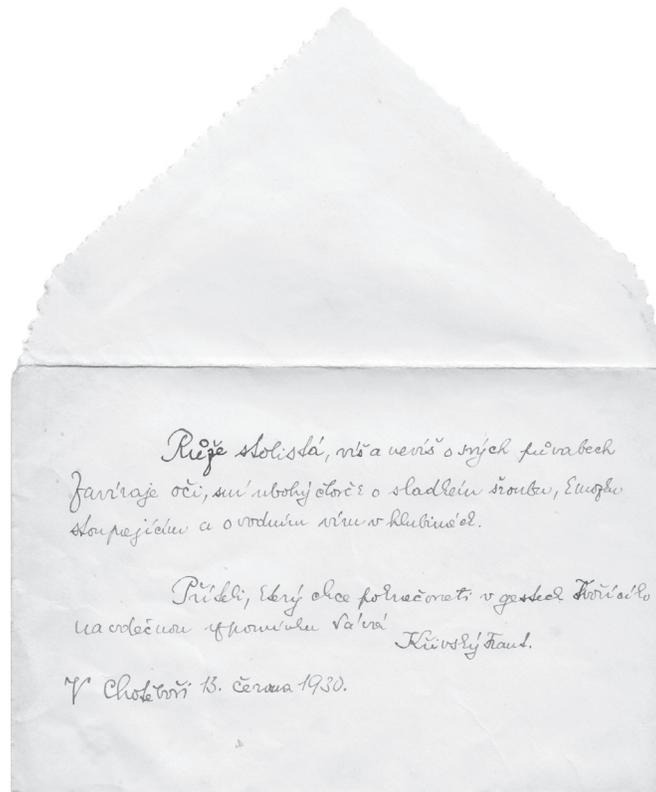


Johanna Kulmala

# The Letter is Only a Poor Expression of what Heart Overflows

## Family Letters from the 20th Century Czechoslovakia

---



JYU DISSERTATIONS 265

---

Johanna Kulmala

**The Letter is Only a Poor Expression  
of what Heart Overflows**  
**Family Letters from the 20th Century Czechoslovakia**

Esitetään Jyväskylän yliopiston humanistis-yhteiskuntatieteellisen tiedekunnan suostumuksella  
julkisesti tarkastettavaksi yliopiston vanhassa juhlasalissa S212  
elokuun 27. päivänä 2020 kello 12.

Academic dissertation to be publicly discussed, by permission of  
the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Jyväskylä,  
in building Seminarium, Old Festival Hall S212 on August 27, 2020 at 12 o'clock noon.



JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO  
UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

JYVÄSKYLÄ 2020

Editors

Tuomo Lahdelma

Department of Music, Art and Culture Studies, University of Jyväskylä

Timo Hautala

Open Science Centre, University of Jyväskylä

Copyright © 2020, by University of Jyväskylä

This is a printout of the original online publication.

Permanent link to this publication: <http://urn.fi/URN:978-951-39-8257-7>

ISBN 978-951-39-8257-7 0 (PDF)

URN:ISBN:978-951-39-8257-7

ISSN 2489-9003

Jyväskylä University Printing House, Jyväskylä 2020

# Contents

Contents .....	3
Dear Reader .....	7
1 Introduction.....	9
1.1 The Story of the Letters Begins in Prague .....	9
1.2 Labov and Waletzky's Theoretical Framework .....	10
1.3 It is not possible to tell about painful subjects in a cold academic light .....	13
1.4 References .....	13
1.4.1 Unpublished Source .....	14
2 František - Orientation .....	15
2.1 My first trip to the Czech Republic.....	15
2.2 Introduction .....	15
2.3 Why this is orientation? .....	25
2.4 L&W and František.....	25
2.4.1 Pressures, memories and news .....	31
2.4.2 Miniature narrations.....	35
2.4.3 Letters not following L&W .....	36
2.5 The Story of František according to L&W.....	38
2.5.1 Orientation.....	38
2.5.2 Complicating action .....	42
2.5.3 Evaluation .....	46
2.5.4 Result or resolution .....	49
2.5.5 Result or resolution and complicating action .....	51
2.5.6 Complicating action or resolution connected with memories .....	52
2.5.7 Coda.....	53
2.6 Speculating a Bit.....	56
2.7 References .....	57
2.7.1 Archival materials .....	58
2.7.2 Personal communications.....	58
2.7.3 Online materials.....	58
3 Pavel - Evaluation .....	59
3.1 Introducing Pavel Křivský .....	60

3.1.1	Pavel's youth .....	61
3.1.2	Monastic Life.....	64
3.1.3	The Beginning of Scouting and Educating Young People.....	66
3.1.4	Lidice and Strahov Library .....	70
3.2	Introduction to the Letters via the Logic of Narrative Analysis.....	72
3.3	L&W in Pavel's letter .....	83
3.4	Pavel's educational letters.....	89
3.5	Pavel as a playful writer .....	93
3.6	Pavel's Miniature Narrations.....	96
3.7	Pavel as Mirek's friend and vice versa.....	99
3.8	Closing Words .....	103
3.9	References.....	104
3.9.1	Unpublished sources.....	105
4	Mirek – Complicating Action .....	106
4.1	Sachsenhausen – April 2015 .....	106
4.2	Introduction to Mirek's letters from Sachsenhausen.....	107
4.3	L&W in Camp letters .....	114
4.3.1	Bowing letters .....	114
4.3.2	Narrative structures .....	117
4.4	Postal Services in Nazi-Germany .....	119
4.5	Letters as Physical Objects .....	121
4.6	17th November 1939 .....	126
4.7	Narrations from the Camp and Outside.....	133
4.7.1	Gloves and other hidden messages.....	133
4.7.2	Friendship and other human connections.....	142
4.7.3	The Šidlof Family.....	149
4.7.4	Nature and Outdoors.....	153
4.7.5	Home and Food .....	159
4.7.6	Holidays and other special occasions .....	169
4.8	Nach jedem Winter kommt ein Frühling .....	173
4.9	References.....	174
4.9.1	Unpublished Sources .....	175
4.9.2	Archival and online sources.....	176

5	Two Maries and Pavel – Resolution.....	177
	5.1 Introduction.....	177
	5.2 Silence between Pavel and Mirek .....	178
	5.3 Introduction to Mařenka and Pavel.....	179
	5.4 Early war time .....	181
	5.5 After the war .....	183
	5.6 Leaving the church, entering the archives .....	186
	5.7 Return to Lake Kacíře .....	195
	5.8 References.....	195
	5.8.1 Unpublished Sources .....	196
6	Zdenka and Mařenka – Resolution & Looking Back .....	197
	6.1 Introduction .....	197
	6.2 Zdenka and Labov’s Logic of Narrative Analysis.....	198
	6.3 Back to normal after the war .....	199
	6.4 Mirek and Fišer .....	202
	6.5 Husbands.....	205
	6.6 Closing Words .....	207
	6.7 References.....	207
	6.7.1 Unpublished sources.....	207
7	Coda: Summer 1968.....	208
8	Conclusion .....	209
	8.1 Velvet Revolution and the Finnish Forests.....	209
	8.2 František - Orientation .....	209
	8.3 Mirek – Complicating Action .....	210
	8.4 Pavel’s Letters to Mirek - Evaluation .....	211
	8.5 Pavel’s letters to Mařenka – Result or Resolution.....	211
	8.6 Zdenka – Result or Resolution.....	211
	8.7 Returning to Finland .....	212



Turku, Finland

1 August 2020

## Dear Reader

I hope you are well. As I am writing this, the world is struggling with the Covid-19 pandemic and as humankind we are trying to find new ways to overcome the crisis. When you are reading these lines, maybe we have been through several other challenges already – globally, locally and personally.

This book that you are holding in your hands or reading from your mobile device also tells about the times in the past when people have needed one another to survive. I hope my text brings new insight into your current situation, whatever it may be.

It is also time for me to express my gratitude to people who have helped me in completing my thesis.

I want to express my deepest gratitude to Professor Tuomo Lahdelma for your guidance and supervision during my research process. You have always had faith in me and your great networking skills have led me to the right places and sources.

Also I want to extend my deepest gratitude to Professor David Novotný and Senior Lecturer Risto Niemi-Pynttäre for your insights into my text at every stage of it and advice on what to read and where to find information.

I cannot begin to express my thanks to Jana Folprechtová, Evžen Gál, Katarina Repková, Sirpa Seppälä, Sylva Šimsová, Daniel Soukup and Veronika Sušová-Salminen for your thorough and insightful answers and bearing with me when I have needed consultation with the questions concerning the Czech language, history and culture.

I am extremely grateful to everyone attending the research seminar of creative writing at University of Jyväskylä for the supportive and warm atmosphere, reading my text extracts with fresh eyes and bringing brave ideas to the table.

I am grateful to University of Jyväskylä, the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences for regularly funding my research and research trips to the Czech Republic.

And I want to extend my gratitude to Eemil Aaltosen säätiö and Kauko Sorjosen säätiö, foundations that have generously funded my research.

Special and warm thanks to Tasci Gibson for proofreading the final version of my text and more importantly for your friendship and all fascinating discussions in the cafés of Prague.

Many cordial and warm thanks to the members of Kruh, especially Věra Břicháčková, Zdenka Burgetová, Olga and Zdeněk Drahoš, Nastja and Vladimír Kopřiva, Jana Pfeifferová, Vladimír Prouza, Josef Skalický, and Jana and Mirek Šťastný. The life stories, photographs and insightful comments you have shared with me have been essential to my research.

Also many cordial and warm thanks to Věra Chrastná for sharing the story of your father, František, and allowing me to write about him in my thesis.

Many sincere thanks to Michael Lorenz for giving me permission to use your family correspondence in this research as well as contributing your family photograph.

Special and warm thanks to my old penfriend Iva Môtiková and her father Stanislav Vik for helping me in the detective work at the very beginning of my research.

Also special and warm thanks to Mrs. Kvapilová and Mrs. Linková for your invaluable help when I was starting my research.

I had great pleasure of working with several wonderful people working in various archives. Without you my work would have never come together. Special thanks to Marek Ďurčanský, Vít Křesadlo Dorka Lábusová, Monika Liebscher, Vlasta Měšťánková and Zdenek Pousta

Special thanks also to my father Jarmo Ruhanen for scanning the letters and other original documents into digital form, to keep the originals untouched and safe.

Warm thanks to my mother Kerttu Ruhanen for always showing interest in hearing my news, at different stages of the research and making me believe that there is a way forward.

I am grateful to my husband Turkka Kulmala for travelling with me to different parts of the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Germany when my research has taken me to those places. Also thank you for your contribution in some of the questions concerning translating tricky terms.

I also want to express my gratitude to several persons who gave valuable insights into my study and who are not among us anymore: Alena Benešová, Jaroslav Franc, Karel Hýbek, Eduard Kuhn, Jan Pfeiffer, Jan Šabršula, Vojmír Srdečný, and Lieko and Marcel Zachoval.

Writer and president Václav Havel has said: "Vision is not enough, it must be combined with venture. It is not enough to stare up the steps, we must step up the stairs."

I have now taken the steps my vision invited me to do, and this thesis is the outcome of it. Just like all these people have shared their life story and expertise with me, in order to make my thesis possible, it is my hope and wish that the story of this thesis becomes a small part of your life story, my dear reader.

Best regards,

Johanna Kulmala

# 1 Introduction

*It is possible to tell damaged and wounded stories. (Helga Krook)*

## 1.1 The Story of the Letters Begins in Prague

These letters became inextricably linked with my life in February 2011 when I was studying at Josef Škvorecký Literature Academy in Prague. One of my teachers, Daniel Soukup, heard that I was handing in my master's thesis where I studied my grandfather's letters from the Second World War. Daniel told me he could bring me a collection of letters which had been discovered in the basement of his home.

As I said I could at least take a look, Daniel gave the letters to me to be kept. This corpus consists of approximately 150 family letters, written between the years of 1900 and 1968. In June 2011 the letters travelled to Finland with me and in October 2012 I was ready to start my research. The path has been fascinating and interesting, especially during the weeks and months when I have found myself walking there where nobody has walked before me and I have had to create my own path. In moments like that, sitting in front of the letters, only looking at them, I have felt as if the people from the past were stretching beyond the bygone century, wanting to touch me.

During the research process I have familiarised myself with Helga Krook's doctoral dissertation *Minnesrörelser (Movements of Memory)* where she seeks truth, placing herself in the middle of gathered material, memories and her own creative mind. In her study, she writes as follows:

*How can one work with historical family material for documentary purposes within the field of artistic research? What can artistic research in the field of literature illuminate? (Speaking and Being Silent / The material I had collected before I started working with the project was far too comprehensive. It posed many different and difficult questions that I was unable to answer, not on a personal level nor within my previous artistic practice. I had to place them in a larger context, deepen the research into the subject, find places, people, memorabilia, memorial sites.<sup>1</sup>*

I have struggled with similar types of questions and obstacles myself. In relation to the family correspondence of Lorencovi, I am an outsider. I had no answers, so I had to do my travels across the Czech lands, visiting archives, interviewing people and consulting experts. I have included glimpses of these travels, as well as extracts from my personal notes, blog entries and email correspondences in the dialogue I am having with my material.

I was fortunate to find Mirek Lorenc's son, Michael and he kindly gave me permission to use this family correspondence of his and mention the family members' names. Also the Šidlof family have given their permission to mention their name in this thesis. František's daughter Věra Chrastná has been happy to hear that her father's letters have been studied. Many other names I have deleted, leaving an initial only, in order to respect the privacy of the people who once lived in this world and their relatives.

---

<sup>1</sup> Krook 2018,12.

There are a few first names which I have kept because they appear frequently but at the same time they are common names and it is not possible to identify the person from the quotations. For instance, Mirek's girlfriend Anny K appears in his letters from Sachsenhausen.

Instead of formulating a research question in a traditional manner, I decided to follow the lead of the material that had fallen into my hands, listening to the different voices of the people who appear in the correspondence and contextualising those voices. This choice led me to doing partly similar things as Krook, without first being aware of her research. I have also been exploring fragments, documents and memories and asking the same questions as she has asked:

*As if an as yet unknown form of itself would grow out of the investigation. How could I tell, in documentary form, about the lives of people who I had never met? Recount memories that I had never had? Can memories that do not exist be passed on to the next generation? What is a narrative, what must it contain (main characters? minor characters? dramaturgy? identification?), what must be sacrificed? ---What does it mean to explore and relate the story of another person about whom there are no longer any memories? Whose story is it then? <sup>2</sup>*

While Helga Krook wrote herself silent, I wrote myself a voice, instead, in order to narrate this story. Whether my voice sounds reliable and the narration relatable, I leave for the readers to judge.

## 1.2 Labov and Waletzky's Theoretical Framework

Since the material I am studying is rather extensive, I wanted to return back to basics and make experiments with the classical model of narrative structure, developed by William Labov and Joshua Waletzky, from year 1967 (from now on L&W). The reason for my choice of method was that I wanted to see if this model would bring clarity and make the narrations embedded in my corpus more visible. The starting point was rather chaotic because different narrations – personal and more general – and several timelines interlace with each other in the letter collection.

L&W was originally developed for the analysis of personal experience narratives, told in face-to-face interaction.<sup>3</sup> Despite obvious differences between the oral narratives (studied by Labov and Waletzky) and written letters, still my intention is to demonstrate that letters actually do have a narrative structure, fitting to L&W.<sup>4</sup>

The L&W model consists of the following elements of narrative structure:

1. Abstract
2. Orientation
3. Complicating action
4. Evaluation

---

<sup>2</sup> Krook 2018,14.

<sup>3</sup> Labov 1972, 363.

<sup>4</sup> See also Kulmala 2017, 20.

5. Result or resolution
6. Coda

The elements 1 and 6 are not necessary for a fully formulated story. Abstract leads to the upcoming story by summarising it one way or another and thus giving the reader an idea about what to expect. Coda, is the closing words of the story and it does not bring up any new information that would be essential to the story itself.<sup>5</sup>

Labov himself defines L&W as *a particular way of recounting past events, by matching the order of narrative clauses with the original order in which those events occurred*.<sup>6</sup> He also mentions the limitations of his definition because the mechanistic usage of L&W would define a remarkable part of literature as non-narrative material.<sup>7</sup>

In my article *The whole history of suffering calls for narrative* I have discussed letters as one form of communicative interaction between (at least) two different participants. One can see some resemblance between correspondence and discussions or other oral communications. This may be the reason why L&W offers a practical tool to study narrations of at least certain types of correspondences.<sup>8</sup> Interpreting the interaction can be difficult, occasionally even impossible, however, because often the other half of the correspondence is missing. This is also the case in this particular collection of letters.

What I have shown already in my article is that the letters written from Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp do follow L&W closely.<sup>9</sup> This pattern is distinctive and also slightly surprising for me, because the survivors whom I interviewed told me that they personally could not find anything interesting in camp letters. According to their own words, they did not express anything in them because of the fear of censorship.<sup>10</sup>

Also in the oldest part of the correspondence, František's love letters to Mařenka (from the early 20th century) follow for the most part L&W. There are exceptions too, but those exceptions reveal new narrations, and for that reason applying L&W is beneficial when looking for the stories embedded in the letters.

On the other hand, L&W is not an adaptable tool as such in case of Pavel's letters, because they represent a different text type compared to those of František's and Mirek's. However, Labov in his book *The Language of Life and Death* introduces a different, maybe somewhat less restrained model to describe *the narrative techniques used to convey the life experience of one human being to another*.<sup>11</sup> He has named the model the logic of narrative analysis (from now on LONA).

---

<sup>5</sup> Labov 1972, 362–365, see also Kulmala 2017, 20–21.

<sup>6</sup> Labov 1972, 6.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid*, 6.

<sup>8</sup> Kulmala 2017.

<sup>9</sup> *ibid*.

<sup>10</sup> Personal communication with Karel Hýbek, 19 February 2015.

<sup>11</sup> Labov, William 2013, 223.

It is worth noting, however, that Labov's schema, which I am going to introduce, outlines in his own words "*oral narrative of personal experience*" and that the extent to which the schema applies to other narratives will vary.<sup>12</sup>

#### The Logic of Narrative Analysis<sup>13</sup>

1. A narrative is identified by the existence of temporal juncture.
1. A narrative is about a reportable event, which has the greatest effect upon the lives of the participants.
2. The most reportable event is connected through a reconstruction of a recursive chain of causally connected events terminating in an initiating event which has no cause.
3. The narrative begins with orientation to times, places, persons and behaviours in which the initiating event is embedded.
4. The narrative is constructed with complicating actions which follow the reconstructed chain of events to the most reportable event and to resolution of its consequences.
5. At any point in the chain, the narrative may show
  - a. instrumental actions that facilitate a following action rather than cause it
  - a. further orientation that is relevant for a following action
  - b. predicates that indicate intention to perform a following action
  - c. ordinary events that suspend the progression along the reconstructed chain of causality.
6. A narrator may omit an action from the reconstructed chain of events which is not in the interest of the teller
  - a. by providing an excuse for that behaviour
  - a. by a failure of memory.
7. A narrator may evaluate the results of a given action by
  - a. adding a description of an alternative possible state of affairs with realistic ? predicates (negatives, futures, conditionals)
  - a. insertion of simultaneous predicates describing the same situation
  - b. statements attributed to third-person witnesses
  - c. evidence of relevant material objects
  - d. emotional predicates attributed to the narrator.

Interestingly, as we will see in chapter 5, the last patch of letters in this correspondence does not follow L&W but it still has narrative elements and the writer herself refers to her texts as narrations. Those letters were written in the late 1940s, and the theme is adapting to life in post-war Czechoslovakia. The writer is Mařenka's friend, Zdenka and as we will see in chapter 6, LONA will be a useful tool to trace the narrations from her letters as well.

---

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> Labov 2013, 223-224.

## 1.3 It is not possible to tell about painful subjects in a cold academic light

(Helga Krook)

Just like Nina Sääskilähti in her doctoral thesis, I am making an attempt to see what Paul Ricœur's philosophical theory offers for the discussion about time and narration, in the particular context of the correspondence that I am studying.<sup>14</sup>

I am not applying Ricœur's framework in a traditional empirical manner, but discussing instead, what his philosophical framework offers for speculating the questions on the world of time and narration. Also in this respect I am following Sääskilähti's path.<sup>15</sup>

She also points out that in Ricœur's thinking the significance of the text comes into being in the intersection of the text's world and the reader's world. Through one's life experience, reader has created expectations about the world. This also leads to expectations on the genre of the text.<sup>16</sup>

It is also worth noting that these letters do not always follow the written standard of German or Czech and the quotes I have used have been copied as they were written, and I have not marked the unstandardized forms. Sometimes the old ink has turned very light and it has been impossible to know if the writer has used a non-standard form or if e.g. a diacritic symbol has faded away. Here and there the text has not been readable, and those missing words and phrases I have marked with three dashes (---).

From Ricœur's point of view life writing requires entering the realm of imagination. It is an unstable mixture of fabulating and recounting real experiences.<sup>17</sup> My personal experience is that studying life writing not only changes the outlook on the texts but on one's own life. That same unstable mixture of real life and fiction become part of the person who is doing the analysis.

In the German documentary film from 2015 *Claude Lanzmann: Spectres Of The Shoah*, Lanzmann says, "I had made the film but the film made me." I have very similar thoughts now, after completing the research that is now available for others to read.

## 1.4 References

Krook, Helga: *In Search of a Name. Memory Movements* [ from German by Ian Bild, in collaboration with Dana Johnson] *Liminalities: A Journal of Performance Studies* Vol. 14, No. 3 (2018), pp. 12-22. <http://liminalities.net/14-3/name.pdf>

Krook, Helga: *Minnesrörelser*. Elise Adrian, Linda Beel, Hilde Lindroth, Anja Nachaum, Greta Wiedrow. Valand Academy, University of Gothenburg, Autor förlag. 2015.

