

through its composition, which intentionally imitates the sonata form. Winner concludes Chapter 3 by Nezval's inspiration by visual arts manifested most patently by his poem "The Breakfast in the Grass," an obvious reference to Manet's canvas of the same name.

The sister arts tradition also played an important role in poems of the 1984 Nobel Prize laureate Jaroslav Seifert, scrutinized in chapter four. Even some of his output from the "proletarian art" period, Winner observes, "suggests the images of Rousseau *le douanier* as well as early paintings by Chagall" (112). Despite a trip to France with Teige in the mid-1920s, when the two poets "passed by the Louvre with contempt" (115), Seifert's literary pictorialism had its French source—Apollinaire's *Calligrammes* utilization of the visual aspect of writing. Some of his other experiments with synesthesia, though, are closer in their technique to Baudelaire's "Correspondences," associating sounds with colors and perfumes.

Vladislav Vančura—the subject of chapter five—was the only member of Devětsil who was not a poet. Yet, despite this, his works are unavailable in western languages because "his poetic prose has proved resistant to translation" (131). Winner explains that this is due to the marked idiosyncrasy of Vančura's language. His narrators—the dominant voices in all of his works—employ, as Winner puts it, "a complex, sometimes baroque style characterized by archaizing lexicon and syntax and with participial and gerundial formulations unacceptable to the Czech oral style" (135).

Chapter six traces in a rather brief manner "The Relation of the Prague Linguistic Circle to Poetism" (157) and, through many documents, illustrates a close friendship between Roman Jakobson, Seifert and Nezval, and Jan Mukařovský and Vančura. On the theoretical level, it reports about the Prague Structuralists' spirited defense of their Poetist comrades against local linguistic purists. The bone of contention was the purists' demand that writers strictly adhere to the norms of literary Czech, which the transgressive avant-gardists flouted whenever it suited their purpose. The book closes with the transition from Poetism to the newest Parisian *dernier cri*—Surrealism initiated by Teige around 1934.

Winner's work is useful for anybody interested in modern Czech literature. Besides a number of close readings of several canonical works it presents extensive English translations of many difficult texts. I recommend it without qualification.

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**Reading Václav Havel.** By David S. Danaher. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015. viii, 270pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Figures. \$70.00, hard bound.

Following Havel's death in 2011, scholars can now evaluate his body of work as a whole and begin properly to assess the significance and nature of its legacy. David S. Danaher positions his contribution carefully; it is not another biography, but the first extended attempt "to read Havel in a way that does not fragment but rather integrates the diversity of his writings" (6). Danaher notes that "most English-language commentators on Havel—who are, for the most part, academics oriented towards the social sciences rather than the humanities—have given priority to Havel's essays over his plays" (91), while literary scholars have tended to focus on the plays. Danaher himself brings broadly literary-analytical skills to not only the plays and essays, but also to Havel's letters, speeches and other texts. He sees in these multiple genres an embodiment of the "mosaic" approach to knowledge and life to which Havel often refers, notably in a letter to his wife, Olga: "it is only from a mosaic of apparently

meaningless things that one can create an approximate picture of the situation" (69). The motif of the mosaic is one of several recurring elements that Danaher takes from Havel's writing to facilitate an integrated reading of his work. Others include the notion of an appeal to the audience or reader to co-construct meaning as a first gesture of solidarity and action; the opposition between "explaining" and "understanding"; and a "focus on restoring an experience of the transcendent in the modern world." This last aspect underpins Danaher's contention that Havel seeks to reframe the Cold War east/west opposition as a shared spiritual crisis.

Danaher's integrating approach may not surprise those literature scholars, historians and political scientists who have unthinkingly read Havel like this, but these readers will nevertheless appreciate his earnest articulation of the experience. His natural audience, however, lies elsewhere. Danaher indicates that the book is partly inspired by years teaching a "lower-level literature-in-translation class for undergraduates from across the academic spectrum" (12). Amid the close readings of selected texts, regular reiteration and summarizing of core themes and arguments, and random references to texts that facilitate better understanding of potentially difficult ideas, the reader rarely loses a sense of the book's origins in a well-prepared, coherent course of undergraduate lectures. Danaher draws on an encyclopedic knowledge and grasp of primary and secondary sources in both English and Czech. He seeks primarily to make that material accessible and relevant, however, to readers like the social scientists he mentions, drawn at best to only part of Havel's work and less preoccupied with any Czech context. Like a good university course, the book builds on knowledge gained to become more demanding in the chapters on existential crisis and on Havel in the original and in translation, which (reminiscent of Havel's onetime intellectual opponent, Milan Kundera's "lists of words"), cleverly draws the reader toward the Czech language.

The didactic structure prevents *Reading Václav Havel* from making the groundbreaking contribution to Havel studies that such an integrated reading could produce. Danaher retains the unquestioning respect, even reverence, for Havel that dominates his reception by western liberal intellectuals; there are few moments of tension here. Havel is not systematically placed in the traditions from which his work arises; even extended comparisons with Arendt, Toulmin or Palouš function pedagogically, to illuminate Havel's thought, while the uniqueness and "weirdness" of his 1960s plays is overstated without reference, for example, to Josef Topol or Alena Vostrá and the contemporary Czech avant-garde theater scene. I was also struck by two parallels accessible to non-Czech readers that go unmentioned but might have enlivened things: between Havel's "exploration" of contemporary being and Kundera's definitions of the novel, and between Havel's "appeal" to his reader and that of another, highly comparable Czech exponent of multiple genres, Karel Čapek. Danaher could legitimately argue that his book prepares his readers both to access and potentially enrich discussions along all these lines and others.

Danaher's underlying goal is not to offer another "closed, totalizing" reading of Havel, but to "break the glass in the museum display-case by allowing ourselves to be read, and perhaps also to be changed, by the very act of reading" (217). Like many, he admires Havel most for his insistent linking of thought to initially often self-directed action, and this inspires the approach—perhaps to academic research, certainly to research-led teaching—implicitly modelled in his book. The lesson is that Havel's legacy will be both sustained and embodied only by a living and lived engagement with his words.

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