derived from the literary language. It is rare, in fact, for a person not to be touched in some way by the literary language. Nowhere is this more evident than where the spoken language and the literary language are as dissimilar as English and Gaelic, or French and Breton. In the case of Czech, the literary revival was the one factor that saved it from decay and ultimate disappearance.

Literary languages are elite languages *par excellence*. This fact has become amply clear to ethnographers who study language as it is actually spoken by most people in a given region. Yet, the literary language virtually defines one's "national" identity, regardless of whether or not the person actually speaks the language as represented by the literary norm. The spoken language only begins to approximate the literary norm when it is spoken by the elites. In North America, we call this literary norm "Standard English". It is the use of this standard that gives the elites social prestige when dealing with subordinate classes, and makes it easier for them to assume leadership roles in society. The elites, thus, become the nation-building group, while the much more numerous subordinate classes become the material out of which nations are built.

In Bohemia we see, furthermore, the phenomenon of foreign domination. This has the tendency of producing a society with two separate elites, one native to the region and the other imported by the conquering power. The struggle between these two groups is conducted, among other means, through language. At issue is the question of what language will be used in elite society: that of the conquerors, or that of the native elite. The weapons in this struggle can vary from wholesale destruction of books written in the local language, to social ostracism from elite circles of individuals who refuse to speak the conqueror's language. These tactics, though temporarily successful, are usually ineffective in the long run. From the standpoint of history, literary languages tend to wax and wane depending on changing social and political factors.

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