---

<sup>14</sup> Sääskilähti 2011, 17.

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *ibid*, 72.

<sup>17</sup> *ibid*, 76.

Kulmala, Johanna: *The whole history of suffering calls for narrative: the question of narrative structure in concentration camp letters*. In *Scriptum* 2017, Volume 4, Number 2/2017. University of Jyväskylä / Art and Culture Studies. Jyväskylä. pp. 17–49.

Labov, William: *The Language of Life and Death*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press. 2013.

Labov, William: *Language in the Inner City: Studies in the Black English Vernacular*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. 1972.

Sääskilahti, Nina. *Ajan partaalla: Omaelämäkerrallinen aika, päiväkirja ja muistin kulttuuri*. Jyväskylä: Nykykulttuurin tutkimuskeskuksen julkaisuja 105, Jyväskylän yliopisto, 2011.

#### 1.4.1 Unpublished Source

Personal communication with Karel Hýbek, 19 February 2015.

## 2 František - Orientation

*When we see each other, we will easily remember Nové Město and everything else that I cannot write. (František)*

### 2.1 My first trip to the Czech Republic

I visited Prague for the first time in July 2002, right after the great flood. We wanted to see something beyond Prague and made a trip to Kutná Hora. The day was exhaustingly hot and in the afternoon a thunderstorm broke out. The small local train was not running but one of the railroad workers took us to the main railway station by car. The trains were running late, even the small local train started operating before the train to Prague finally arrived.

After the tiresome day, spending hours in a restaurant near the railway station and seeing a small glimpse of Kutná Hora I feared that travelling in the Czech Republic would always be complicated. Little did I know where the life would take me within ten years.

When I started studying this correspondence in 2011, I soon noticed that Kutná Hora had a significant role in the life of one of the earliest characters appearing in the correspondence, František. He lived there as a teenager and young adult. Also when reminiscing the trip to Kutná Hora back in 2002, it dawned on me, that approximately at the same time the letters had been discovered, they had exposed themselves to the new millennium and new readers.

This entity consists of 28 letters and 8 postcards written by a young man called František to a young lady called Mařenka (Marie). The first letters were written approximately in 1900 and the last one was dated in December 1910.

### 2.2 Introduction

*Psal bych Ti každý den, jak Tě mám rád, drahoušku a také Ti denně píši, ale nemohu Ti je nikde dát. Nyní ke všemu mne ještě ti hoší od Vás špehují; však jsem dal včera večer jednomu z nich „krátkou odměnu.“ Abych nezapoměl odpověděti na Tvou otázku; že pani domu našla ty lístky, to mně řekl Pylaha. Ostatně nic na tom není; mě jest to stejné, jenom jestli Tobě to nepřineslo nějaký nepříjemný okamžik. Po prázdninách zde nebudem, tak co jest nám po kom.*

*(I'd write to you daily about how I'm fond of you, my darling, and I do write to you daily, but I cannot find a place to give them to you anywhere. And now, on top of it all, the boys from your place are stalking me; but last night I gave one of them „ a short reward“. So that I do not forget to answer your question: it was Pylaha who told me that the landlady had found the letters. After all, no fuss about it, it is all the same to me, just so you did not get into trouble. After holidays, we will not be here so why should we be bothered by others)*

This is how František wrote to Mařenka around the year of 1900. The exact date or year is not known because the earliest love letters of this young couple are lacking them.

Ricœur points out that the best way to define the current moment is the date, which marks the particular day of the year. The calendar is a connecting element between subjective and

objective time. Similar elements are e.g. generations, archives and documents.<sup>18</sup> As the date is significant in comprehending the time, it is interesting for me to note that several of František's letters, especially the ones he wrote as a school boy, are undated. In the writing moment he has not considered it important to mark the moment in the objective time. In this chapter I have mentioned the known dates, with the exception of the very short quotations.

According to Ricœur, history uses reflective instruments, such as the calendar, archival materials and other documents, and these instruments connect lived time and universal time and "bear witness to the poetic function of history".<sup>19</sup> Letters are also this type of reflective instruments.

It is very unlikely that František ever even considered the possibility that his letters would be read over 110 years later. Still, his writing is strongly connected to the time, the present moment, which is of course also typical of letter writing.

*Včera jsem nemohl dlouho usnouti po Tvém posledním dopisu. Až Ti budu o prázdninách psáti, zachovám se dle Tvého návodu. Abych nezapoměl na tu adresu. F. T., syn říd. učitele v Trpišovicích pp. Světlá n/Sáz. Myslím ale, budeme se ku konci prázdnin snad stěhovati do sv. Čech. Pak Ti budu psáti.*

*(Yesterday, I could not fall asleep for a long time after your last letter. When I write you during holidays, I will follow your instructions. And now the address. F. T., son of head teacher in Trpišovice pp. Světlá nad Sázavou. But I think that we will move at the end of the summer to Sv. Cechy.<sup>20</sup> Then, I will write to you.)*

According to Nina Sääskilahti, a biographical writer is even in the most ideal circumstance only at the edge of the time, in a position where one can visualise the biographical time. One can never rule or master the time, however. Writing creates an illusion about the time as a dimension which can be captured and construed.<sup>21</sup>

As I mentioned above, archives have a role in connecting subjective and objective time. For this reason archival sources are also important in my research. This chapter as well as the upcoming chapters will demonstrate that with various examples.

According to the school protocol books in the regional archive of Žďár nad Sázavou both František and Mařenka studied in Nové Město na Moravě during the academic year 1900-1901, in the same school building but in different level-schools.<sup>22</sup> Mařenka studied in an 8-year middle school for girls and František in a 11-year middle school for boys. The schools operated in the same building until spring 1901, and after that the boys moved to the new school building, which is still in the same use (the local high school operates there) in 2020.

---

<sup>18</sup> Sääskilahti, 2011, 110.

<sup>19</sup> Ricœur 1990, 104.

<sup>20</sup> This means probably northern or northeastern Bohemia.

<sup>21</sup> Sääskilahti, 2011, 119.

<sup>22</sup> Státní okresní archiv Žďár nad Sázavou. Jedenáctiletá střední škola, Nové Město na Moravě. kniha č 32. & Státní okresní archiv Žďár nad Sázavou. Osmiletá střední škola, Nové Město na Moravě. kniha č 549.

This setting alone, where the girls had fewer opportunities for education, reveals the woman's more vulnerable position compared to men in the Czechlands at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The situation was of course similar to the position of women overall in Europe, and one can even say that Mařenka was relatively privileged because she received a better education (the best available in the area where she lived) than many other girls (and boys) of her generation.

Archivist Vít Křesadlo from Státní okresní archiv Žďár nad Sázavou kindly explains the educational system at that time.

*3. joulukuuta 2017 kello 10:40*

*Dear Johanna,*

*Around 1900, a school attendance of eight years was compulsory (children aged 6 to 14). The basic level of education was represented by "elementary schools" (obecná škola - Volksschule). The children could have attended the elementary schools for all of eight years. However, after completing the five years of the elementary school, they could switch to attend "a town school" (mestanská škola - Hauptschule, Bürgerschule) for three years where they could have received better education.*

*The best education was provided by grammar schools (gymnázium) and "realka - Realschules" (focused more on natural sciences) where students have studied for seven or eight years, again after completing the five years of the elementary school.*

*At the turn of the 20th century, both boys and girls could attend all elementary schools and most of the town schools. However, not all grammar schools and Realschules accepted girls for the studies.*

*Best regards, Vít*

*18. 2. 2019 12:39:48*

*Dear Vít,*

*again I am back with you after a long break. Thousand times sorry about that. What you wrote to me over a year ago is important in what I'm doing in my research right now.*

*So am I assuming right that the Realka Skola in Nové Město did not accept girls as students? I don't remember seeing any girls' names in the documents.*

*Another question: is the school building that was built around the year 1900 is still used as a school? It was closed when I went so I couldn't be sure, but it seemed like a school to me even in 2015.*

*----*

*I thank you in advance for being so patient with me.*

*Best regards,*

*Johanna*

27. helmikuuta 2019 kello 21:37 Vit Kresadlo kirjoitti:

Dear Johanna,

*you are right, the first two girls were admitted to the Realschule only since September 1907. The building built for the Realschule still serves school purposes. Today it is called the grammar school (gymnazium) - <https://www.gynome.cz/>.*

---

Kindly regards Vit

The vulnerability of a young woman can be found in the quote below. František's main concern is that their correspondence would not cause any difficulties to his (semi-)secret girlfriend. His landlady has found her letters, but fortunately there have been no consequences. In her article 'A husband without suspicions does not intercept his wife's letters': Letters, Privacy and Gender in the Victorian Novel, Karin Koehler discusses the violation of epistolary privacy. She points out that in Victorian England, the husband's right to appropriate his wife's personal correspondence was hardly questioned.<sup>23</sup>

*Ačkoliv máme nyní ve škole dobu postupných zkoušek, přece bych byl rád kdyby ten čas tak rychle neplynul. Stále doufám, že se snad zase někde sejdeme. Co říkáte?: Kéž by to bylo co nejdříve. Již se těším na první hubičku. Dostanu jí? Tak ale musí jít jedna za druhou, jako děti ze školy! Podobné pocity jako Vy, mám i já; čím více překážek v cestě, tím se mi více líbíte, tím Vás více miluji. Denně, tak řka závidím sl. R když s Vámi po ulici promenáduje. Kdybych mohl být tak šťasten a s Vámi se procházeti. Abych Vás nezapomněl ubezpečiti, mne nikdo neviděl, když jsem Vám dával lístek jen p. P a snad Č.*

*(Although we have at school exam period to classify to higher class, yet I would love the time would not pass by so quickly. I still hope that we, perhaps, meet somewhere. What do you say? I wish it was as quickly as possible. I am already excited to receive first kiss. Will I get it? So, it must go one (kiss) after another, like when kids leave the school. Similar feelings like you, I have also, the more obstacles I have, the more I like you and the more ardently I love you. Daily, I am almost jealous of Miss when she is parading down the street with you. I wish I was so lucky to walk with you. So that I do not forget to assure you, nobody saw me when I gave you the letter only Mr. P and maybe Č.)*

Koehler's focus is on married women and their opportunities – or lack thereof – to keep their correspondences private, but unmarried women's letters were in a similar risk to be exposed to outsiders. In Mařenka's case it was the landlady but it could have been a parent or a sibling, too. Because of the same need for privacy, František mentions the struggle to find the right time and place to exchange the messages surreptitiously.

All in all, this correspondence, or the whole collection of letters gives hardly any first-hand information about Mařenka. Only one postcard, addressed to her son Mirek (whose letters will be discussed in chapter 3), is possibly written by her. Otherwise we learn about her only via

---

<sup>23</sup> Koehler 2017, 156.

other people, most of whom are men. This is relevant and also intriguing, because it was Mařenka, after all, who kept the letters and most likely hid them at some point after the summer of 1968.

I have discussed the topic of hiding with a Finnish-Hungarian writer Harri István Mäki, whose family also hid family letters after the Hungarian Uprising in 1956. He finds the theory plausible that also these letters were cached because of the occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968, and the fact that the last letter is from June 1968 may not be a pure coincidence.<sup>24</sup>

If František's letters are confusing sometimes, Mařenka is equally confusing to him. Here we hear her voice and his puzzlement.

*Jak často na Vás vzpomínám a přitom rozbírám každé slůvko Vašeho posledního, tak příliš vážného dopisu. Mám za to, že jsem mu porozuměl v tom smyslu v jakém byl psán, jen té větě "My se musíme vidět, až bude vše urovnáno." Nemohu rozumět a kdybych rozuměl, nemohl bych už psát. Jste tak vážná a odměřená v dopise a tak roztomilá, když jsem s Vámi mluvil. Prosím Vás, vysvětlíte mi aspoň poněkud, co jste tím mínila.*

*(I think of you often and analyze every word of your last and so serious letter. I think I have understood the letter the way it was written, only the sentence „we have to see each other when everything is settled.“ I cannot understand it and if I did understand, I could not write anymore. You are so serious and distant in the letter and so lovely when I spoke to you. Please explain to me at least a little bit what you meant.)*

However, Mařenka speaks here and there, in the texts of the men, all of whom have been significant to her at some point in her life. In the quote below, František reveals Mařenka's puzzlement in her reply, when he has written to her after six or seven years of silence.<sup>25</sup>

*Je to sice poněkud divné, že jsem se dal tak najednou do dopisování, a když u mne ptáte proč, nedovedu odpovět, jak bych nedovedl tenkrát v Městě. (Brno, 5.11.1908)*

*(It is a bit strange that I so suddenly started to write, and when you ask me why, I cannot answer, like I could not [answer] that time in [Nové] Město. (Brno, 5 November 1908))*

František is starting his military service soon, and he is seeking female friends to write to. One way or another, he has discovered Mařenka's new address in Chrast and starts sending her letters. Again, archives reveal that František approaching Mařenka with a letter is not so strange, after all. The census of Chrast from year 1910 reveals that she has moved to Chrast with her father and stepmother in 1907.<sup>26</sup> Pardubice where František is located at the time is only 24 kilometres from Chrast. He also often suggests a meeting in Pardubice. The letters do not tell us whether the plan was ever implemented or not, though.

---

<sup>24</sup> Personal communication with Harri István Mäki, 17 November 2018.

<sup>25</sup> In some letters František mentions seven years of break in their friendship and correspondence, in others he writes that the break was six years.

<sup>26</sup> Census of Chrast in 1910. electronic copies available in Státní okresní archiv Chrudim.

*Do Pardubic bych se rád podíval ale bojím se Tě zeptati, chtěla-li by jsi se tam také podívati; - poněvadž máš se mnou špatné zkušenosti. V posledním dopise jsem se Ti o tom zmínil a Tys ani neodpověděla. Ale tento formát dopisu není moc praktický, je asi velmi malý a možná že se na poště ztratil.*

*(I would like to go to Pardubice but I am afraid to ask you whether you would like to go there, too, since you have bad experience with me. In my last letter, I mentioned it but you did not even answer me. But this letter format is not too practical, it is perhaps too small and possibly was lost by the post office.)*

The archives in the Czech Republic also reveal that František had started his high school in Kutná Hora in autumn 1899. He had applied for transfer to high school from the town school (měšťanská škola), after the elementary school (obecná škola), and he had been accepted to the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade of the high school.<sup>27</sup> However, his studies were not very successful, and he failed the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Then he moved to Moravia, to a town called Nové Město na Moravě and did the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade there with better academic results.<sup>28</sup>

The reason why he moved to Nové Město to continue his studies is unknown but in autumn 1901 his younger brother started the same high school from the 1<sup>st</sup> grade there as well.<sup>29</sup>

What we do know, is that František's parents lived in Šetějovice (a small town in Bohemia) during his years in Moravia, because he gives Mařenka his address, and at some point, he gives Mařenka his new address in Kutná Hora. Interestingly, the school catalogues reveal that František's family had moved from Šetějovice to Čermná.<sup>30</sup> All this indicates that the family has moved frequently but considered Bohemia their home, rather than Moravia.

The high school is for boys only, but during his first year in Nové Město, František studies in the same premises with Mařenka who went to the town school. Those two schools operated in the same building, and apparently the new male student, who had moved from the other side of the country, had caught Mařenka's eye. At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the high school building was ready and since then the young lovers studied in separate buildings. There are, however, no mentions about this in František's letters.

When František finishes high school, the connection between him and Mařenka breaks. František continues his studies, he becomes a surveyor and he educates himself further, completing his engineering studies in 1908.<sup>31</sup>

Mařenka has left very few traces to archives since she graduated the town school of Nové Město. As stated before, she lived with her old father and his new wife in Chrast since 1907.<sup>32</sup> She was

---

<sup>27</sup> Gymnázia Kutná Hora, konferenční protokoly 1899/1900. kniha 6., protocol number III (28 September 1899). Státní okresní archiv Kutná Hora.

<sup>28</sup> Jednáctiletá střední škola, Nové Město na Moravě kniha 32, Státní okresní archiv Žďár n. S.

<sup>29</sup> Jednáctiletá střední škola, Nové Město na Moravě kniha 38, Státní okresní archiv Žďár n. S.

<sup>30</sup> Jednáctiletá střední škola, Nové Město na Moravě kniha 41, Státní okresní archiv Žďár n. S.

<sup>31</sup> Hlavní katalog 1905-06. B318, České vysoké uení technické v Brně. Státní oblastní archiv v Brně.

<sup>32</sup> Census of Chrast in 1910. Electronic copies available in Státní okresní archiv Chrudim.

the youngest child and her mother had died between the censuses of 1890 and 1900.<sup>33</sup> There are no indications in František's letters that she would have written about her loss and in that sense confided in him.

One of the many challenges in interpreting his letters is caused by the fact that many of his letters lack the date. For this reason, I have not been able to arrange the letters chronologically, and many quotations in this chapter are marked as *undated*. Fortunately, it is still easy to say which letters were written by the teenager František and which were written by the young adult František because his handwriting changed radically over the years.

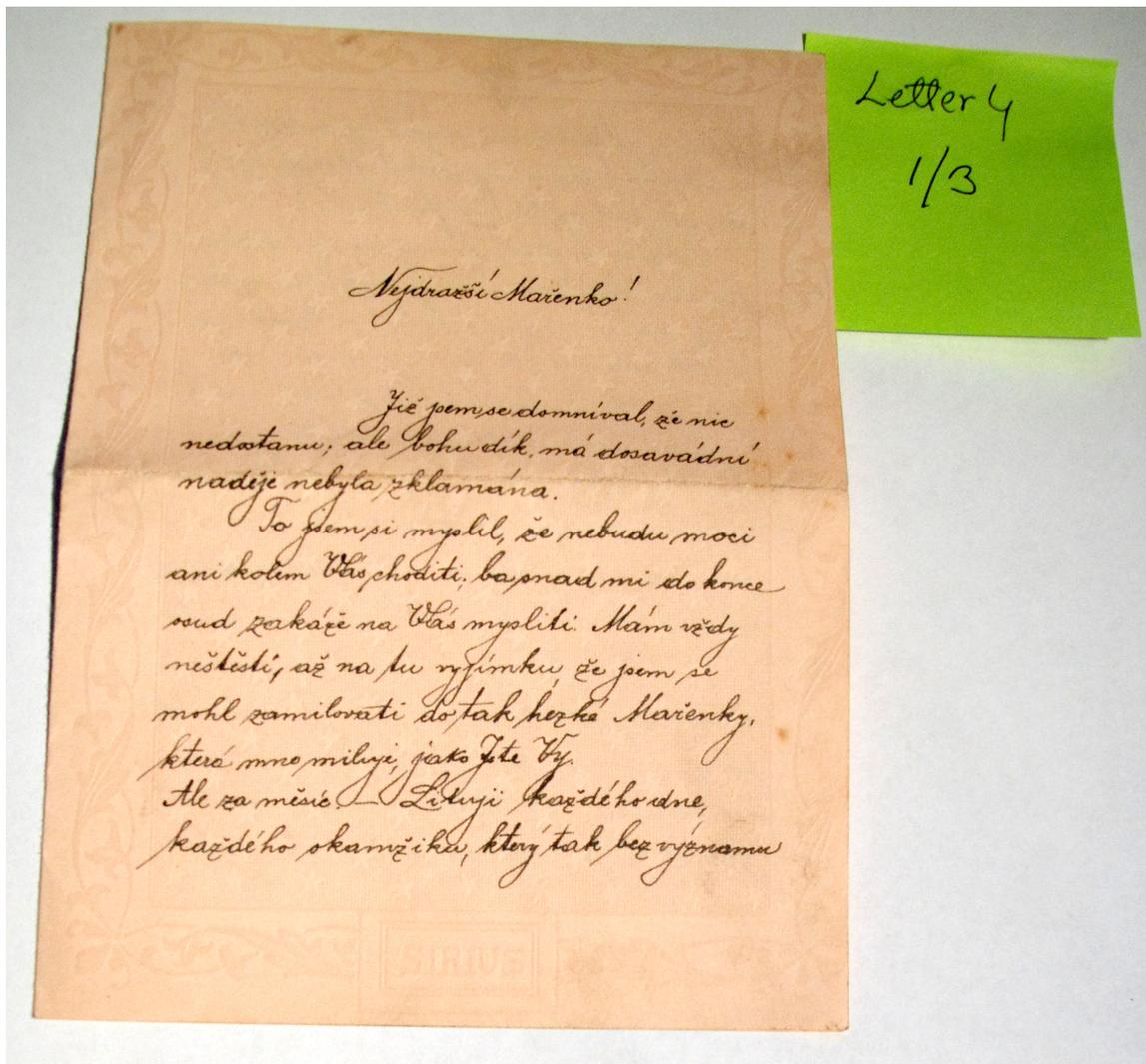
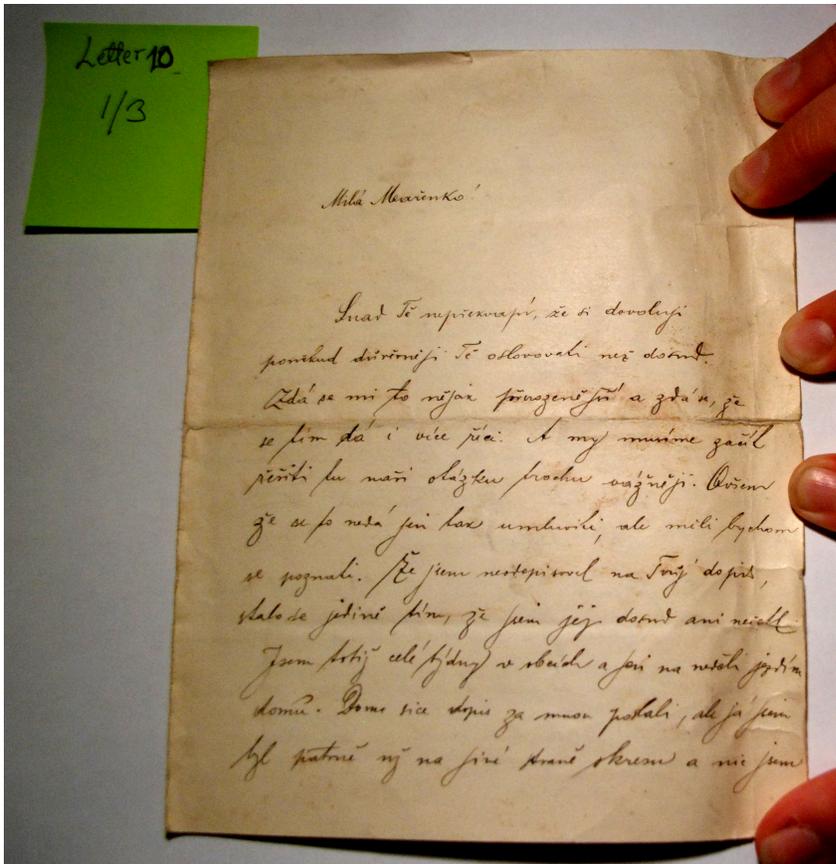


FIGURE 1 Young Frantisek's handwriting sample

<sup>33</sup> Censuses of Najdek in 1890 and 1900. Okresní úřad Nové Město na Moravě. Sčítací operáty Najdek (box 125). Státní okresní archiv Žďár n. S.



**FIGURE 2** Older František's handwriting sample

Michael Toolan points out that narrative reading embraces *kinds of focussing and selectivity, both at the time of reading and afterwards*.<sup>34</sup> This statement is in harmony with my personal experience when both reading František's letters and writing about their narrations. It is impossible to present a coherent story without making choices about what to include and what to dismiss.

Small details can be relatively easily dismissed. For example, it would of course be interesting to know what had annoyed Mařenka when František wrote to her: *Please, write to me if you are still upset and for how much longer you plan to be upset. Cordial greetings. Frant.* Still, this detail is most likely not relevant to the big picture and the story as a whole and even more importantly, the information is not available for us anymore.

I do admit, though, that what upset Mařenka may not have been a small detail at all but a turning point in this relationship, and if it had not taken place, the family history would have been different and I would not have done this epistolary research. This is the challenge, and the beauty, of studying egodocuments.

However, I have had to accept the fact that even bigger and more relevant themes, such as what František's life was like when he lived in Pardubice as a young engineer and wrote to Mařenka

---

<sup>34</sup> Toolan 2016, 351.

who lived in Chrást, remain mysteries. Archives do not reveal anything relevant about this part of his life and there are no oral histories available, either.

Michael Toolan defines perceiving change from one situation to another as one purpose of a narrative text. He does not regard change as an optional expectation of a reader, but rather as an essential element, which enables the readers to perceive the text as narrative.<sup>35</sup> This premise of Toolan's is accomplished in František's letters, even though they cannot be arranged in chronological order.

In his work *Time and Narrative (volume I)*, Paul Ricoeur refers to W.P. Gallie's work *Philosophy and the Historical Understanding*, which states that "ideally, a story should be self-explanatory".<sup>36</sup> The story which František creates in his letters, is not an ideal one, it has gaps, which will never be filled, e.g. what happened to her and Mařenka between the seven years of silence in their correspondence. However, Ricoeur also points out that a narration has to be acceptable, rather than predictable.<sup>37</sup> In my view, I have succeeded in finding a story embedded in these letters, which is far from ideal, but in its imperfection it is still acceptable.

It is interesting to note that František's letters have partly similar themes to those written in the Ancient times. In their article *Words between Lovers: The Appearance of Spousal Love in Roman Letters*, Amanda Kelley and Heather Moser refer to Cicero's final exilic letter to his wife Terentia where the despair and hopelessness concerning his return and the situation at home are apparent.<sup>38</sup> This is what Cicero writes:

*[C]um aut scribo ad vos aut vestras lego, conficior lacrimis sic ut ferre non possim*

[W]hen I write to you at home or read your letters I am so overcome with tears that I cannot bear it.<sup>39</sup>

The quotation below is from František's letter, presumably from year 1902 when he is 17 years old. I am making this assumption based on the contents of the letter. He is saying his final farewell to Mařenka and he is heartbroken already by the thought that she may have a new lover the following year. The basis for my assumption about the year when the letter was written is school registers. According to them, František was born in 1885 and he graduated in 1902.<sup>40</sup>

*Kdo Tě bude na druhý rok milovati?? Tato otázka stále doráží moje nervy a vyloudila již nejednu slzu z mého oka. Snad se více již nesejdeme. --- Děkuji Ti za Tvoji láskou, kterou Jsi mne až dosud odívala; jsem přesvědčen, že mne miluješ. Nyní, když jsme byli již, takřka, svojí, musím Ti dát poslední s Bohem.*

*(Who will love you next year? This question is still attacking my nerves and elicited many a tear from my eyes. Perhaps, we will not meet again. --- Thank you for your love which you have*

---

<sup>35</sup> ibid, 191.

<sup>36</sup> Ricoeur 1983, 149–151.

<sup>37</sup> ibid, 150.

<sup>38</sup> Kelley & Moser 2015, 6–7.

<sup>39</sup> Cicero's original text and the English translation available:

[https://www.loebclassics.com/view/marcus\\_tullius\\_cicero-letters\\_friends/2001/pb\\_LCL205.59.xml](https://www.loebclassics.com/view/marcus_tullius_cicero-letters_friends/2001/pb_LCL205.59.xml)

<sup>40</sup> Jedenáctiletá střední škola Nové Město na Moravě, kniha 41, Státní okresní archiv Žďár n. S.

*wrapped me with until now; I am convinced that you love me. Now, that we were almost man and wife I have to give you last good-bye.)*

František's letters are a story of young love, and a story of two young people. It is a story about how a young man sees a young woman, like a mirror of a kind, reflecting her features back to herself. Sometimes the perspective is that of a third party, as in the example below.

*--- pro nějakou malichernou úlohu jsem zůstal doma a druhý den mi kamarádi vyprávěli, že tam bylo také Mařenka a jak tančila. (Lysá nad Labem 2.12.1910)*

*(---for some small homework assignment I stayed at home and next day, my friends told me that Mařenka had been there, too, and how she had danced. (Lysá nad Labem 2. December 1910 ))*

The letters also narrate a story of a young man and his position in his society. On one hand, František is a well-travelled man who as a surveyor has opportunities to see not only the various corners of Bohemia and Moravia, but also the Balkans. The gender differences in the liberties are apparent here. Whenever František and Mařenka are planning a meeting, they need to take her position into consideration. She cannot travel as freely as he can.

*Poněvadž to všechno na lístek nelze napsati, byl bych rád kdybychom se mohli někde sejít; pokud možno sami. Pamatujete si Mařenko na zimu - na led? To byly časy.*

*(It is not possible to write everything in a letter, I would be happy if we could meet somewhere; if possible alone. Mařenka, do you recall the winter – the ice? Those were the times.)*

On the other hand, despite his rather extensive liberties, František is still at the mercy of older men and their willingness to favour him when seeking work opportunities, as well as the women of his own age, who expect their future spouses to have both wealth and position.

*Jeden můj kolega věnoval se civilní službě a už se chce ženit; já chudák si musím ještě počkat na takové věci.)*

*(One of my colleagues who did civil service already wants to get married, poor me, I have to wait for these things.)*

And that is what František is aiming at. He writes about his plans in another letter to Mařenka:

*Za měsíc budu mít odbytu roční praxi, ač budou-li mi v to počítat i vojančinu a pak mám už vyhráno. Teď dostávám slušný plat a tak jsem spokojenější. Teď zde byl o svátcích bratr technik a tak se mnou jezdíval po venkově. (K. H (= Kutná Hora) 21. 4 1909)*

*(In one month, I will have completed one year of practicum, if they count in my civil service, and then I'll be fine). I have a decent salary now and so I am more satisfied. Now, during holidays, my brother, who is a technician, was here with me and he travelled with me in the countryside. (K. H. (= Kutná Hora) 21. 4 1909))*

František's voice starts this family saga. He tells us who Mařenka was and what kind of family and friends she acquired in her life. His story is that of a young woman in Austria-Hungary who would live through several intense phases of European history – and so would he. Then František steps back, giving space to other voices.

## 2.3 Why this is orientation?

František's letters to Mařenka are the orientation to the bigger story, created by the whole correspondence. They are letters from Mařenka's youth, small glimpses of what her life was like before she married Josef. The letters are also written at the advent of independent Czechoslovakia, a state which had a very short life, eventually, which these people of course could never have guessed.

During the interpretation process I have been trying to define what František is to Mařenka. This has not been an easy task, and the more I have studied the matter, the more their relationship seems like what the people of the 21<sup>st</sup> century call *an undefined relationship*. They are two young persons, romantically interested in each other. They dated secretly during their teen years but as young adults they are, for various reasons, more distant, but pursuing each other.

## 2.4 L&W and František

I am now demonstrating how the elements of L&W are apparent also in František's letters. However, I have added a few other categories of letter narration that do not exist in the original L&W. Due to the nature of this correspondence, there is plenty of what I call in this chapter *relationship talk*. Via writing, František and Mařenka define and even live their relationship, because meeting is not easy. L&W does not take this kind of discourse into account, and the most probable reason for this is that their model is based on a different type of text corpus. Another category, which is connected to relationship talk is persuasion. František is very insistent when it comes to persuading Mařenka to meet him. These parts of the texts reveal about their communication and relationship dynamics, too.

*Udělejte, si někdy výlet do Pardubic a já bych tam Vás překvapil. Mám sice v neděli být v kanceláři; ale to bych nějak už snad zařídil; beztoho to bude asi až na druhý měsíc. Nějak se umluvte se slečnou F. když by jste nemohla jeti sama a mohla by jste mi napsati.*

*(Why don't you make a trip sometime to Pardubice, and I would surprise you there. On Sunday, I should be in the office but I'd hopefully arrange it somehow, it'll probably be next month anyway. Please arrange it somehow with Ms. F. in case you could not come alone and you could write to me.)*

Another category, also in a central role in this series of letter narrations is the news. František and Mařenka only see each other once between the years 1908 and 1910 – provided that the letters tell the whole story. In any case, they have met very rarely and the letters have been the only means of communication. For this reason exchanging news about mutual friends and acquaintances is an important part of the correspondence. Next I am analysing one letter, using L&W and at the same time demonstrating how these other categories may intertwine and overlap the classic elements of narration, introduced by L&W.

### Orientation and News

*Milá slečno! Jistě že někdy, jestli si vůbec kdy vzpomenete na mne, myslíte, jak já ubožák teď v zimě někde na cvičišti execíruji a snad v duchu i litujete - zatím já jsem již skoro týden doma a na vojnu už jen vzpomínám. Šťastnou náhodou jsem se dostal zase na svobodu a mám k vojsku*

*jen ještě malý závazek. Odpočívám teď doma na válečných vavřínech, ale sotva jsem se toho zbláznil, mám jiné a větší starosti. Nabažil jsem se totiž už civilní praxe a ---.*

*( Miss! Sure sometimes, if you ever remember of me, you think how I, the wretched person (or: “a poor soul”), am now, in the cold,) exercising on some training ground exercising, and, perhaps, you even pity me in your thoughts – but in fact, I’ve been at home already for one week and I only recall my military service. Due to lucky circumstances, I am back in freedom and I have only a small obligation to the army. I am resting on my war laurels but it hardly made me mad, I have other bigger worries. You see, I have had enough of civil practicum ---.)*

In František’s letters, orientations tend to be abundant, which is the case also in the example below. Maybe because one of the motivations for him to write is to impress Mařenka, he falls into the trap of being verbose. The orientation and the latest news are entwined in this extract. The memories of war may simply mean his experiences in the military service in general, or he may refer to Bosnian Crisis which occurred in 1908-09. Young men who were doing their military service at that time were certainly affected by the situation and that may be visible in František’s writing too.

#### Complicating action, relationship talk

*---chci se teď dostat do státní služby; mám jen starost, abych se nedostal někam až do Haliče nebo Bukoviny. Odpusťte, milá slečno, již Vás musím takovými starostmi. Velmi rád bych si Vás také trošku dobral, jako Vy mne s tím mým nešťastným konfiteorem; vícekrát se už nebudu nikomu zpovídati. Několika větami dovedete uvést z míry takového „vysloužilce“. Vy roztomilý filosofe; za to Vám Mikuláš jistě nic nenadělil.*

*( ---I want to get to state service; I am only worried that I do not get a place somewhere in Galicia or Bukovina. Forgive me, dear Miss, that I bother you with these worries. I would also like to tease you, like you teased me about that unfortunate confession of mine, I will not confess to anybody anymore. With a couple of sentences you can unsettle such a „veteran“. You cute philosopher; that is why, I’m sure, Santa Nicolas did not give you any presents.*

The typical complicating action, i.e. worries about the future is visible here. To ease the tone of the text, he mentions teasing and old memories from the school years in Nové Město na Moravě where he was forced to make a confession about his relationship with Mařenka. Also, here is a hint about Mařenka’s letter, which reveals that the teasing is mutual.

#### Evaluation / Complicating action

*Po Vánocích pojedu zase do Brna a tak mne tak maně napadlo, kdybychom se mohli někde uvidět. Velmi rád bych Vás uviděl; jsem snad trochu sentimentální; dělám si ovšem jen tak plány, nevím jestli to bude možno. Nevím kterou dráhou pojedu a budu-li se moci někde zastavit. To bych Vám ještě napsal, poprosil Vás a Vy by jste jistě snad nic proti tomu neměla. Bylo by to zvláštní shledání, že ano?*

*(After Christmas, I will go to Brno again so a thought happened to occur to me if we could see each other somewhere. I would very much like to meet you; perhaps I am a little sentimental; but obviously, I am just making some plans and don’t know if it’s possible. I do not know which route I will take and if I can make a stop somewhere on the way. I would write that to you, I’d ask you and you surely hopefully wouldn’t be against it. It would be a peculiar meeting, wouldn’t it?)*

Here František combines both evaluation, which is reflection on the current situation and his own nature. Also the complicating action, the challenges to meet, is present.

#### Coda

*Zítřka je mariánský svátek; máte-li snad náhodou také své jmeniny, tedy přijměte i moje srdečné blahopřání; neumím užívat dlouhého frázování, ale doufám že si trochu rozumíme. Srdečně Vás zdraví, František Tippl H*

*Kutná Hora 7.12.1908*

*(Tomorrow is a Marian feast day; if, by any chance, it's also your name day, please accept my hearty/cordial wishes; I cannot write long phrases, but I hope we understand each other at least a little bit. Cordial greetings, František Tippl*

*Kutná Hora 7 December 1908)*

Just like orientation, also codas tend to be long in František's letters. The final greetings and possible wishes, like here for the name day, take space. In this respect his letter-writing resembles oral communication where farewells between lovers are also typically long.

František's letters do not follow L&W in its purest form. In several letters the model is followed quite closely, the only difference being that evaluation is followed by result or resolution, not vice versa, as in L&W. The reason for this is according to my understanding the text type. It is more natural to evaluate the situation at the end of the letter, after finding the result or the resolution. When lovers communicate mainly in writing, communication problems and challenges in finding time and opportunity to meet are often present, as we will see later.

Here is another example of a letter where all the elements of L&W are visible and the narration follows L&W more "purely" than the previous one.

#### Orientation

*Milá Mařenko!*

*Snad Tě nepřekvapí, že si dovoluji poněkud důvěrněji Tě oslovovati než dosud. Zdá se mi to nějak přirozenější a zdá se, že se tím dá i více říci.*

*(Dear Mařenka!*

*hopefully you are not surprised that I am taking the liberty to address you in a somewhat more familiar way than until now. Somehow it seems more natural to me and it also seems more can be told this way, too.)*

What František means is that he is using the more familiar pronoun *ty*, instead of more formal *vy*. This is the only time when he attempts to create closer relations with Mařenka, and in his later letter he apologises for it.

*Drahoušku, nepodezřívej mne, že jsem se snad na Tebe hněval, že Jsi odešla z Ochozého. Vím, že to bylo nemožné. Odpusťte, drahá začal jsem Vám tykati. Snad se nebudete prot o zlobiti. Já naopak byl bych rád, kdyby Jste mi tykala; zda se mi to býti upřímnější.*

*(Darling, do not suspect me that I was angry at you because you left Ochoz. I know it was impossible. Forgive me, darling, that I started to use informal address. I hope you won't be upset at it. I, on the contrary, would be glad if you could address me in the familiar form, it seems more honest.)*

### Complicating action

*A my musíme začít řešiti tu naši otázku trochu vážněji. Ovšem že se to nedá jen tak umluvit, ale měli bychom se poznati. Že jsem neodpísal na Tvůj dopis, stalo se jedine tím, že jsem jej dosud ani nečetl. Jsem totiž celé týdny v obcích a jen na neděli jezdím domů. Doma sice za mnou dopis poslali, ale já jsem byl patrně už na jiné straně okresu a nic jsem nedostal.*

*(And we have to start addressing that issue of ours a bit more seriously. Of course, we cannot only talk about it but we should get to know each other. The only reason I did not reply to your letter was that I did not even read it yet. You see, All these weeks, I am in the villages and I only return home on Sundays. They sent me the letter but I probably was already on the other side of the district and therefore I have not received anything.)*

František's work as a surveyor complicates the matters and makes arranging a meeting difficult.

### Result or resolution

*Včera ráno jsem dostal lístek a dopis druhý. Proto ta starostlivá moje Mařenka marně čekala na odpověď. Kdybys věděla, jak často jsem vzpomínal na tu zlou Mařenku, která mi už snad na 4 dopisy neodpověděla. A mám ji přece tak rád jako v Nov. Měste; jenom že musíme mít teď na zřeteli ještě jiné okolnosti, které nám tenkrát (1)jistě nelámaly hlavu. A Ty jsi taková starostlivá. Kdybych Tě neznal jako milou veselou Mařenku, tak bych z Tvého dopisu si Tě představil jako starostlivou – no to mé tajemství. Jsem velmi rád, že souhlasíš, abychom se viděli. Těším se nevýslovně, neboť se musím přiznati, že se mi stýskalo po Tvých očích. Tuším, že se tentokrát trochu více dorozumíme a mne se to pak bude lépe jezdit po venkově a snadněji se to bude čekat na adjutum. Pak by nám to uběhlo jako voda a až bych dostal sám okres, uskutečnili bychom všechny naše tužby. Na podzim budu míti pak více volného času a mohli bychom se častěji vídat.*

*(Yesterday, I received a postcard and 2nd letter. Therefore my caring Mařenka was waiting in vain for an answer. If you only knew how often I was remembering this bad Mařenka who has not replied to my 4 letters. I like her the same as in Nové Město but now we have to consider other circumstances, too, which we surely did not rack our brains over that time. And you are so caring. If I did not know you as nice joyous Mařenka, I would consider you caring from the letters- this is my secret. I am very glad that you have agreed to see each other. I am so looking forward to you because I have to admit I have been missing your eyes. I sense/feel that this time will get along better and I will have much better time traveling in rural areas and wait for my bonus pay. Then the time would fly like water when I am in charge of a district we would make all desires come true. In the fall, I will have more free time and we could see each other more often.)*

One of the themes emerging from the letters is the slow postal service, which is causing even more communication problems. The extract above shows how František's uncertainty about Mařenka's willingness to meet is diminishing when the letter finally arrives.

According to Reetta Eiranen, expecting letters and waiting for delayed letters were part of daily life between Fennoman philosopher J.V. Snellman and his wife Jeanette. Even though the slow postal service was often mentioned as the reason for the break in communication, also other possible reasons such as illness or the romantic feelings cooling off caused distress.<sup>41</sup>

### Evaluation

*Co tomu říkaš, abychom se v neděli někde uviděli; ale do Chrasti nepojedu – nechci aby naše známost byla hned napoprvé tak oficiální. S takovou věcí je nejlépe počkat až je úplně hotová. Udělejte si se slečnou Z. výlet a já Vás tam vyhledám. – to se rozumí, že řekneš doma kam jdeš, ale ostatní nemusí přece nic vědět. Musíme přece nejvíce sami sobě věřiti a dokud jeden druhého dobře nepoznáme, nemůžeme nic vážného podnikat. Mařenko, nedívej se na věc tak příliš vážně; nedůvěrou a starostlivostí to vše by sevšednělo.*

*Vzpoměn si na Nové Město, tenkrát jsem si musili tak tajně doručovat svá přáníčka a právě z té doby skoro tajné naší lásky zbyly nám nejkrásnější vzpomínky a teď tak neprakticky si počínáme. Nebuď tak vážná a opatrná to bychom udělali z naší lásky ponkou svatební smlouvu a žádné vzpomínky bychom na naši známost neměli. Nerozmýšlej se a napiš, že neděli přijedeš do Chrudimi nebo do Pardubic a já si tam udělám také výlet.*

*(What do you say that we meet each other somewhere on Sunday but I will not come to Chrast- I do not want our relationship to be known to public. It is best to wait with this until all is done. Make a trip with Miss Z and I will find you – it is understandable that you will say at home where you are going but others do not have to know. We both have to trust each other most, and until we know each other well, we cannot start to do anything serious. Marenka, do not take the thing so seriously, with distrust and solicitude everything would become so routine.*

*Remember Nové Město, at that time we had to exchange greetings so secretly, and it is from this period of our almost secret love that we have the nicest memories and now we are acting so impractically. Do not be so serious and careful, that would turn our love into a mere wedding agreement, and we would not have any memories of our courtship. Do not think over and write that you will come on Sunday either to Chrudim or Pardubice, and I will make a trip there, too.)*

In this case, the evaluation consists of two parts. First of all, František suggests a meeting plan, but he does not want to come to Chrast, which is Mařenka's home town. Secondly, he is direct in expressing his wish to keep the relation secret.

### Coda

*Prosím Tě milá Mařenko, napiš mi do neděle kdy a kam přijedete. Sl. Zděnce se nezapomenu poděkovati a srdečně ji pozdravuji a těším se až zase uvidím tu roztomilou Mařenku. Nejroztomilejší pozdrav posílá, Tvůj František*

*(Please Mařenka, write to me by Sunday when and where you are coming. I won't forget to thank Mrs. Z and heartily greet her and I am looking forward to seeing beloved Mařenka. The happiest greetings sends, your František)*

---

<sup>41</sup> Eiranen 2016, 43.

Very often, even the letters which follow L&W relatively faithfully, contain other themes which cannot (at least not in this context) be positioned under any of the classic narrative elements of L&W. In the following letter that theme is persuasion. The dominating modus of the letter is conditional, since František is hoping that a meeting would be possible. The willingness to meet and the struggle against loneliness is a very visible theme in František's letters, and it is also a strong motivating factor for him to write.

### Orientation

*Milá slečno Mařenko!*

*Zase jsem se jednou rozkolébal a dávám se do psaní. Kolikrát jsem už tento měsíc začal psát, kolikrát jsem jej nedopsal a neposlal.*

*(Dear Miss Marenko!*

*Once again, I have started to write to you. How many times this month I have started to write to you, how many times I have not finished and did not send.)*

### Complicating action

*Je mi přece nějak smutno po Chrasti. A my jsem oba taková nějaká úzkostliví, že všemu přikládáme hned velké váhy a proto jsme od sebe v tak obrovské vzdálenosti. Vy si teď často asi z Chrasti vyletíte, tak mne napadlo, že bychom se mohli přece někde uvidět. Udělte, si někdy výlet do Pardubic a já bych tam Vás překvapil. Mám sice v neděli být v kanceláři; ale to bych nějak už snad zařídil; beztoho to bude asi až na druhý měsíc. Nějak se umluvte se slečnou F. když by jste nemohla jeti sama a mohla by jste mi napsati.*

*(But still, Chrast makes me sad somehow. And we both are so anxious and we take everything so seriously and that is why we are so far away from each other. I guess you leave Chrast often now, so there is an idea that we could possibly meet somewhere. Why don't you make a trip sometime to Pardubice, and I would surprise you there. On Sunday, I should be in the office but hopefully, I would manage to leave it somehow, I guess it is going to be next month anyway. Please speak to Mrs. F. If you cannot come alone and you could write to me.)*

Mařenka lives in Chrast and the work takes František there, we refers most likely to his surveying team. However, he has not met Mařenka yet, after many years. Uncertainty is a very dominant complicating action in František's letters in general and it is present also in this one.

### Persuasion / Result or resolution

*Jen se prosím Vás milá slečinko nerozmýšlejte, kývněte svou hlavinkou. Těším se, že si zase po čase trochu povíme co nás tíží. Já si myslím že bych Vás už ani nepoznal. Prosím Vás tedy, raději se ani nerozmýšlejte a nepřipravujte a čím dříve mi napíšete, tím srdečnější Vám budu. Já bych Vám pak ještě jenom napsal, zdali bych mohl určitě přijeti (jestli jsem dostal dovolenou).*

*(But please dear Missy do not think too much, just nod with your head. I am looking forward to being able to speak about what is our burden. I think I would not even recognize you. Please do not think too much and do not prepare, the sooner you write to me the more openhearted I will be. I would then write to you one more time, confirming that I can come (provided that I get a day off).)*

The resolution would be arranging a meeting, and this suggestion includes a great deal of persuasion. The persuasion underlines the complicating action and František's motivation to find a solution. Also the constant uncertainty is present in this letter as a complicating action.

### Evaluation

*Takové krásné shledání nám jistě vynahradí jak tu dlouhou pauzu co jsme se neviděli a psaní, „ to jsou jen hvězdičky proti slunci“ jak jste mi kdysi napsala.*

*(I am sure such a nice meeting will compensate the long period we did not see each other and writing, „it is only small stars compared to the sun“, as you once wrote to me.)*

In the evaluative part of the letter we are granted a permission to see a tiny bit of Mařenka and her writing style, quoted by František. This moment in the correspondence highlights the challenges I have been facing when trying to characterise Mařenka – I can only see her through the eyes of other people.

### Coda

*Srdečně Vás zdraví a teší se nashledanou František*

*Prosím Vás, omluvte mne, že tak nedbale a málo píši,- je to přímo v kanceláři. Jen tak na rychlo - jinak bych to byl zase nedokončil.*

*(Cordial greetings and looking forward to seeing you,*

*František*

*Please forgive me for writing so casually and so little – I am right at the office. Just quickly – otherwise I would not finish the writing.)*

## 2.4.1 Pressures, memories and news

*Waiting impatiently, the question about my existence will be solved.*

The three key topics which František writes about, and which remain either entirely or partly outside of L&W are pressures (especially about looks), memories and news. Sometimes these themes are connected to the narrative elements of L&W. In this example, the concerns of life are an intrinsic part of complicating action and result or resolution, too. I have selected a few quotations which discuss these themes, in order to demonstrate the special characteristic of letter narrations in general and narrations of this correspondence in particular.

*Uvidíte aspoň, jak se změnil Váš bývalý Frant a já zase svou Mařenku. Ale rád bych se dal fotografovati až budu na podzim na vojně. Nejlépe by ovšem bylo, kdybych mohl do Chrasti přijeti, ale bohužel nejsem teď pánem svého času. Vydělám si teď hodně peněz, ale za to nemám ani chvílku oddechu.*

*(At least you'll be able to see how your former Frant has changed and I will see my Mařenka. But I would like to have a photo taken when I am in the autumn at the military service. The best would be if I could come to Chrast, but unfortunately, I am not the master of my time now. I make a lot of money now, but I do not have anytime to relax.)*

The next, quite lengthy extract contains both comparing the memories of the youth to the current situation and discussion about looks. What is remarkable here is that František describes Mařenka, so again we learn a little bit about her.

*Za několik dní snad zase budu nucen jeti vyměřovat ven. Ale nemyslete, slečno, že snad jen proto hned odepisuji, že bych pak neměl času. Naopak, kdybych nikam nejel, psal bych ihned, jak tenkrát, když jsme si ty barevné dopisy psávali. Zase bych zabloudil v ty krásné zlaté časy naší dětské známosti. A není snad ani jinak možno.*

*Ty naše dopisy nyní musí býti jen variace vzpomínek na naši mladičkou lásku. Neznáme se teď co do povahy ani osoby. A Vy, milá slečno, jak jsem z dopisu vyrozuměl, bojíte se, aby se Vaše představa při našem setkání nezklamala. Máte docela pravdu. Já jsem na to úplně zapomněl, že ke známosti je třeba aby se jeden druhému líbil. Já jsem se nebál nikdy, a ani teď se nebojím, že má představa o Vás snad by se při setkání nějak změnila - jistě Jste tak milá a upřímná jako dříve. Představuji si Vás jako jsem Vás viděl tehdy před 7 lety o Božím Těle, když byla vaše škola a reálka na průvodu a Vy jste měla krémové šaty, byla jste poněkud probledlá a tak nekonečně roztomilá. Stála Jste skoro v poslední dvojici toho Vašeho průvodu a já tenkrát jako malý student stál mezi terciány. - Víím, že Jste se změnila mnoho od té doby, ale nikterak jsem se nebál, že bych si snad uchované dojmy nějak porušil - na to jsem ani nepřipravil. Vy se teď bojíte, že by jste se ve mne zklamala. Tak mně to nějak bodlo. - máte snad pravdu. To je snad jediné, co by nás mohlo rozloučiti. Známosti se tedy nemají a nemohou uznávatí jen na papíře. Navrhuji tedy, abychom si vyměnili podobizny.*

*(In a few days, I might be forced to go and survey again. But please do not think that this is the only reason I reply so quickly, that I will not have time then. On the contrary, if I did not go anywhere I would write immediately, like back when we used to write those colorful letters. I could get lost thinking of the beautiful and golden time of our childhood acquaintance. And, perhaps, it is not even possible to do otherwise.*

*Our letters today must be only a variation of memories of our youthful love. We do not know each other, neither our character nor personality. And you, dear Miss., as I understood from the letter, you are afraid that your imagination would turn into disappointment from meeting. But you are quite right. I have totally forgotten that acquaintances must attract each other [physically]. I was never afraid and now I am not afraid either that my imagination about you while meeting would change. - I am sure you are still so nice and honest like before. I imagine you when I saw you 7 years ago during Corpus Christi [day], when your school and high school was in procession and you had creme dress, you were quite pale and infinitely lovable. You were standing almost in the last row of pairs of the procession and me at that time as a small student with 3rd graders. I know you have changed a lot from that time, but I am not afraid that I would damage my preserved impressions of you- I did not even count on this. And you are afraid now that you might get disappointed in me. That pierced be somehow - you might be right. It is perhaps the only thing that could separate us. Acquaintances should not and cannot be acknowledged on paper only. I suggest we should exchange photos.)*

Here František also brings up something universal, the pressure to have good looks. These types of pressures are prominent in epistolary texts since ancient times. For instance, Amanda Kelley and Heather Moser point out in their article that Pliny the Younger chooses to evade the

pressures to look handsome by stating that his wife Calpurnia appreciates his ambition over his looks.<sup>42</sup>

*Non enim aetatem meam aut corpus, quae paulatim occidunt ac senescunt, sed gloriam diligit.*

*For she values neither my age nor my body, which little by little will decline and grow old, but for my ambition.<sup>43</sup>*

This is how František sees himself now, as a young adult.

*Vy by jste mne jistě nepoznala. Posílám Vám fotografii, ale nevypadám jako 24 letý; spíše 40 letý. Ted' ovšem plnovous nenosím a je ze mne dost mladičký vojáček. Ale což fotografie, ty jsou jen k oživení vzpomínek, ale velmi rád bych Vás po sedmi létech uviděl, abychom si mohli trochu popovídat, co jsem za těch 7 roků zkusili dobrého i zlého.*

*(I bet you would not recognize me. I send you a photograph but I do not look like 24 years old but more likely 40 years old. Now, however, I don't have a beard and I am a pretty young soldier. In any case, photographs are only to revive the memories but I would really like to see you after 7 years, so that we can chat what we experienced - good and bad over the past 7 years.)*

When it comes to news, it is natural to write them in the context of orientation, as was the case in the examples mentioned in the previous chapter, and also in the following.

*Milá slečno!*

*Jistě že někdy, jestli si vůbec kdy vzpomenete na mne, myslíte, jak já ubožák ted' v zimě někde na cvičišti execírui a snad v duchu i litujete - zatím já jsem již skoro týden doma a na vojnu už jen vzpomínám. Šťastnou náhodou jsem se dostal zase na svobodu a mám k vojsku jen ještě malý závazek. ---.)*

*Miss! Sure sometimes, if you ever remember of me, you think how I, the wretched person (or: "a poor soul"), am now, in the cold,) exercising on some training ground exercising, and, perhaps, you even pity me in your thoughts – but in fact, I've been at home already for one week and I only recall my military service. Due to lucky circumstances, I am back in freedom and I have only a small obligation to the army. ---.)*

Military service is the theme also in the next extract, as well as day-to-day things and news about family.

*Děkuji Vám za vzpomínku - jest mi tentokráte tím milejší, poněvadž jsem dnes jak se říká po vojánsku „marod“ a nemohu ven. Víím, že než si na tu vojnu a execírku zvyknu, že budu ještě mnohokrát „marod“. Sedím ted' v kantíně, vypůjčil jsem si od kaprála dopisní papír a píši Vám a domů. Je ta vojančina dost veselá a zajímavá, ale já bych ji hned vyměnil za zlatou svobodu. Mladší bratr můj studuje zde techniku a tak k němu denně chodívám na besedu. A co Vy slečno stále děláte, ani Jste mi lístek z Prahy neposlala. Kdyby Jste mi napsala kde bude v Praze bydlet, mohli jsme se tam uvidět a poznat; byl jsem 10 dní v září doma v Kutné Hoře a rád bych si tam byl zajel, ačkoliv jsem na výstavě byl v červnu.*

---

<sup>42</sup> Kelley & Moser 2015, 9–10.

<sup>43</sup> I am using here the same translation as Kelley & Moser in their article (page 10).

*(Thank you very much for remembering me - it is this time even nicer, because today as used in military jargon I am „sick“ and I cannot go out. I know, until I get used to military service and drill exercise, I will be sick many more times. I sit here in the canteen, I borrowed stationary from the corporal and I am writing to you and home. The military service is quite joyful and interesting but I would exchange it right away for golden(dear) freedom. My younger brother studies at technical school so I go daily to visit him. And what are you Miss doing all this time, you did not even send me a letter from Prague. If you wrote to me where you would live (OR: „be staying“) in Prague, we could see each other and get to know each other; for 10 days in September, I was home in Kutna Hora and would like to go there even though I was at the exhibition (fair) in June.)*

The news may also concern František and Mařenka's mutual friends and acquaintances and ordinary day-to-day things.

*Co dělá slečna H? Chodíváte do lípek a na výlety. Já si někdy zajdu na rybník a jezdím na loďce. Do svátků budu v kanceláři a po svátkách začnu zase jezdit po věnkově. To je jediné co mne baví. Až budu mít větší službu tak si chci koupit místo.*

*(What is Miss H doing? You go to linden trees and trips. I sometime go to the lake and take a boat trip. Until holidays, I will be in the office and after holidays I start to travel around the villages. It is the only thing that interests me. When I have a bigger job I want to buy a place.)*

Occasionally, the different narrative elements interlace each other, like here. The letter below contains not only a Labovian complicating action (communication problems and concerns about the future) but also relationship talk and news. It is possible to interpret this example partly as a result or resolution because František is obviously trying to communicate that positive things are happening and he is moving on with his life.

*Milá slečno!*

*(Dear Miss!)*

*Byl jsem od nov. roku v Brně a teď za několik dní pojedou zase domů. Velmi rád bych se zastavil na své cestě, abychom se přece viděli. Nevím ovšem jak bych bez ohlášení u Vás pochodil, asi že se na mne teď hněvate. Aspoň jen na nějakou hodinku bych přijel do Chrasti. Aspoň abychom se udobřili; když jsme si v posledních dopisech tak málo rozuměli. Prosím Vás tedy, napište mi laskavě*

*(From the New Year, I was in Brno and now in a few days I will again go home. I would very much like to stop by on my way, so that we can yet see each other after all. Of course, I do not know how can I show up without any prior notice, probobly you are upset with me. At least for an hour or so I would come to Chrast. We would at least reconcile; since we did not get along well in the past letters. Please write to me kindly)*

*...jestli se nehněvate a mohu-li se u Vás zastavit. Budu teď nějaký čas doma - podával jsem si žádosti a teď budu čekat doma v sladkých nadějích a držet palec. Prosím Vás tedy, milá duše, napište ale prosím Vás, hodně brzy, aby mne to, ještě v Brně zastihlo. Víím, že Vy se nehněvate a že naše shledání bude takové, jako tenkrát u „Třech křížů“ v Nov. M. Srdečně se těší a pánům rodičům dává se poroučet*

Váš František.

Brno, 12.1 1909

*(...that you are not upset with me and that I can come and see you. I will be home for some time. I have sent in my applications and now I will be waiting at home in "sweet" hopes and hold my thumbs. Please, dear soul, write very quickly, so that I can receive your letter in Brno. I know you are not angry with me and that this meeting will be the same as at that time at "three crosses" in Nove Mesto. Heartily glad to see you and greetings to your parents.*

Yours, František

Brno, 12 January 1909)

#### 2.4.2 Miniature narrations

In the middle of one letter, František tells a story. The story is not, however, a separate entity from the rest of the letter, because it is connected to their situation. This is one of the letters from the early 1900s with no dates. Cigánek is František's teacher of Czech and German.<sup>44</sup>

*Musím Ti říci, že jsem měl dnes již vyšetřování zase Pylaha psál něco ve škole o mne a prof. Cigánek mu to vzal a pak se mi řekl že o tom našem poměru něco slyšeli ale nemělo to žádného významu. Na konec mi řekl abych se z toho dobře vyzpovídala, což jsem také učinil – ale milovat Tě drahá nikdy nepřestanu.*

*(I have to tell you that I was investigated again, Pylaha was writing something about me in school and professor Cigánek took it from him and then Cigánek told me that he had heard about our relationship but it had no meaning to him. At last he told me to take to go and make a good confession, which I did – but my darling I will never stop loving you.)*

In his later letter from 7 December 1908, František refers to this incident when the teacher makes him do the confession (presumably in church) about his relationship with Mařenka. In that letter it is also apparent, that Mařenka jokes about it in her letter first.

Another miniature narration inside a letter reveals some remarkable things in František's life situation.

*Musím Vám napisati něco čistě "přátelského". Jak jsem se vlastně dostal do Pardubic, to nevím - celou cestu jsem byl myšlénkami tam u Vás na náměstí. V Pardubicích jsem se setkal s Jeho Magnif. panem rektorem mor. techniky panem prof. Líčkou; loni byl předsedou zkušeb. komise, když jsem dělal státnici. Ještě se na mne pamatoval a tak se ke mne hlásil. Jel do Kutné Hory zastupovat českou techniku na slavnosti 500 letého napsání dekretu Kutnohorského. Z počátku mi bylo v jeho společnosti jaksi tísně – zvláště když poznal, že já jsem o té slavnosti ani nevěděl. Ale v Kolíně jsme 2 hod. čekali a tak jsme se potom volně bavili, že jsem mu i řekl odkud právě jedu a jak jsem se krásně u Vás měl. Ale nemyslete si, milá duše, řekl jsem že to byla „přátelská“ návštěva, což on také ihned pochopil; je to velmi hodný pán. Slíbil mi také, že až bude nějaké místo pro mne na Moravě, že na mne nezapomene, abych neměl tak daleko ku svým milým přátelům do Chrasti. Dělá mi to teď dost velkou starost, kam se dostanu; jenom nikam příliš*

---

<sup>44</sup> Jednáctiletá střední škola, Nové Město na Moravě kniha 32, Státní okresní archiv Žďár n. S.

*daleko. Zapoměla by Jste na naše přátelství, a mne by zůstaly jen vzpomínky na Váš krásný zjev. Prosím Vás milá slečno Mařenko, buďte však upřímná k sobě i ke mne jen na tomto základu možno stavět hrady.*

*(I must write something purely „friendly“ to you. How I actually arrived to Pardubice I do not know because on the road I was in thought at your square. In Pardubice, I met with His Magnificence Rector<sup>45</sup> of technical [school] Professor Líčka; last year he was chairman of examination committee when I was doing my state exams. He still remembered me and he acknowledged me. He went to Kutna Hora to represent Czech University of Technology at the celebration of 500 years of the decree of Kutna Hora. At the beginning, I was quite uptight in his presense especially when he realized that I did not know about these celebrations. But in Kolin, we waited 2 hours and we talked freely, I told him from where I am coming, what a wonderful time I had at your place. But do not think my dear, I only said it was a „friendly“ visit, and he understood it quickly, he is a very nice man. He also promised, when there is some position for me in Moravia, that he will not forget about me, so that I do not have such a long way to my nice friends in Chrast. I am quite worried now where I will go; only not too far away. You would forget about our friendship, and I would be only left with memories of your beautiful appearance. Please dear Miss Mařenka, please be honest to yourself and me, we can build castles only on this foundation.)*

For a researcher, this story is also enlightening, concerning the situation between the genders in the early 20th century. Magister Líčka is mentioned only in one letter, and he is not a key figure in my research, but there was plenty of information available about him and his career in the archive of Brno University of Technology. At the same time, I have been searching for even the smallest pieces of information about Mařenka in various archives across the Czech Republic, and the outcome has been quite minuscule. She never worked outside of home, and for this reason the only traces she has left to archives are in the documents of the decennial census and the schools she went to in Najdek and Nové Město.

### 2.4.3 Letters not following L&W

In this subchapter I am introducing two examples of letters which do not fit into L&W, or they have only a few, maybe even unclear characteristics of a typical narration. It is still important to note that letters without (much of) a narration are still part of the bigger narration that these letters from František to Mařenka formulate.

These non-narrative letters are stopping points, in a sense, in the middle of the story. Not only an outsider like me pauses, but also the actual participants of the correspondence do so.

*Nejdaržší Mařenko!*

*Přicházím k Tobě jako kající hříšník, aby Jsi mi odpustila. Snad víš proč? Byl jsem ten den mrzutý a k tomu ještě mne bolela hlava. Pak jsem toho lítoval, ale již bylo pozdě a ty se snad proto již hněváš? Či snad mne z něčeho jiného podezříváš? Myslíš že jsem to uděl kvůli učení? Právě v onen čas, když Jsi se tenkrát na mne hněvala, šlo mi učení špatně; ale v poslední jsem vše dokonale nahradil.*

---

<sup>45</sup> A honorary title used in the Czech language.

*(Dearest Mařenka!*

*I am coming to you as a repentant sinner, for you to forgive me. Perhaps you know why? On that day, I was so annoyed and I also had a headache. Then, I regretted it but it was already too late, perhaps you are angry at me? Or you are suspecting me of something? You think it was because I had to study? At that time when you were angry with me, I had bad time studying; but lately I have made up for it.)*

*Ted, ke konci roku by jsme se měli rozhněvati? Postupné zkoušky jsou již odbyté a tu tím více mohu na Tebe vzpomínati. Odpusť, drahoušku, že jsem Ti tak dlouho neodepsal; z počátku to bylo nemožné a nyní jsem si myslil, že se snad někde přece sejdeme. Zapoměl jsem Ti také poděkovati za pohledy; vždyť to bude někdy jediná upomínka na Tebe, můj anděli. Ale za 14. dní; to bude těžké loučení. Abychom mohli aspoň ty dopisy rychleji vystřídati, nebylo by lépe, kdyby jsme je někde schovávali?*

*(Now, at the end of the year we should be angry with each other? Placement exams are over with and now I can think of you more. Forgive me, darling, that I have not written back for such a long time, at the beginning it was impossible and now I thought we would meet each other. I also forgot to thank you for postcards; someday it will be my only memory of you, my angel. But in 14 days; it will be hard to part. I hope we could exchange the letters more often, would it be better if we can hide them somewhere?)*

*(Now, at the end of the year we should be angry with each other? Placement exams are over with and now I can think of you more. Forgive me, darling, that I have not written back for such a long time, at the beginning it was impossible and now I thought we would meet each other somewhere after all. I also forgot to thank you for postcards; someday it will be my only memory of you, my angel. But in 14 days; it will be hard to part. In order to exchange the letters more often, at least, would it be better if we hid them somewhere?)*

*Třeba na hřbitově u některého pomníka. Slyšel jsem ale, že p. Š našla ty lístky ode mně. Je to pravda? Lituji, že jsem byl takový – liknavý- u Tř. Křížů. Co jsem mohl užítí nyní se mi snad nenaskytne taková příležitost. Nebo snad se na mne hněváš, že chodím se Ž, on se mne vždy chytí a nemůžu se ho zbaviti. Prosím Tě tedy, drahá Mařenko, již se na mne nehněvej; nemohl bych ani spáti. Chodím dále na hřbitov a do „V Ochoze“ a snad to zas napravím.*

*Líbá Tě, Tvůj Frant.)*

*(Possibly, at the cemetery nearby one of the gravestones. But I heard that Mrs. Š had found the letters from me. Is it true? I am sorry that I was so sluggish – at the 3 crosses. What I have could have used now I will not get such an opportunity. Or you are upset with me because I walk with Ž, but he always follows me, and I cannot get rid of him. Please, dear Marenka; pls do not be angry with me anymore; I could not even sleep. I still go to the cemetery and to „Ochoz“ and hopefully I can make it up.*

*Kisses, yours Frant.)*

It would be possible to interpret this letter as a monumental and on-going complicating action. The separation is evident and it is going to happen soon. This letter is undated but judging by

František's handwriting and partly the contents, we can tell that it was written by the young František in Nové Město. Ochoz(a) is a forest area where people traditionally go to ski and hike in the outskirts of Nové Město.

*Geometr F. Tippl*

*Surveyor František Tippl*

*Vážená slečno!*

*Přijedu v neděli 17. tého a zařídím si to tak, že budu v Chrasti asi v poledne a odpoledne se uvidíme. Těším se velmi na naše shledání a přece se čehosi obávám, ale to Vám pak řeknu ústně; Vy by jste mi teď zase asi nerozuměla. Mám jen teď starosti jak Vás tam v Chrasti naleznu; ale to doufám, že Vaša hlavinka sama nějak zařídí. Srdečně se, těší a na shledanou a pánům rodičům se dává poroučet.*

*(Dear Miss!*

*I will come on Sunday the 17<sup>th</sup> and I will arrange it that I am in Chrast approx. at noon and in the afternoon we could meet. I am looking forward to seeing you very much and yet I am afraid of something, but I will tell you then; I think you would not understand me now again. I am only worried now how to find you in Chrast but I hope that your little head<sup>46</sup> will arrange it somehow. Warmly looking forward to seeing you and greetings to your parents.)*

This is more of an informational letter, or a note, rather than a typical complete letter. However, in its slightly mysterious tone, there is a complicating action. Something is concerning František and he is also worried about finding Mařenka's home.

Letters like these, even though they do not have a full narrative structure, are still part of the bigger entity, as they provide additional information about the situation, and also a small description of what communication was like between two young persons who were romantically interested in each other. This type of letter is like a pause or a quiet flow in the narration and after that the story continues.

## 2.5 The Story of František according to L&W

### 2.5.1 Orientation

In this chapter (2.5.) I will draw a picture of the story that emerges from František's letters when L&W is used to analyse them. This is, of course only one story based on this classic model of narrative structure and several others could be found with different methods.

The orientation can be very brief, e.g. *Milá Marenko* (Dear Mařenka), but quite often František chooses to write a bit longer, sometimes even a lengthy orientation. In his case, it can be an orientation in the literal meaning of the word, like in the example below, where he describes the current situation.

---

<sup>46</sup> Hlavinka is a diminutive for head and in this context it is an endearment, meaning that she is smart and can find the right solution.

*Drahoušku!*

*Myslíl sem, že po prázdninách až zde nebudeš, bude mi zde trudno; ale včera jsem dostal psaní z domu, že zde nebudu také. Nejspíše budeme s bratrem v Pardubicích.*

*(Darling!*

*I thought that after holidays when you are not here, I will be very gloomy but yesterday I received a letter from home (meaning) that I would not be here either. Probably, my brother and I will be in Pardubice.)*

Or he may write about writing:

*Roztomilá Mařenko!*

*Konečně jsem se odhodlal Vám psát. Nemohu totiž již utišiti touhu po Vás a tu ji aspoň částečně ukojuji tím mrtvým písmem.*

*(Sweetest Mařenka,*

*Finally, I have resolved to write to you. I cannot appease my desire after you and here I am at least partly satisfying it with this dead writing.)*

He may also apologise for not writing sooner. This is a typical convention in a correspondence, or in any other form of communication.

*Drahá, roztomilá, nejdražší Mařenko!*

*Především odpusti, že Ti tak dlouho nepíšeš. Psal bych Ti každý den, jak Tě mám rád, drahoušku a -*  
--

*(Dear, cute and dearest Mařenka!*

*First of all, forgive me that I have not written for such a long time. I would write to you every day how I like you, darling and---)*

Another typical convention at the beginning of a letter is expressing gratitude.

*Drahá slečno!*

*Děkuji za vzpomínku - neminula se s účinkem – probudila mne z krátkých mých snů o štěstí!*

*(Dear miss!*

*Thank you for thinking of me, it did misfire - it woke me up from my short dreams about happiness.)*

František may start a letter also with a memory.

*Milá slečno! Dear Miss!*

*Zase si musím zalétnouti do těch dob novoměstských studií, té doby plné poesie a štěstí!*

*(Dear Miss!*

*Once again, I must fly back to the times of our studies in Nové Město, the period full of poetry and happiness!)*

Or he may start by expressing his jealousy.

*Milá slečno!*

*Děkuji Vám srdečně za vzpomínku. Myslil jsem, že se už nedočkám a nebo že se na poště dopis ztratil. No, ale za to, že jsem čekal, dostal jsem krásný růžový dopis. Smím se zeptat od koho Jste ten dopisní papír dostala?*

*(Dear Miss.*

*Thank you heartily for remembering me. I thought that I would not receive or the letter was lost at the post office. But because I waited out I received a beautiful pink letter. Can I ask from whom you obtained the stationery?)*

Occasionally he confesses his love, too.

*Nejdražší Mařenko!*

*Již jsem se domníval, že nic nedostanu, ale bohudík, má dosavadní naděje nebyla zklamána. To jsem si myslil, že nebudu moci ani kolem Vás choditi, ba snad mi do konce osud zakáže na Vás mysliti. Mám vždy neštěstí, až na tu výjimku že jsem se mohl zamilovati do tak hezké Mařenky, která mne miluje, jako Jste Vy. Ale za měsíc. Lituji každého dne každého okamžiku, který tak bez významu uplyne.*

*(Dearest Marenka!*

*I almost thought that I would not receive anything but thank God, my hope was not disappointed. I thought that I would not be able to even walk by your place, or that even my fate might forbid me to think of you. I always have bad luck, with the exception that I could fall in love with such a pretty Mařenka who loves me – like you are. But in one month. I regret each day and each moment that passes without any meaning.)*

Also the constant topic that appears throughout the correspondence, planning to meet, can be present in the orientation.

*Milá Mařenko!*

*Těším se na shledání velmi. Byl jsem v Praze, jak jsem Ti poslal lístek a dovezl jsem si trochu nadějí domů. Čekám že to do nového roku přijde.*

*(Dear Mařenka!*

*I am looking forward to seeing you very much. I was in Prague where I sent you the message and I brought back with me some hopes. I hope it will come before new year.)*

One miniature narration in this part of the correspondence is František's attempt to write to Mařenka using the informal address instead of formal. This type of attempt to get closer is improper because the man could not do that without the lady suggesting it first. He soon returns to the 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural form, though, and apologizes for his previous behaviour.

*Milá Mařenko!*

*Snad Tě nepřekvapí, že si dovoluji poněkud důvěrneji Tě oslovovati než dosud. Zdá se mi to nějak přirozenější a zdá se, že se tí dá i více říci.*

*(Dear Marenka!*

*I hope you are not surprised that I am addressing you somewhat more familiar than until now. It seems somehow more natural for me and it seems I can also tell you more this way.)*

*Velectěná slečno!*

*Jsem teď již delší dobu z Brna venku. Vyměřujeme teď právě velmi hezkou malou vesničku Podbřežice u Nov. Rousinova na Hané. Celé dny jsem v polích a jen na večer mám chvílku volnou pro sebe*

*(Dear revered Miss!*

*I've been away from Brno for quite some time now. We are surveying now a very nice small village called Podbrezice which is close to Novy Rousinov in the Hana region.. I spend all days in the fields and only in the evening I have a bit of time for myself.*

In this case, location and environment are described here in the orientation

*Milá slečno!*

*Zdá se mi to skoro nekonečností, co čekám na nějakou vzpomínku a zatím je to teprve několik skoro dní. Jsem dětina, vidíte. Upřímně řečeno, nemáte mi ani co psát, jen cosi cítíme svatého a život to hasí. Tak často a tak nevýslovně rád na Vás vzpomínám, ačkoliv považuji všechny ty vzpomínky a tužby za něco neoprávněného, skoro zapovězeného.*

*(Dear Miss!*

*It seems almost an eternity since I've been waiting for some remembrance but, in fact, only few days have passed. I am childish, you see. Honestly, you have nothing to write to me, we only feel something sacred and life is quenching it. I so often and inexpressibly like to think of you, although I consider all memories and desires as unright, almost as forbidden.)*

This orientation reflects on the relationship.

*Milá slečno!*

*Jak se vždy rád připravuji, když Vám mám psát. Co myšlenek a tužeb prolítne mi hlavou jen že jsou všechny jaksi neucelené a neurčité.*

*(Dear Miss!*

*I always like to take the time of preparing before writing you a letter. How many thoughts and desires fly through my head – but they are all somehow incomplete and uncertain.)*

Here František writes about writing right at the beginning of the letter.

*Milá Mařenko!*

*Tak dlouho, Tě nechávám čekat na slíbený dopis. Ty se jistě už za to na mně hněváš. A teď ještě nemohu o sobě dát určitou zprávu.*

*(Dear Mařenka!*

*I let you wait for so long for my promised letter. I am sure you are angry with me because of this. And now even, I cannot even tell you anything specific about myself.)*

This orientation includes excuses for not writing earlier.

*Milá slečno!*

*Děkuji srdečně za vzácné Vaše pozvání. Jsem velmi rád, že se zase jednou uvidíme.*

*(Dear Miss!*

*Thank you heartily for your precious invitation. I am very glad, that we will see each other once again.)*

In this orientation František thanks her for an invitation.

### 2.5.2 Complicating action

Jerome Bruner defines complication as *the disturbance in the story*, and it is trouble that defines complication. By trouble he means the element which comes into being from the imbalance of narrative elements. According to Bruner, Labov and Waletzky are certain of the significance of trouble as the core of complication, and they even collected the narratives in such a manner that the presence of *trouble* was ensured.<sup>47</sup>

Also in František's letters *trouble* is present, creating complicating actions. Communicating in writing has its challenges, and for this reason, misunderstandings, even arguments, happen, which in turn become complicating actions.

*Snad se pro takovou malichernost nehněváš? Čekal jsem marně na zprávu. Zkazili jsme si tím oba svátky, ale nechápu že se můžeš Ty pro něco takového pohněvati.*

*(Perhaps you are not upset for such a pettiness? I waited for your note in vain. We both have spoiled our holidays but I do not understand that you can be upset for such a thing.)*

The quotation below tells vividly about the struggles and the writer's block the young writer is facing. The question about the cemetery refers to František and Mařenka's plan to exchange letters by hiding them under a particular gravestone.

*Proč nechodíš na hřbitov? Tak jsem se do toho psaní dnes hnál; myslel jsem jak Ti toho hodně napíšeš a zatím nemám již ani co psát. Nedovedu totiž napsati, co srdce tíží a jakou láskou k Tobě, můj drahoušku, lne; na koho to mám svéztí?*

---

<sup>47</sup> Bruner 1997,63.

*(Why are you not going to the cemetery? I was rushing to write you today and I thought I would write a lot to you but I don't even have anything to write anymore. I cannot possibly write what hurts my heart and what love I have for you, my darling; who should I blame?)*

Jealousy is a very obvious complicating action and it is present in the letters of both the young and the František. The earlier quotation where František asks about pink stationery and shows his jealousy is written in Brno in November 5th 1908. Meanwhile, the next quotation is from his high school years, the letter is not dated but it must have been written during his school years in Nové Město na Moravě because it has been written in the more calligraphic, young person's style. Also Ochoz(a), the forest area near Nové Město is mentioned here.

*Dostala Jste již nějaký pohled z R? Chtěl jsem Vám také poslati, ale domnívám se, že by Jste to považovala za urážku. Proč Jste odešla v neděli s Ochoze? Šli za Vámi nějakí hoši a tu ve své žárlivosti jsem je stíhal. Ostatně mám nač žárliti, Ž Vám chce psáti své vyznání a také se mi s tím svěřil – Domnívá se, že se neznáme. – On ale chce také, abych to psaní sám za něho napsal a Vám, drahá Mařenka, dal. Budete-li chtít, tak Vám je někdy dám.*

*(Have you received any postcard from Rožínka? I also wanted to send you [one], but I was thinking that you would take it as a insult. Why did you leave Ochoz on Sunday? Some boys were walking behind you and I was so jealous that I had to follow them. After all, I have a reason to be jealous because Ž wants to write to you his love confession and he confided in me. He believes that we do not know each other. But he also wants me to write to you on his behalf and bring the letter to you, dear Mařenka. If you want, I will give them to you someday.)*

Here is an extract from the years when František was already earning his own living and the struggles of work have become one of the complicating actions between him and Mařenka.

*[O]d rána do večera lýchám přes strniště, někdy, brambory, cukrovku atd a večer nemohu rukama ani vládnout a proto jistě odpustíte, že tak málo kaligraf. (Podbřežice, 3.9. 08)*

*([F]rom morning to evening I am lying in stubble, sometime potatoes, sugar beets etc and in the evening I cannot move my hands and therefore please forgive me, that I am writing so little calligraph. (Podbřežice, 3 September 1908))*

Work-related worries also complicate other things, such as planning one's life.

*Jeden můj kollega věnoval se civilní službě a už se chce ženit; já chudák si musím ještě počkat na takové věci. Musím čekat, až dostanu samostatně okres. Ale teď je jen třeba hodně štěstí, držet oba palce aby to dobře dopadlo a nedělat si tak dalekosáhlé plány.*

*(One of my colleagues who did civil service already wants to get married. Poor me, I have to wait for these things. I have to wait until I get a region/district assigned. But now I just need a lot of luck, keep both fingers crossed so that things turn out well and do not make such long term plans.)*

Also the military service complicates the situation and the communication between the lovers.

*Musím ještě na rok na vojnu a rok je dlouhý, ačkoli není jak tak dlouhý jako 7. let. Jen to je škoda, že se vlastně neznáme. Těžko jak dělati plány, jaké já si mimoděk udělám. Snad už je to u mne v krvi, dělat samé plány. Prosím Vás, slečno, souhlasíte s tou výměnou fotografií? Budete aspoň*

*vidět, jak se ten bývalý Frant. změnil – snad se Vám nebude líbit ale zajímat Vás snad přece bude. (Podbřežice, 3.9. 08)*

*(But I have to go to military service for a year, and one year is long, though it is not so long as 7 years. It's just pity that we, in fact, do not know each other. It is hard to make plans that I make unintentionally. Perhaps it is in my blood, make plans all the time. Please Miss, do you agree with the exchange of photographs? You will at least see how former Frant. changed- you might not like him but he might still interest you. (Podbřežice, 3 September 1908))*

What is interesting in the following, lengthy extract, is how the complicating action, in this case jealousy, is connected to a memory. The narration is in a sense playing with different time levels, from the schooldays to the time when František and Mařenka had no communication with each other to the writer's present moment.

*Vzpomínám si, jak jsem kdysi Vašimi monogramy popsál v reálce celou lavici a když na to přišel profesor, musil jsem nechat celou lavici na svoje útraty čistit. To jsou vzpomínky. – Vy mi pak napíšete, že to byla tenkrát u mne zábava. Takový malý student v takových věcech nehledá nikdy zábavu. Ale Vy jste takový roztomilý filosof, který se pořád na všechno ptá prvně, - jak atd. Je to sice poněkud divné, že jsem se dal tak najednou do dopisování, a když u mne ptáte proč, nedovedu odpovědět, jak bych nedovedl tenkrát v Městě. Šest roků jsme skoro o sobě ani nevěděli. Když jsem byl na technice seznámil jsem se na plesu s jednou slečnou, která v Brně studovala a náhodou má stejný monogram s Vámi. Velmi hezká slečna je to, ale poznal jsem, že nás poutalo k sobě jen jakési kolegiální přátelství a nic víc. (Brno 5.12.1908)*

*(I remember how I wrote all over my desk your monogram in realka school<sup>48</sup> and when the professor found out, I had to have the desk cleaned at my expense. What memories. – You wrote to me it was a lot of fun. Such a young student never thinks it is entertaining. But you are such a cute philosopher who constantly asks for the first time - how etc. It is a bit strange that I so suddenly started to write. When you ask me why I cannot answer, like I could not (answer) that time in Nové Město. We did not hear from each other for 6 years. When I was at technical [school]<sup>49</sup>, I got to know one girl at the dance ball who studied in Brno and she coincidentally has same monogram as you. She is a very pretty girl, but I got to know we were only attracted by a sort of collegial friendship and nothing more. (Brno 5 December 1908))*

Complicating action can also narrate the story of future, in the form of plans, as in the next example.

*Nevím sice úplně dobře proč to nesmí být, ale i přes to myslím, že to snad myslíte dobře a také se rád podrobuji. Zatím starám se o své záležitosti. Na radu pana vrchního geometra vzdal jsem se místa v Lublani, poněvadž bych se velmi těžko dostal zpět a jezdím do Prahy. Dostal jsem dosti velkou naději, zůstanu v Čechách nebo na Moravě. Nemám sice žádnou protekci, ale bohudíky, že vysvědčením mohu s každým konkurovati. Pojedu do Prahy ještě tento týden jednou a pak mi prosím Vás už držte také svůj paleček(4), aby to dobře dopadlo a hodně brzy.*

---

<sup>48</sup> "Reálka" is the colloquial form, the official name was "reálná škola" (in German: Realschule; the term is still used in the German-speaking countries). Apart from the natural sciences, the focus was also on modern languages.

<sup>49</sup> Meaning "university of technology".

*(Although I do not know exactly why it cannot happen, I still think You hopefully mean it well, and I gladly submit. For now, I am taking care of my things only. Following advice given by Mr. Head Surveyor, I gave up a position in Ljubljana because it would be hard to ever return back, and nowadays I go to Prague. I've received big hope that I'll stay in Bohemia or Moravia. I do not get any favoritism but thank God that with my report cards I can compete with anybody. I will go to Prague this week one more time and then please hold your fingers crossed so that everything turns out well and really quick.)*

In the next extract complicating action is connected to news. It is also worth noting that young people have very similar worries throughout the history, and František's writings prove that too. Also the idea that life was at least in certain respects easier is visible in his thinking.

*Na druhý týden hodlám jeti do Prahy – vždy jsem si myslil, že snad už nebudu musít tam jít, poněvadž mi jen slibují a já, stále čekám. I u nás musíme pocítit vliv té neblahé finanční tísně a proto tolik otálí s jmenováním. Kolegové v zemské službě také jsou teď „na dovolené“ jen že jim zastavili plat. Škoda, že jsem se nanarodil o sto roků dříve.*

*Je krásný máj ale na mne to kouzlo jarní tak málo působí. Žádné zvláštní nadšení - jen samá starost. Provádím teď sice trochu civilní praxe, která mi dost vynesle ale přece raději čekám na dekret. Považ jaký jsem bláhoveček za půl roku bych mohl být autorisovaným civ. geometrem a samostatně pracovat a já zatím čekám na 11 hodnostní třídu(1). Ted' chci tedy jeti do Prahy, ale bojím se že už mne tam vypucují, že na ně stále chodím. Do Pardubic bych se rád podíval ale bojím se Tě zeptati, chtěla-li by jsi se tam také podívati; - poněvadž máš se mnou špatné zkušenosti. V posledním dopise jsem se Ti o tom zmínil a Tys ani neodpověděla. Ale tento formát dopisu není moc praktický, je asi velmi malý a možná že se na poště ztratil.*

*(Next week, I plan to go to Praha- I always thought that I would not have to go there any more, since they just keep promising, and I keep waiting. Even in our work field, we are feeling the influence of that unfortunate financial tightness (crisis) and that is why they are dealying decision. Colleagues from cadastral service are also „on holiday“ now, but their salary was stopped. It is pity that I was not born 100 years earlier.*

*It is now beautiful May but the charm of spring is affecting me only very little. I have not special enthusiasm – only worries. Although I am doing some civil practice now, from which I obtain sufficiently enough income but I rather wait for decree. Imagine, I'm a little crazy, in half a year I could be an authorized civil surveyor and work independently but at the time being I am waiting for 11th rank. Now, I want to go to Praha but I am afraid that they will scold me because I go there so often. I would like to go to Pardubice but I am afraid to ask you, would you still like to go there, since you have bad experience with me. In my last letter, I mentioned it but you did not even answer me. But this letter format is not too practical, it is perhaps too small and possibly was lost by the post office.)*

### 2.5.3 Evaluation

The evaluative function of a story is defined by L&W as *that part of the narration which reveals the attitude of the narrator towards the narrative by emphasizing the relative importance of some narrative units as compared to others.*<sup>50</sup>

In this respect, jealousy and rivalry between schoolboys about a girl's attention is an outstanding example of an evaluative phase in a letter narration.

*Čím více mám soků, tím Vás více miluji, zvláště od té zasvěcené soboty před svátky. (Kéž by se ještě jednou vrátila.)*

*(The more rivals I have, the more I love you especially from that sacred /devoted Saturday before holidays. (I wish it would once again happen.))*

Confession of love and hoping the mutual feeling from the other person is present in the evaluation too.

*Teprve, poslední dny jsem na Vás, drahá Mařenko, pozoroval, že jste zase obnovila svoji náklonnost ke mně. Což mně ovšem nevýslovně těší. Víte zajiste a nebo aspoň, že Vás miluji a to také očekávám od Vás.*

*(Only, past few days I have observed that dear Mařenka has again renewed her affection to me. Which makes me unspeakably happy. You know for sure or at least that I love you and I expect the same from you.)*

Complicating action, the challenges in communication are combined to the evaluation in this example. František's position as an outsider becomes also apparent here, because he writes that he does not know the surroundings very well.

*Avšak doufám, že nyní budou časy mnohem lepší, poněvadž se můžeme téměř denně sejít. Již jsem Vám chtěl mnohokrát psát ale nikdy jsem neměl příležitosti Vám jej dát. Píší Vám přece tak již důvěrné psaní poněvadž se domnívám, že mi snad z toho nebudete dělati žádné nepříjemnosti. Prosím Vás proto abyste mi dala brzy na srozuměnou a myslím že Vám by to bylo příhodnější určití místo. Já to zde ještě nepoznám. Třeba do Ochozu.*

*(But I hope that times will be much better now, because we can meet almost daily. I wanted to write to you many times, but I did not get a chance to give the letters to you. I write to you such a confidential letter, because I believe that, hopefully, you will not give me a hard time about it. Therefore please give me some time to think this over, it would be [handwriting illegible] place. I do not know the places here. Maybe Ochoz.)*

In the following extract the complicating action intertwines with the evaluation. František is trying to arrange a meeting between him and Mařenka and he also writes about his feelings and concerns.

*Po Vánocích pojedu zase do Brna a tak mne tak maně napadlo, kdybychom se mohli někde uvidět. Velmi rád bych Vás uviděl; jsem snad trochu sentimentální; dělám si ovšem jen tak plány, nevím jestli to bude možno. Nevím kterou dráhou půjmem a budu-li se moci někde zastavit. To*

---

<sup>50</sup> Labov & Waletzky 1967, 37.

*bych Vám ještě napsal, poprosil Vás a Vy by jste jistě snad nic proti tomu neměla. Bylo by to zvláštní shledání, že ano? (Kutná Hora 7.12.1908)*

*(After Christmas, I will go to Brno again so a thought happened to occur to me if we could see each other somewhere. I would very much like to meet you; perhaps I am a little sentimental; but obviously, I am just making some plans and don't know if it's possible. I do not know which route I will take and if I can make a stop somewhere on the way. I would write that to you, I'd ask you and you surely hopefully wouldn't be against it. It would be a peculiar meeting, wouldn't it?)*

Here again we receive a vague idea of what Mařenka wrote back. She is defining her own space and boundaries in the relationship and thus defining where it stands, and František is expressing his respect towards Mařenka's choice.

*Jste starostlivá i opatrná, milá slečno Mařenko chcete být volna. Nevyčítám mně, ani mne Váš dopis nepřekvapil ---.*

*(You are caring, careful, nice Miss Marenka and you want to be free. I am not holding it against, and your letter did not surprise me ---.)*

Financial situation is one of the themes in František's letters. In this example he reveals to us that he has been rather successful in his career thus far. This way he evaluates his possibilities to establish a family, and at the same time he wants to send Mařenka the message that he is in a good position already.

*Tak málo Vás znám a tak cele jste mne zaujala. Mám zde teď výhodné zaměstnání a žiji jen svému povolání a Vám. Tím však nechci nijak překážeti Vaši svobodě - buďte volná – já Vás budu hladěti přesvědčeti o své důslednosti – pokud to jest v mé moci; neboť, nemyslete si milá slečno, že zapomínám na své vady a tuším, že i Vy s nimi snad bojujete.*

*(I know you so little but I am interested in you. Here, I have a good occupation and live for my job and for you. I do not want to bring obstacles to your freedom- be free- I will continue to persuade you about my persistence – if I am able to, do not think that I am forgetting my mistakes and I am guessing that you, dear Miss are struggling with them.)*

František also writes very openly about his views about the relationship. He does not want to meet Mařenka in public but suggests a meeting in either his own hometown Pardubice or in a small town nearby, Chrudim. He refers to their school years and their secret meetings back then in Nové Město, too.

*Co tomu říkáš, abychom se v neděli někde uviděli; ale do Chrasti nepojedu – nechci aby naše známost byla hned napoprvé tak oficiální. S takovou věcí je nejlépe počkat až je úplně hotová. Udělejte si se slečnou Z. Výlet a já Vás tam vyhledám. – to se rozumí, že řekneš doma kam jdeš, ale ostatní nemusí přece nic vědět. Musíme přece nejvíce sami sobě věřiti a dokud jeden druhého dobře nepoznáme, nemůžeme nic vážného podnikat Mařenko, nedívej se na věc tak příliš vážně nedůvěrou a starostlivostí to vše by sevšednělo.*

*Vzpomeň si na Nové Město, tenkrát jsem si musili tak tajně dovnecovat svá přáníčka a právě z té doby skoro tajné naší lásky zbyly nám nejkrásnější vzpomínky a teď tak neprakticky si počínáme. Nebud' tak vážná a opatrná to bychom udělali z naší lásky pouhou svatební smlouvu a žádné*

*vzpomínky bychom na naši známost neměli. Nerozmýšlej se a napiš, že neděli přijedeš do Chrudimi nebo do Pardubic a já si tam udělám také výlet.*

*(What do you say that we meet each other somewhere on Sunday but I will not come to Chrast- I do not want our relationship to be known to the public. It is best to wait with this until all is done. Make a trip with Miss Z and I will find you – it is understandable that you will say at home where you are going but others do not have to know. We both have to trust each other most, and until we know each other well, we cannot start to do anything serious. Marenka, do not take the thing so seriously, with distrust and solicitude everything would become so routine.*

*Remember Nové Město, at that time we had to exchange greetings so secretly, and it is from this period of our almost secret love that we have the nicest memories and now we are acting so impractically. Do not be so serious and careful, that would turn our love into a mere wedding agreement, and we would not have any memories of our courtship. Do not think over and write that you will come on Sunday either to Chrudim or Pardubice, and I will make a trip there, too.)*

Below is a quote about the same issue, and František is evaluating the situations and options to meet. He makes a reference to emigration to America, which was a remarkable historical phenomenon in the Europe of the early 20th century.

*Budouli nám okolnosti jen trochu příznivy, doufám, že to všechno může souvisěti jak jsem si to jako malé nerozumové slibovali. Tenkrát jsem byli věru odvážnější než nyní. Prosím Vás ještě jednou, dlouho se nerozmýšlejte a Jste li s tím srozumněna, napište a já ihned Vám odepíši, mohu-li určitě přijeti. Nejlépe ho snad bude v Pard. nebo až pojedete do N.M. v N.B. (Kdyby tento dopis někdo cizí četl, jistě by myslil, že chceme vyjeti do Ameriky).*

*(When all circumstances will be positive and all things come together, like when we promised to each other at the time we were young (little) and foolish. At that time, we were more daring than now. Please once again, do not overthink for too long, when you agree, please write to me immediately and write right back, if I can come for sure. The best is to meet in Pardubice or when you come to Nové Město in Nemecký Brod. (If a stranger were to read this letter, he would think that we want to travel to America).)*

This extract is interesting also for another reason. In his article *Some Further Steps in Narrative Analysis*, Labov discusses a phenomenon called *Observer's Paradox*, which means the dilemma a researcher encounters when he or she is trying to find out how people speak when they are not being observed.<sup>51</sup>

When studying epistolary narrations, one does not need to take Observer's Paradox into account as often as with oral narrations because letters usually are intended for a specific reader or readers. Here, however, František imagines a third party reading his letter, which is also a healthy reminder that a researcher cannot completely ignore Observer's Paradox because the writer themselves may bear in mind that at some point an outsider possibly reads the text.

Hanna Elomaa, who has studied correspondences of Fenno-Swedish writers from the early 1920s until the 1940s, points out that the writers' texts were not only private texts but the speculation about other readers in the future was present during the writing process. For example, Elmer

---

<sup>51</sup> Labov 1997, 395.

Diktonius, who had extensive correspondences with several people, eliminated letters from his collection because he did not want outsiders to read the most “colourful” texts.<sup>52</sup>

Every now and then, František pays attention to the actual writing process and in a sense self-evaluates himself as a writer and his ability to express himself in writing.

*Kdy přijedu do Chrasti; to Vám pak ještě naiši; těším se, jako bych byl ještě ten malý student z Nov. Města. Kéž se nám slečna splní naše představy a za druhé abych se dostal do státní služby zde v Čechách. Tož neposuzujte dopisy podle délky jich, ani podle jednotlivých slov. Až se uvidíme, lépe se nám bude vzpomínat na Nové Město a na vše ostatní nežli lze to napsat.*

*(When I plan to come to Chrast, I will write to you; I am looking forward as if I was the small student from Nové Město . I hope our imaginations will come true and secondly I would be admitted to civil service here in the Czech lands. Do not criticize the letters according to their length, nor even according to individual words. When we see each other, we will easily remember Nové Město and everything else that I cannot write.)*

Sometimes evaluation includes self-reflection, and František is observing his personal development and his current life situation.

*Těď už nejsem tak volný jako dříve. Teším se , až budu ve státní službě, abych trochu odpočinul. Je to sice trochu brzo, chtít si odpočinuti, ale v civilní službě nemá člověk ani v neděli dopoledne. Teď na té vojně je to skoro ještě horší až na to, že se nemusím o nic starat. (Brno 14.10.1908)*

*(Now, I am not the same as I used to be. I am looking forward to being in the civil service, so that I can relax a bit. It is a little bit too early to want to take a break but in civil service a person does not have free time even on Sunday morning. Now during the military service, it is almost even worse except that I do not have to take care of anything. (Brno 14. October 1908))*

Complicating action can be present also in evaluation. In this case the young František is discussing his concern about keeping the relationship in secret and at the same time he is evaluating the future of the relationship, because he is leaving the town soon.

*[P]ani dom našla ty lístky, to mě řekl P. Ostatně nic na tom není; mě jest to stejné, jenom jestli Tobě to nepřineslo nějaký nepříjemný okamžik. Po prázdninách zde nebudem, tak co jest nám po kom.*

*([T]he landlady has found the letter I was told by P. After all, no fuss about it, it is all the same to me, just so you did not get into trouble. After holidays, I will not be here so why would be bothered by others)*

#### 2.5.4 Result or resolution

Quite often persuasion is connected to the result or resolution part of the letter. Here are a few examples of that.

*Udělejte, si někdy výlet do Pardubic a já bych tam Vás překvapil. Mám sice v neděli být v kanceláři; ale to bych nějak už snad zařídil; bez toho to bude asi až na druhý měsíc. Nějak se umluvte se slečnou F. Když by jste nemohla jeti sama a mohla by jste mi napsati.*

---

<sup>52</sup> Elomaa 2011, 288–289.

*(Why don't you make a trip sometime to Pardubice, and I would surprise you there. On Sunday, I should be in the office but I cannot manage to leave, it'll probably be next month anyway. Please make some arrangement with Mrs. F. If you cannot come alone you could write to me.)*

*Jen se prosím Vás milá slečinko nerozmýšlejte, kývněte svou hlavinkou. Těším se, že si zase po čase trochu povíme c nás tíží. Já si myslím že bych Vás už ani nepoznal. Prosím Vás tedy, raději se ani nerozmýšlejte a nepřipravujte a čím dříve mi napíšete, tím srdečnější Vám budu. Já bych Vám pak ještě jenom napsal, zdali bych mohl určitě přijeti (jestli jsem dostal dovolenou).*

*(But please dear missy do not think over (too much), just nod with your little head. I am looking forward to being able to speak about what is our burden. I think I would not even recognize you. Please do not now think too much and do not prepare, the sooner you write to me the more hearty (nicer, openhearted) I will be. I would write to you one more time, confirming that I can come (provided that I get a day off).)*

Here, in turn, result or resolution combines with evaluation. This quotation also reveals František's interpretation about Mařenka's ideas about him. The interpretation is most likely based on something that she wrote, but since we do not have her letters, it is impossible to say whether the interpretation is right or not.

*Je vidět, že je slečna Mařenka trošku pošetilá si představuje si mne jako nějakého rytíře z pohádky. Ovšem kdyby jste měla dobrou vůli, pak bychom snad zase mohli staviti základy do budoucna a snad by měly pevnější základy než před 7. léty. Odpusťte mi prosím Vás takového vyjádření - vím, že nesmím býti výbojným a nechat všechno náhodě a osudu. (Podbřežice, 3.9. 1908)*

*(It is evident, that Miss Mařenka is a little bit foolish and is imagining me as some knight from fairy tale. But if you had good will, we could build foundations more easily for the future and perhaps they would be stronger than 7 years ago. Forgive me these expressions, I know that I cannot be so aggressive and I must leave everything to coincidence and fate. (Podbřežice, 3 September 1908))*

Also the pressures about ageing and earning a livelihood can be a theme in the result or resolution part. This extract is somewhat mysterious, we will never know what František wanted to ask and if he and Mařenka actually met again. What František is waiting for from Prague is most likely something related to his work and career.

*Vy budete míti také snad nějakého hosta, takže bychom si nemohli tak pohovořiti. Ale jak to bude s Tvými pány rodiči. Přece nemohu jen tak přijeti na návštěvu - musíme si přece vážněji počínati - než loni něco přece musím říci. Příkládám té mé návštěvě trošku větší význam než loni. A nemůžeš mi míti ani za zlé, víš že už nejsem malý hoch. Byl bych rád, aby mi to z Prahy poslali. Chtěl bych se Tě Mařenko také na něco ptát, ale nevím s jakou bych u Tebe pořídil. Víš ale, musíš mne omluviti - chci jednat vážně a nehněvej se, že jsem tak zvědavý. Ústně bych se Tě na to jistě nikdy nezeptal a přece ten prosaický život trochu nutí, abych to aspoň nějak věděl.*

*(You will also have some guest, so we could not speak about anything anyway. But how is it going to be with your parents? I cannot just simply come for a visit, we have to be more serious than last year, I have to say something. I am giving a bit more significance to this visit than last year. You cannot blame me, I am not a young boy anymore. I would be happy, if they send it to*

*me from Praha. I would like to ask you something but I do not know what your reaction would be. You have to excuse me, I want to act seriously and do not be upset that I am so curious. I would never ask you verbally but our prosaic life is forcing me to know at least something.)*

The same complicating action which is present in the whole correspondence, the challenges to meet, can also be present in the result or resolution part of the letter, as is in the following situation. František is also looking for the resolution in the long-term by trying to convince Mařenka that his financially on solid ground.

### 2.5.5 Result or resolution and complicating action

František's letters frequently combine a complicating action with the result or resolution. Here I am giving a few examples.

*Uvidíte aspoň , jak se změnil Váš bývalý Frant a já zase svou Mařenku. Ale rád bych se dal fotografovati až budu na podzim na vojně. Nejlépe by ovšem bylo, kdybych mohl do Chrasti přijeti, ale bohužel nejsem teď pánem svého času. Vydělám si teď hodně peněz, ale za to nemám ani chvilku oddechu. (Brno 24. 8 1908)*

*(You can at least see how your former Frant has changed and I will see my Mařenka. I would like to have photo taken when I am at military service in the autumn. The best would be if I could come to Chrast, unfortunately, I am not the (lord) of my time. I make a lot of money now, therefore I do not have any time to relax. (Brno 24. 8 1908))*

The difficulties in finding a time and opportunity to arrange a meeting is here connected with the resolution that František does not want the relationship to be public yet.

*A co řekneme Vašemu milému panu otcí? Musíme s pravdou ven a ten se nám pak zasměje. Myslím však, že budu moci přijet až na nový rok; teď o svátcích budeme mít u nás příbuzné a nevím jak dlouho se u nás zdrží.*

*(What are we going to tell to your dear father? We have to tell the truth and he will then laugh at us. I think I can come during New Year; now during holidays we have relatives visiting, I do not know how long they will stay.)*

In the next example, loneliness is both the complicating action and result, because František does not believe in any improvement in the foreseeable future. This letter also reveals one more time that Mařenka jokes in her letters at František's cost a little bit.

*Počkej, počkej, dělali si dokonce i vtipy z usedlého pána. Nevím věru co bych Ti za to udělal, kdyby Jsi se mi dívala teď do pera. Ale Tys tak daleko a já se musím spokojiti jen vzpomínkami. O Vánocích musím uviděti to moje tajemství a přivést si zase trochu intensity do té naší Hory. Už vidím, že zase tak jako loni budeme si cizí, budeme mluvíti dosti úryvkovitě, patrně a jistě bychom se k těmto našim dopisům a u té tituluře jeden druhého skoro ani neznali.*

*(Wait, wait, to make even jokes of the settled down man. I do not know what I would do to you, if you were looking at my pen. But you are so faraway, I have to be satisfied with memories only. During Christmas, I have to see my secret and bring back along the intensity to (Kutna) Hora. I can predict, that like last year we will be strangers, we will speak in fragments, for sure we will refer to our letters otherwise we would not get to know each other.)*

Disagreements and arguments are part of the correspondence, as well as attempts to clarify the situations and creating reconciliation.

*Prosím Vás, co jsem Vám jen udělal, že Jste se tak rozhněvala. Nemohu si vzpomenouti ani na jedinké slovo ve svém posl. dopise, kterým bych Vás snad nevědomky urazil; tak dobře jsem to všechno myslil a Vy Jste mi patrně dobře nerozuměla. Nejvíce mne mrzí ta Vaše poznámka o malichernosti a o tom osočování. Připadá mi, jako by Jste to ani Vy nepsala; vždyť jsme si až dosud tak dobře rozuměli. Váš dopis mne moc velmi překvapil. (Hora Kutná 29. 12. 1908)*

*(Please, what have I done to you that you got so angry. I cannot recall one single word in my previous letter with which I could have unaware insulted you, I meant everything so well and you probably did not understand it. I regret mostly your comment on pettiness and about slurring. Seems that it wasn't even you writing it; for we've got along so well till now. Your letter surprised me a lot. (Hora Kutná 29 December 1908))*

*Aspoň abychom se udobřili; když Jsem si v posledních dopisech tak málo rozuměli. Prosím Vás tedy, napište mi laskavě jestli se nehněváte a mohu-li se u Vás zastavit. Budu teď nějaký čas doma - podával jsem si žádosti a teď budu čekat doma v sladkých nadějích a držet palec. (Brno, 12.1 1909 )*

*(In order to reconcile at least; since we did not get along well in the past letters. Please write to me kindly that you are not upset with me and that I can come and see you. I will be home for some time. I have sent in my applications and now I will be waiting at home in „sweet“ hopes and keep fingers crossed. (Brno, January 12 1909))*

Not only meeting is difficult, but the messages travel slowly and waiting for them is a struggle. In this extract which combines the complicating action and the result or resolution, František attempts to make the correspondence more efficient.

*Prosím Vás, až se rozhodnete a budete mi psáti, dejte dopis v sobotu ráno na poštu, abych jej dostal v neděli ráno sám do ruky. Jezdím celé dni po okrese a mohlo by se stát, že bych snad dopis nedostal. To je překážek vidíte, ale když si vzpomenu na Vaše krásné oči, zapomínám na všechno a chtěl bych se pustit k Vám.*

*(Please, when you decide and write to me, please send the letter with Saturday post, so that I can receive it on Sunday morning to my hands. I travel the district all week and it could happen that I would not receive the letter. So many obstacles, you see, but when i think of your beautiful eyes, I forget everything, I want to run to you.)*

## 2.5.6 Complicating action or resolution connected with memories

Since Mařenka and František have challenges in meeting and even communicating. It may also happen that the situation evokes nostalgic feelings in him - even in the young František who was still in high school, as in the quote below.

*Poněvadž to všechno na lístek nelze napsati, byl bych rád kdybychom se mohli někde sejiti; pokud možno sami. Pamatujete si Mařenko na zimu- na led? To byly časy.*

*(It is not possible to write everything in the letter/ message, I would be happy if we could meet somewhere; if possible, alone. Mařenka, do you recall the winter – ice? Those were the times.)*

Here the memory of Mařenka is connected to finding a way to meet.

*Dva roky jsem Vás neviděl a myslím, že bych Vás ani nepoznal. To bychom si zase jednou pohovořili a já si zase odvezl trochu krásných dojmů? Nejlépe by se mi to hodilo některou sobotu, nebo v neděli odpoledne. Ve čtvrtek pojedou do K.H. Budu se tedy těšiti na šťastnou náhodu, že se v Praze uvidíme a myslím, že se snad přece zase poznáme. Pamatuji si, že tenkrát v Chrasti měla, Mařenka takový nějaký pruhovaný bělavý plášť, náušnice s modrými kaménky a krásné roztomilé oči a já bláhoveček byl jsem krásnou Mařenkou tak odzbrojen, že jsem si ji bál vzíti za ručku. (Lysá nad Labem 2.12.1910)*

*(I have not seen you for 2 years and I think I would not even recognize you. We would once again speak a lot and I would take back some nice impressions? The best would be on Saturday or Sunday afternoon. On Thursday, I will go to Kutná Hora. I am looking forward to a lucky chance that we could see each other in Praha and I think that we recognize each other. I remember that back in Chrast, Mařenka had some kind of striped, whitish coat (light raincoat sort of), earrings with blue stones and beautiful cute eyes and the foolish me was so enchanted/disarmed by beautiful Mařenka that I was afraid to take her by hand. (Lysá nad Labem 2.12.1910))*

What is essential here is that we learn something about Mařenka, how she was dressed, as well as František's detailed memory of her.

### 2.5.7 Coda

*When I know something for certain, I will write to you immediately.*

Compared to e.g. Mirek's letters from Sachsenhausen, which I will discuss in chapter 3, František's codas are significant parts of the entity, they are long and they in a sense decorate the letter with their poetic word choices. Here František sends name day wishes to Mařenka in the coda.

*Zítřka je mariánský svátek; máte-li snad náhodou také své jmeniny, tedy přijměte i moje srdečné blahopřání; neumím užívat dlouhého frázování, ale doufám že si trochu rozumíme. Srdečně Vás zdraví, František Tippl H*

*Kutná Hora 7.12.1908*

*(Tomorrow is a Marian feast day; if, by any chance, it's also your name day, please accept my hearty/cordial wishes; I cannot write long phrases, but I hope we understand each other at least a little bit. Cordial greetings, František Tippl*

*Kutná Hora 7 December 1908)*

Coda can also be a place to pay compliments and express feelings, especially when the loved one is far away.

*Jsi skutečně krásná a proto Ti kyne daleko lepší štěstí. --- Jsem blažen, že jsi mi popřála své lásky aspoň na čas. Odpuť prosím, nemohu již dále psáti pro nevýslovnou bolest srdce. Bud' s Bohem a vzpomeň si na mne. V duchu Tě objímá a celuje Tvůj, František*

*(You are really so beautiful and therefore, a much better happiness awaits you... I am blissful that you have given your love to my for at least some time. Please forgive me, I cannot write any more because of unspeakable pain of heart. Farewell, and remember me. In my mind, I am hugging you and kissing you, Yours, Frantisek)*

In Coda, František may reflect on his writing and himself as well.

*Píši tak nejasně, že mi ani dobře neporozumíte, ale omluvte mne, tak nerad na své slabé schránky vzpomínám. Dovolí-li nám „osud“ zase někdy aspoň kratičké shledání, doufám, že rozřešíme zase aspoň kousek našeho úkolu a že si snad zase odvezu od Vás mnoho nadějí.*

*(I am so unclear with my writing, that you cannot even understand me but forgive me, I hate to think about my negative characteristics. If fate allows us at least a short meeting, I hope we will solve at least a bit of our quest and that I will gain a lot of hope from you again.)*

Sometimes we also learn about the place where František writes, like in the next example.

*Prosím Vás, omluvte mne, že tak nedbale a málo píši,- je to přímo v kanceláři. Jen tak na rychlo - jinak bych to byl zase nedokončil.*

*(Please forgive me for writing so casually and so little – I am right at the office. Just quickly – otherwise I would not finish the writing again.)*

Here František mentions Zdenka, who is possibly the same Zdenka whose letters I will discuss later. I cannot be absolutely certain, though, because this is a fairly common first name and there is no mention of the family name.

*Prosím Tě milá Mařenko, napiš mi do neděle kdy a kam přijedete. Slečně Zdeňce se nezapomenu poděkovati a srdečně ji pozdravuji a těším se až zase uvidím tu roztomilou Mařenku. Nejroztomilejší pozdrav posílá, Tvůj František*

*(Please Marenka, write to me until Sunday where and where are you going. I will not forget to thank Miss. Z and I heartily greet her and I am looking forward to seeing beloved Mařenka. The happiest greetings sends, your Frantisek)*

In epistolary research, encountering references to people whose identity remains unknown is not unusual. Here František mentions a common friend's initials only. He also comments on his own writing and apologizes for his untidy handwriting.

*Nehněvejte se, že tak neúhledně a nečitelně teď píši. Mám teď ve zvyku všechno dělat v kanceláři. Podruhé budu mít více času a budu psát pořádněji.*

*Pozdrav slečně přítelkyni Z.F.*

*(Do not be upset, how untidily and illegibly I write. I am accustomed to do everything in the office. Next time, I will have more time and will write more neatly.*

*Greetings to miss friend Z.F.)*

Also, one of the things we will may never know is if Miss Z. and Miss Z.F. are the same person and could they be the initials of Mařenka's friend Zdenka, whose letters will be analysed in chapter 5.

*Slečnu Z. dávám uctivě pozdravovati a onen vážný krok ať si dobře rozmyslí - a neprodává svobodu jen tak lacino. Prosím Tě vzpomeň si na mne zase nějakým psaníčkem, ale hodně velikým.*

*(I greet respectfully Miss. Z., and she should she think over her binding step – and does not sell her freedom cheaply. Please think of me and write me a letter, a big letter.)*

The coda may also include the wish for a new letter from Mařenka, as in the examples above and below. And it may still be the place to write about memories and the past things they have experienced together. Here František also refers to himself as Mařenka's former "third grader", which is a reference to him having to sit the third grade twice.

*Prosím Vás milá slečno, nešetřte papírem, ani inkoustem. Napište mi toho hodně moc. Ovšem nejvíce se těším až se uvidíme, pak milá slečno Mařenko, smím-li Vám to tak říkati, budeme si toho ještě mít kolik co vypravovat, že nám ani čas nestačí. Vždyť víte jistě jak jsem Vás měl dříve tak rád a na to se tak snadno nezapomene. Bohužel, že jsme se dlouho neviděli, změnili se a proto se teď pokládám za cizího, abych mohl důvěrněji psát. Prosím Vás, nezapomeňte na svého bývalého „terciána“ a brzy, hodně brzy ho potěšte obšírným dopisem. Ručku Vám líbá a tiskne, František T.(Brno 14. Řijna 1908)*

*(I ask you dear Miss, do not save paper, nor ink. Please write to me a lot. But the most I am looking forward to meeting you, then dear Miss Mařenka, if you allow me to address you like this, we will have so much to talk about, the time will not be enough. You know for certain I used to like you a lot before, it is not easy to forget this. Unfortunately, we have not seen each other for a long time, we changed and that is why I consider myself as stranger, so that I can write more confidentially. Please do not forget about your former "3rd grader" and quickly, very quickly make me happy with a long letter. Kisses on your hand and squeezing your hands, Frantisek T. (Brno 14 October 1908))*

Sometimes we learn things about Mařenka's life from the codas, such as the ball in which she has participated. The Headmaster is Mařenka's father.

*Těším se, že mi po plese pošlete malý referát, jak Jste se bavila. Prosím Vás, omluvte mne, tentokráte, že tak nečitelně píší, příště se polepším. Panu řídícímu dávám se srdečně poroučet a Vám přeji ještě jednou mnoho zábavy. Ruce Vám líbá, Geom T.*

*(I am looking forward to your small report regarding the ball dance, how you enjoyed it. Please, forgive me that my writing is so illegible, next time I will be better. I am sending greetings to the head(teacher) I wish you a lot of good time. Kisses on your hand, Geom T.)*

The following coda is from the time of František's military service. Going to Serbia may mean the Crisis of Bosnia which happened at the time.

*Celkem se mi zde dost líbí, až na tu execírku. Pojedemi-li do toho Srbska, tak Vám pošlu hodně pohlednic. Užijete tedy hodně krásného podzimu a až uznáte za dobré, napište mi zase něco od Vás z Čech; prosím Vás, ale hodně moc, je to jediné nač se tolik těším. Srdečně Vás zdraví Váš, František (Brno 5.11.190)*

*(I quite like it here, except the drills. If we go to Serbia, I will send you many postcards. So enjoy a very beautiful autumn and when you want, write me again something from Bohemia; please*

*write a lot, it is the only thing I am looking forward to. Heartily greetings, František (Brno 5 November 1908))*

František is not the only one to whom the quantity of the letter matters as well as quality. Also J.V. Snellman, Fennoman philosopher and Finnish statesman, hoped that his wife Jeanette would write “a couple of lines”. And he added: “The more [lines] the more loving towards me.”<sup>53</sup>

In the next coda František reveals something about their previous meeting. He came uninvited. Mother is not her biological mother because she died when Mařenka was still young, but her father’s new wife.

*Těším se na shledání; přijedu třeba zase jak nezvaný host; vždyť Jste všichni tak nekonečně dobří; jsem hrdý na Vaše vzácné přátelství. Budu teď nedočkavě čekat na Váš milý dopis – prosím Vás, nenechte mne dlouho čekat, víte přece jak jsem nedočkavý. Panu řídícímu dávám se uctivě poroučet, milostivé paní matince ruce líbám a Vám milá duše, líbám aspoň Vaši rukavičku a prosím brzkou vzpomínku. Frant.*

*Hora Kutná 18.1 1909*

*(I am looking forward to seeing you; perhaps I come again as an uninvited guest; you all are so endlessly good; I am proud of your precious friendship. I will be waiting for your nice letter impatiently - please do not let me wait for too long, you know how impatient I am. I send greetings to Mr. Head(teacher), and kisses on hands of your gracious mother, to you dearest soulmate, I at least kiss your glove and please remember me quickly. Frant.*

*Hora Kutná 18. January 1909*

Here is another coda which discusses the possibilities to meet, and this time František also wonders about the possibilities to deepen the relationship.

*Možná že mne to bude už zítra mrzeti, že jsem to psal. Ale prosím Tě dušičko moje, vid' že se nebudeš na mne hněvat. Vidíš, že já jsem na sebe také takový a nechci k Vám jeti dříve až dostanu jmenování. A kdybych chtěl, aby naše známost trvala 5–6 roků, pak bych se Tě na to nemusil ani ptáti; ale chci, aby to vedlo brzy k cíli. Prosím Tě, omluv svého filosofa a brzy mi zase piš. Přeji Ti veselé Svátky a těším se na nový rok. Nejsrdečnější pozdrav od Frant.*

*(Maybe, I will be regret tomorrow that I wrote this. But please my soul, please do not be angry with me. You know I treat myself the same, and I do not want to go to your place until I get an invitation. If I wanted our friendship to last 56years, then I would not have to ask you but I want this to lead to the final stage. Please, forgive your philosopher and write back to me fast. I wish you Happy Holidays and I am looking forward to a New Year. The heartiest greetings, form Frant.)*

## 2.6 Speculating a Bit

According to David Wood, --- *fictional narrative draws in the creative imagination, by offering us textually elaborated possibilities of existences.*<sup>54</sup> In the light of Wood’s statement I analyse my

---

<sup>53</sup> Eiranen 2016, 43.

own work the best I can. Is writing about František in the light of his letters and archival materials fiction? He definitely is more than the remaining documents and he cannot give his own versions about his life events anymore. For this reason, I would say that my creation is fiction, based on facts. The documents have given him one existence, whereas the memories of his still living relatives give him another.

In František and Mařenka's case, even the facts that we know about their later life create a fiction-like, maybe even a bit bookish story. They both left Nové Město na Moravě in their young days, František first and Mařenka a bit later when her father remarried and moved to his hometown in Bohemia, Chrast.<sup>55</sup>

However, they both, first moving from place to place in Bohemia, ended up living in Prague after the Second World War, about 5 kilometres from each other.<sup>56</sup> We do not know whether they ever met but it is very much possible that they did. The fiction writer in me wants to believe that they did.

Amanda Kelley and Heather Moser discuss the way Cicero describes his wife Terentia using traditionally masculine qualities: *incredibilis virtus et fortitudo*.<sup>57</sup> František does not see similar virtues in Mařenka, or at least he does not write about them. However, we know that Mařenka was both virtuous and brave because she hid and saved this family correspondence for us, the readers from the future.

## 2.7 References

- Bruner, Jerome. *Labov and Waletzky Thirty Years On*. In *Journal of Narrative and Life History*, Volume 7, Numbers 1–4. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, pp. 61–68, 1997.
- Burke, Kenneth. *The Grammar of Motives*. New York: Prentice-Hall. 1945.
- Eiranen, Reetta. *Kirjeet aikan ja paikan tunteikkaina ylittäjinä*. In *Niin & näin*, 2/2016, 43–46.
- Elomaa, Hanna. *Henkilökohtaista ja ammatillista: Ruotsinkielisten modernistikirjailijoiden kirjeenvaihtoa 1920-luvun lopulta 1940-luvulle*. In *Kirjeet ja historiantutkimus* edited by Maarit Leskelä-Kärki et al. Saarijärvi: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, pp. 273–297, 2011.
- Kelley, Amanda & Moser, Heather. "Words between Lovers: The Appearance of Spousal Love in Roman Letters". In *Private and Public Voices: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Letters and Letter Writing*, edited by Karin Koehler and Kathryn McDonald-Miranda. Oxford: Inter-Disciplinary Press, pp. 3–21, 2015.
- Koehler, Karin. "A husband without suspicions does not intercept his wife's letters': Letters, Privacy and Gender in the Victorian Novel." In *Private and Public Voices: Interdisciplinary*

---

<sup>54</sup> Wood 2002, 12.

<sup>55</sup> Census of Chrast in 1910. electronic copies available in Státní okresní archiv Chrudim.

<sup>56</sup> Personal communication with Vera Chrástná, 25 February 2012.

<sup>57</sup> Kelley & Moser 2015, 6.

*Approaches to Letters and Letter Writing*, edited by Karin Koehler and Kathryn McDonald-Miranda. Oxford: Inter-Disciplinary Press, pp. 155–182, 2015.

Labov, William. *Some Further Steps in Narrative Analysis*. In *Journal of Narrative and Life History*, Volume 7, Numbers 1–4. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, pp. 395–415, 1997.

Labov, William & Waletzky, Joshua. “Narrative Analysis: Oral Versions of Personal Experience”. In *Essays on the Verbal and Visual Arts: Proceedings of the 1966 Annual Spring Meeting of the American Ethnological Society*, edited by June Helm. Seattle & London: American Ethnological Society, pp. 12–44, 1967.

Ricœur, Paul: *Time and Narrative volume 1*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 1983.

Ricœur, Paul: *Time and Narrative volume 3*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 1990.

Sääskilahti, Nina. *Ajan partaalla: Omaelämäkerrallinen aika, päiväkirja ja muistin kulttuuri*. Jyväskylä: Nykykulttuurin tutkimuskeskuksen julkaisuja 105, Jyväskylän yliopisto, 2011.

Toolan, Michael: *Making Sense of Narrative Text: Situation, Repetition, and Picturing in the Reading of Short Stories*. New York and London: Routledge. 2016.

Wood, David. *Introduction: Interpreting Narrative*. In *On Paul Ricœur*, edited by David Wood. Oxon: Routledge, pp. 1-19, 2002.

### 2.7.1 Archival materials

Census of Chrast in 1910. electronic copies available in Státní okresní archiv Chrudim.

Censuses of Najdek in 1890 and 1900 (box 125). Okresní úřad Nové Město na Moravě. Státní okresní archiv Žďár n. S.

Gymnázia Kutná Hora, konferenční protokoly 1899/1900. book number 6., protocol number III (28 September 1899). Státní okresní archiv Kutná Hora.

Jedenáctiletá střední škola Nové Město na Moravě, knihy č 32, 38 a 41, Státní okresní archiv Žďár n. S.

### 2.7.2 Personal communications

Personal communication with Vera Chrastná (František's daughter), 25 February 2012.

Personal communication with Harri István Mäki, 17 November 2018.

E-mail correspondence with Vít Křesadlo: 3rd December 2017, 18 February 2019 and 27 February 2019.

### 2.7.3 Online materials

Cicero, Marcus Tullius: *Letters to Friends*, the latin text and the English translation: [https://www.loebclassics.com/view/marcus\\_tullius\\_cicero-letters\\_friends/2001/pb\\_LCL205.37.xml](https://www.loebclassics.com/view/marcus_tullius_cicero-letters_friends/2001/pb_LCL205.37.xml) (18 January 2020)

### 3 Pavel - Evaluation

Soon after František disappears from Mařenka's life, she marries Josef. This chapter introduces Mařenka and Josef's son Mirek and his good friend Pavel. Their friendship is revealed to us via Pavel's letters to Mirek. This part of the correspondence consists of 18 letters between the years of 1929 and 1938 and one envelope that once contained rose petals.

Let me, however, begin the chapter with a letter Mirek wrote to his parents from Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp, after spending there nearly eight months.<sup>58</sup>

Abstract

*Den 14./VII.1940*

*(14 July 1940)*

Orientation

*Meine Teuersten!*

*Nach einem längeren Warten als sonst habe ich vor einer Woche die Karte und auch den Brief bekommen.*

*(My dearest!*

*After an otherwise longer wait I have received the card and the letter.)*

Evaluation / Orientation

*Ihr kennt Euch gar nicht vorstellen, welche Freude mir gemacht hat, dass ich die bekannten Orte und Leute wenigstens auf einem Bilde wieder gesehen habe. Am gleichen Tage habe ich auch Euer Packet bekommen, mit dessen Inhalt ich sehr zufrieden war. Das alles hat mich in dem besten Gesundheitszustand eingetroffen und da fehlte mir zu einer völligen Zufriedenheit nur eine Versicherung, dass ich zu bestimmter Zeit nach Hause zurückkehren werde.*

*(You cannot imagine my joy when I have seen the familiar places and people, at least on a picture. On the same day I received also your package, I was happy with its contents. That all has happened to me in the best health and only one thing was missing from the full happiness, that I would return home at a certain time.)*

Complicating action / Evaluation

*Von dem Bilde konnte ich nicht eine lange, lange Zeit meine Augen lösen. In dem Falle, dass Ihr dem Pavel schreiben werdet, richtet ihm meine Grüsse aus. Ich denke auch oft auf ihn, ebenso wie auf alle Leute mit denen ich je verkehrte. Hier lebt man mehr der Vergangenheit, denn die Zukunft ist zu unsicher, als dass man irgendwelche Pläne machen könnte. Trotzdem vertragen wir*

---

<sup>58</sup> Since Mirek is not a native speaker of German, his letters do not always follow the standard written form of the language. Also his writing is strongly influenced by the spoken language and his native Czech. I have intentionally abstained from commenting on the deviations and allowed Mirek freely use his own voice.

*aber das alles gut – man kann sagen immer besser – den die Gewohnheit macht viel und die Jugend findet sich unter allem Bedingungen ihre Freude. Wo habt Ihr den H getroffen? Es handelt sich wohl um den Mediziner H?*

*(I could not help staring at the pictures for a long time. In case you write to Pavel, please send him my greetings. I think also of him often, as well as all other people with whom I was in contact with. Here one lives more in the past because the future is too uncertain, in order to make any plans. Despite all that, we take it all well – one can say better and better – because we are getting used to it and the young find their happiness in all conditions. Where have you met H? You must mean Doctor H?)*

Resolution / Evaluation

*– Mit den Kaninchen ist das gut – ich esse sie gern aber das, dass es ein leichtes Fleisch ist, ist für mich, Gott sei dank, nicht mehr entscheidend. Habt Ihr schon von dem Herrn H eine Antwort bekommen? Grüsst von mir alle Bekannten – auch Dana, wenn sie wieder mal anruft.*

*(- The rabbit is good – I like to eat it but the fact that it is light meat, is not, thank God, that important to me anymore. Have you received any answer from Mr. H yet? Greetings to all acquaintances from me – also Dana, if she calls again.)*

Coda

*Ich freue mich schon an Euer künftiges Schreiben – dass ich am Samstag zu bekommen hoffe. Es küsst und grüsst euch herzlich Euer Mirek.*

*(I am looking forward to your upcoming letter – that I am hoping to receive on Saturday. Cordial greetings and kisses to you from your Mirek.)*

This chapters will be the evaluation of the master story, the big narration that this whole correspondence formulates. Pavel's letters to Mirek show the outcome, Mirek's career success, Pavel's philosophical path, even though there will be the complicating action ahead, Mirek's incarceration in Sachsenhausen, and Pavel's complicating action is yet to come in the more distant future.

Pavel's tribulations actually stay cropped out of this thesis because it is not discussed in the material I am studying. It is still important to be aware of them as a background knowledge and I will discuss them briefly in chapter 4.

### 3.1 Introducing Pavel Křivský

It is far from simple to introduce Pavel Křivský, because he appears to be a rather contradictory figure in the history of Czech scouting. One of the reasons for people to have contradicting views about him is that he was a political prisoner between the years of 1952 and 1965, and he was sentenced for treasonous activities against the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic.<sup>59</sup>

---

<sup>59</sup> Operativni podsvazek, Pavel Krivsky\V\_672\_MV\_upraveno\V\_672\_MV\_Operativni\_podsvazek and Pavlíková, 2009, 24.

Kirsi Keravuori who has studied a correspondence of a country skipper family in the Finnish archipelago discusses the difficulties in contextualizing letters. When the recipient knows the circumstances and the context, the letters do not explain the background or temporal connections very clearly. Also, the correspondence itself is fragmentary because parts of it have been misplaced.<sup>60</sup>

Just like Keravuori, I have also used archival sources to make the puzzle as complete as possible. The most important biographical data of a human life is usually available, although it is often scattered around in different archives. In my project, Pavel's letters would have been impossible to contextualize without doing various researches in archives and interviewing people who knew Pavel or had life experiences similar with his.

It is essential for me to at least make an attempt to write a small introduction about Pavel Křivský. His complex character and life story make his intriguingly confusing letters at least a little more understandable. Also, Pavel is a relatively well known person in the Czech Republic, and for that reason there is plenty of material available about him.

The picture I am drawing about him here is based on discussions with several members of his former scout group, as well as other sources. Someone else might draw a completely different picture of him.

### 3.1.1 Pavel's youth

A member of Pavel's scout group, Sylva Šimsová interviewed his widow Marie Pavlíková in London (2-6 February 1990). The interview has turned out to be one of the most valuable sources for me in learning about Pavel's background. I am now giving a brief overview of Pavel's youth, using Marie Pavlíková's voice, since she and Pavel's letters to Mirek are the only sources I am aware of concerning his early years.

Pavel's family comes from Vysočina near Chotěboř, and he was born in the village of Bílek. His father owned a bakery. Pavel was a devoted listener to his grandfather's rich memories and other stories. Grandfather liked to talk, he remembered family history and the history of the region, and Pavel wrote everything down. Unfortunately, his sisters, when emptying the old childhood home, burnt those notebooks, which of course upset Pavel.<sup>61</sup>

Father allowed Pavel to study but he was not keen on it, he wished that as the only son, Pavel would become a baker and take up his work. Besides Pavel, they had three younger daughters. Mother was working at home, not only with household chores, but she also had a shop where she sold bread and other necessities. Mother was diligent, she had been working as a servant in a Jewish family and learned many things there. She was grateful to the family forever. The Křivskýs also had students living with them during the school weeks. Often on Sundays, when they were supposed to visit their families, they stayed for lunch because Mrs. Křivská cooked well.<sup>62</sup>

---

<sup>60</sup> Keravuori, 2017, 36.

<sup>61</sup> Pavlíková 2009, 17–18.

<sup>62</sup> *ibid*, 18.

In baptism, Pavel was named František, after his father, and Pavel was in fact his monastery name, which he kept after leaving the monastery. Mother, however, always called him František.<sup>63</sup>

Pavel remembered his mother fondly, and he was sorry not to see her when he was in jail in the 1950s-60s. Marie and Pavel's friends did not take her to Leopoldov prison to meet him because she was old and sick. In every letter he mentioned mother and sent a few words to her. Also, when Marie wrote to Pavel, mother sent her greeting and news.<sup>64</sup>

*Leopoldov 14/11 1954*

*Dear Marie, I thank you cordially for the gold and the money that I have received accordingly. It now depends on the doctor if it is enough. I hope it is so that I don't need to bother you more. I'm hoping to see you soon because I have a permission for a visit. I am now writing a new invitation to you and Václav because now only two visitors are permitted.*

---

*I am happy about your messages from the world of art and science. It is a pleasure to hear about the work and achievement of those who can still work. It is a pity that I cannot continue my scientific work. I had so much prepared and planned. I hope that at least you work, read and study from there, where I ended. I ask you to dedicate to books, documents and to work diligently. If your health permits*

*I ask you to greet my mother, sister, Václav and aunt. I ask you not to forget Bílková, acquaintances, relatives, our home region where it must be peaceful. I am looking forward to our meeting and wish you a lot of health and contentment.*

*Cordially yours,*

*Pavel*

---

<sup>63</sup> ibid, 18.

<sup>64</sup> ibid, 19.

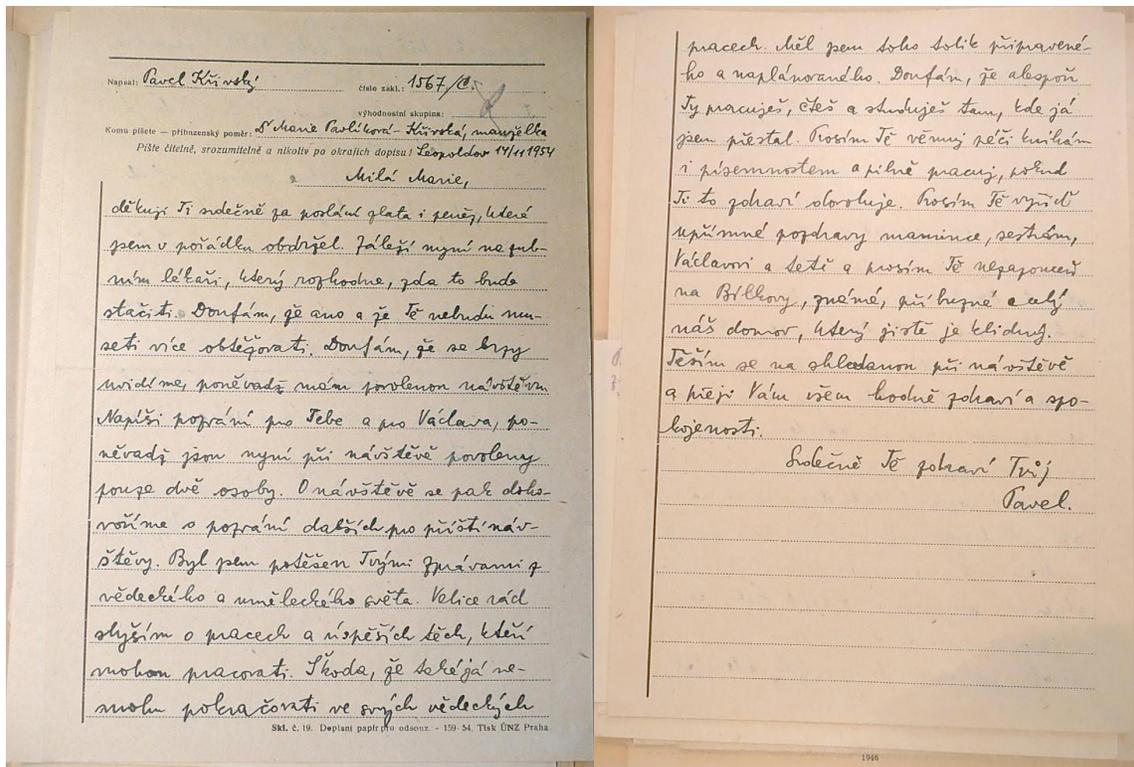


FIGURE 3 The Czech original of the previous letter. (Courtesy of Museum of Czech Literature)

Pavel studied in the gymnasium of Chotěboř 1922-1930. During his school years, he liked his Professor Wolf who taught writing and was a good friend with students. Professor Wolf brought scouting to Chotěboř and Pavel also joined. Wolf introduced the boys to the beautiful nature, by the River Doubravka. From those adventures, Pavel brought home plants and planted them in mother's garden.<sup>65</sup>

In the first (preserved) letter to Mirek, from summer 1929, which I will discuss more later in this chapter, Pavel also mentions wildlife, although he does not mention Professor Wolf or scouting. A possible explanation is that these things were self-evident in the lives of the schoolboys in Chotěboř that mentioning them was not necessary or relevant in communication

*F.K. Lorenci suo salutem dicit.*

*Jestli pak zaměstnán jsi práci tělesnou vzpomeneš si na tělovědu. Posílám Ti přednášky, abys nezapoměl. Možná že Tě překvapějí. Nezačínám buňkou, jak jsem Ti řekl, ale objasňuji základní pojmy morfologické a fyziologické buňka přijde na řadu později. Píšeš, že máš mnoho práce, ale já mohu říci, že ještě. Vedle práce doma, konám "apoštolskou práci" chodím zvonit, pomáhat přenášet mrtvoly. Se S dáváme do pořádku velké akvárium v komoře je vše nezměněno. V akváriu udělal S 2 kopce a zasadil rostliny 3 Valimerie. Já jsem nosil vodu. Elodea je asi 2x větší než já. Valimerie jsou také pěkné. (červenec 1929)*

<sup>65</sup> ibid 18–19.

*(F.K. Lorenzo suo salutem dicit.*

*While busy with physical work, I wonder if you remember somatology. I am sending you lectures so that you do not forget. Maybe you will be surprised. I do not start with the cell (biological) as I told you but I am illustrating basic morphological and physiological concepts, the cell will be explained later. You write that you have a lot to do but I can say that I have a lot more to do. Apart from working at home or at home, I do "apostolic work" - I ring bells, help to carry dead bodies. With Soucek, we are putting a bog aquarium I order, in the chamber nothing has changed. I made 2 hills and planted 3 Valimerias in the aquarium. I brought water. Elodea is approx 2x bigger than I. Valimeria plants are also pretty.(July 1929))*

### 3.1.2 Monastic Life

After Pavel finished high school, he started to study theology. Classmates were surprised, they expected him to study natural sciences or medicine. Father did not want Pavel to go to university because he had hoped that Pavel would become a baker but in 1930 Pavel moved to Hradec Králové to study theology.<sup>66</sup>

In Hradec seminary Pavel learned to know Metod Ťoukálek who was in the Želiv monastery as a member of clergy. Metod Ťoukálek was very energetic and practical, he always relied on Pavel. He understood that Pavel was soft and impractical and would be lost if he was going to be just a priest. So that is why he persuaded him to leave seminary and go to Želiv.<sup>67</sup>

Pavel went to introduce himself to the abbot and he took him. In spring 1931 Pavel became a novice. This is how Pavel started a period of life that he always said was beautiful. He felt like home in the monastery, and Pavel's future wife Marie Pavlíková was in the understanding that the Abbot liked him.<sup>68</sup>

In this short letter, or to be exact, a brief informative note, Pavel makes a reference to Hradec and his studies there. Dada who is mentioned in this note remains unknown to us. The 22<sup>nd</sup> of May is Emil's name day, but Pavel never mentions anyone called Emil in his letters. I have not found him in any other reference materials either

19.5.193

*Milý Mirku!*

*Velmi často vzpomínám na Tebe, zvláště teď když máš před maturitou. Vzpomínám, že Dada slavíval 22. května svůj svátek. Až mu budeš gratulovat připoj také moji vzpomínku na něho, že mu přeji, aby se tím mužem o kterém v Písmu se píše*

*qui ingreditur sine macula et operatur justitiam*

*qui loquitur veritatum in corde sua.*

*Qui non agit dolum in lingua sua. Nec fecit proximo suo malum at opprobrium non accepit adversus proximos suos (Žalm 14 september)*

---

<sup>66</sup> ibid,19.

<sup>67</sup> ibid, 19.

<sup>68</sup> ibid, 19.

*(Dear Mirek!*

*Very often I think of you, especially now that you have before graduation. I remember that Dada celebrated his name day on 22nd May. When you congratulate him also add my memory of him that I wish him to become the man that the Scripture sings about*

*ingreditur qui sine macula et operatur justitiam  
qui loquitur veritatem in corde sua.*

*Qui non agit mine in sua lingua. Nec fecit PROXIMO suo malum at opprobrium non accepit  
Adversus proximos suos (Psalm 14 september)*

*V úterý pojedu do Hradce vzpomeň na mě v modlitbě. Bude-li to možné rád bych se podíval do Chotěboře, přijel bych o ½ 6 hodině. Ovšem nevím to jistě.*

*(On Tuesday I go to Hradec remember me in prayer. If possible, I would like to go to Chotěboř, I would arrive about half six. But I'm not sure.)*

*Zdraví Tě a o modlitbu prosí.*

*(Greetings and asking for a prayer.)*

*Želiv 18-5 34*

*fr. Pavel O Praem*

During the time of preparation Pavel continued studies in Hradec Králové and took the exams. In 1934 he took the oath and the Abbot made him the archivist and librarian of the monastery. A year later he finished theology studies in Hradec Králové and he was ordained. Pavel's parents were not present in his ordination, his family was not particularly religious. His parents were Catholic though, but not devoted.<sup>69</sup>

Pavel also visited the Vatican in 1937, in order to participate in the election of the head abbot. He was accompanied by Abbot Vavroušek. This stay in Rome was a rich and beautiful memory for him. He talked about it during the night before his death in 1989.<sup>70</sup>

In 1939 Pavel became the novice master of Želiv. He was in charge of the boys who entered the monastery. He also frequently visited Prague, even after the universities were closed. He was happy to return to Želiv but he was also happy with his students in Prague and he stayed in the Emmaus monastery close to Karlovo náměstí.<sup>71</sup>

At this point Marie Pavlíková's story about Pavel's life crosses with another key theme of my research. By closing the universities she refers to the events of November 1939 when the Nazi regime decided to close the Czech universities in Bohemia and Moravia, as one of its means to oppress the Czech nation. Mirek's destiny in this era of history was to be incarcerated in Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp. This topic will be discussed more thoroughly in later chapters.

---

<sup>69</sup> ibid, 20.

<sup>70</sup> ibid, 20

<sup>71</sup> ibid, 21.

Emmaus, in turn, is a community of Benedictine monks in Prague. Also Mirek knew that Pavel used to stay there during his visits to Prague. Two draft versions of Mirek's letters to Pavel have been preserved. For one reason or another, Mirek (or possibly his mother Mařenka) has wanted to keep them. In one of those drafts (dated 26<sup>th</sup> June 1936) he writes to Pavel as follows:

*Milý Františku!*

*Konečně jsem našel trochu času abych Ti odpověděl na Tvůj dopis. Jak si můžeš sám představit měl jsem v poslední době v Praze hodně práce a nemohl jsem Tě vyhledat. Hned po rigo jsem však spěchal do Emmauz a tam jsem se k svému nemilému překvapení dověděl, že jsi byl nemocen a že již delší dobu nejseš v Praze. Byl bych Ti psal, ale čekala na mě pitva - ve dne práce- večer nová příprava a k tomu ta vedra a cesty mezi rozpálenými kameny Pražských ulic mě tak dokonale vyčerpávaly, že jsem prostě nebyl schopen jakékoliv práce.*

*(Dear František,*

*I finally found some time to answer your letter. You can imagine, I had a lot of work to do recently in Prague and I could not visit you But immediately after the rigo<sup>72</sup> I rushed to Emmaus, and there, to my unpleasant surprise, I learned that you'd been ill and that for some time you were not in Prague. I would have written to you, but there was an autopsy awaiting me - work during day – a new preparation in the evening and furthermore the heat wave and the passages between the hot street stones of Prague, I was so completely exhausted that I just could not do any work.)*

It is worth noting that Mirek refers to Pavel with his original name, given to him by his parents, instead of his monastery name. We also learn a bit about Mirek's life as a medical student. Later in this chapter we will see how Pavel in his letters discussed Mirek's plan to become a doctor.

In the summer of 2018, I visited Emmaus monastery in Prague, to ask if they have old guest books or any other documentation about visitors. I was told at the information desk that it is virtually impossible that Pavel who was in a different monastic order (Premonstratensian) could have stayed in Emmaus, which is a Benedictine monastery. However, not only Mirek but also Pavel's scout friends confirm that he did stay in Emmaus. Why there and not in Strahov, which is a Premonstratensian monastery in Prague, remains unknown.

The Czech National Archive prepared the little material they have from the 1940s about Emmaus for me to study. Most of the documents were destroyed by one of the American bombs accidentally dropped to Prague on 14 February 1945. The accident was caused by a navigation mistake, the intended target was Dresden.

As I presumed, I did not find anything relevant. In the same folders I could find materials from the 1920s and 1930s. Even the beer and grocery bills were saved and arranged chronologically, but the possible traces of Pavel had turned into ashes.

### 3.1.3 The Beginning of Scouting and Educating Young People

During his years in Želiv Monastery, Pavel had his first scout group. He chose young people from the villages, educated them and helped them in social problems as well as finding opportunities

---

<sup>72</sup> Rigo - rigorózní zkouška, an exam to gain a doctorate.

to study further.<sup>73</sup> Actually, when I returned home from Prague in June 2018, I understood that I had actually found something relevant in the National Archive.

In 1949 he left the Catholic church, but his distancing from the church was not a typical one; he kept the Christian values and cherished them outside of official or organised practising of religion.<sup>74</sup>

*Mluvíš o Katolicismu. Soudíš dle povrchu. Církev je pro všechny "jdouce učte všechny národy" a proto postupem doby dostalo se do ní mnohých formalit, ale je to docela přirozené. Tím se však stává, že pod těmi zvyky, jádro mizí – a proto tolik nepochopení. Mnohé nepřátelství vzniklo z nepochopení! Nedívej se na formality, ale jdi ke kořenům, i já jsem chyboval soudě zevnějšek, ale nyní vidím co krásy je skrytou pod hezkými povrchnostmi. Později více, ústně! (červenec 1932)*

*(You're talking about Catholicism. You judge according to the surface. The Church is for all "Go ye therefore and teach all nations" and therefore over time it fell into many formalities, but it is quite natural. In this way, however, it happens that under those habits, the core disappears – and therefore there is so much misunderstanding. Much hostility arose from a misunderstanding! Do not look at the formalities, but go to the roots, even I erred judging from appearances, but now I see what beauty is hidden under nice superficiality. Later, more verbally! (July 1932))*

Another monastery, interesting for me is Želiv. Its documents are also lost, concerning those years critical for me. Nobody seems to know why. I have communicated with several places where some of the information might be hiding.

*The most likely reason for this is that Želiv became a prison for priests in the 1950s. Horrible things happened there (as well) but I'm not going to write more about them today. The latest documents that had not been archived yet may simply be burnt or destroyed otherwise*

*When I return home, I understand that this tiny piece of information helps me a bit. Marie Pavlíková tells in her interview that Želiv was prospering, but at the same time the people living in the countryside around the monastery were struggling. One of Pavel's scouts, Vladimír Zikmund has told me that Pavel noticed injustices in the relations between the monastery and the surrounding village. For instance, he had seen people being forced to do fieldwork for the monastery and a pregnant lady lifting heavy things when carrying out her duties to the monastery.<sup>75</sup>*

*On the other hand, Želiv Monastery had given a loan of one million Czechoslovak Crowns (approximately between 10 and 25 million Czech crowns in 2020) to Strahov Monastery in Prague.*

*(My personal notes, 20 June 2018)*

---

<sup>73</sup> Personal communication with Alena Benešova, 21 October 2011.

<sup>74</sup> Personal communication with a group of scouts 20 October 2011. and Kopřiva 2009, 10.

<sup>75</sup> Pavlíková 2009, 21. and Personal communication with Vladimír Zikmund. 23 February 2016.

In other words, Želiv monastery, could afford to lend money to its fellow monastery in Prague but not to develop the living conditions and wellbeing of the people who lived close to it. This small document might be a key to the reasons why Pavel walked out of the monastery gates.

The key words which seem to appear in the narrations of people who belonged to Kruh are self-education and learning responsibility. The heritage of Pavel's teachings is cherished even in the year of 2020, the members of Kruh continue meeting once a month in "a salon" where they discuss and lecture to one another or invite guest lecturers.

Pavel was a budding educator in his youth, when he was keeping up the correspondence with Mirek.

*Mi13/VI 34*

*Milý Mirku!*

*Děkuji Ti srdečně za Tvůj dopis i za Tvoji fotografii. Bude ji uchovávat jako milou památku na Tebe. Těší mě, že jsi vykonal tak skvěle "prima testamina? publica". Gratuluji Ti k Tvému úspěchu kéž Ti dopadnou všechny zkoušky, které na Tebe čekají tak krásně. Doufám, že jistě se Ti to podaří při Tvém velkém nadání a vytrvalosti, vždyť budeš studovat to co jsi v dětství měl rád a v čem jsi našel tolik krásy.*

*(Dear Mirek!*

*Thank you sincerely for your letter and for your photo. It will be nice to keep it as a nice memory of you. I am pleased that you did so well 'prima testamina? publica ". Congratulations on your success, I wish you all your tests which await you go so beautifully. I hope that you will surely succeed, given your great talent and perseverance, you'll study what you liked as a child and where you found so much beauty.)*

*Prožíváš radostné chvíle, kéž čistá radost Tě nikdy neopustí.*

*(You are spending joyful moments, may pure joy never leave you.)*

*Ke zkouškám pojedu kolem 24. června buď v sobotu nebo v pondělí. To nevím ještě přesně, až budu připraven. Doma se zastavím jako obvykle jen na krátko, abych mohl ještě něco do konce roku školního si připravit.*

*(I go for the tests around 24th June either on Saturday or Monday. I do not know yet exactly, when I am ready. At home, I'll stop as usual only for a short time, so I could prepare something by the end of the school year.)*

*Byl bych rád, kdybych se mohl s Tebou sejít, no až jak Pán Bůh dá.*

*Srdečně Tě zdraví a na Tebe vzpomíná*

*Frater Pavel o Praem*

*Želiv, 15. června 34*

*Večer o 6 hodině*

*(I would be glad if I could see you, God willing.*

Warmly greets you and remembers.

Friar Pavel o Praem

Želiv, 15 June 34

Evening 6pm)

Pavel also makes references to several literary works, and it would be very interesting to analyse the development of his thinking in the light of these texts. This, however, would be a very extensive task and it would sidetrack me from the actual focus of this thesis, the family correspondence as an entity. It is very unfortunate that I have had to make choices and frame the literary references out of my work and give them less notice than what they would deserve.

*Koupil jsem si Srdínka: O drobnohledné stavbě těla člověka (histologie) O vývoji těla člověka. (embryologie). Velmi pěkné, srozumitelné populární učebnice histologie a embryologie. Ale ať Ti píší cokoliv o tomto nikdy neodpovídáš. Tak jsem Ti psal o Voronovových pokusech o zmlazení a nabízel jsem Ti, že pošlu Ti referát ale ani slova jsi nenapsal. Psal jsem Ti o úvahách, které jsem měl v neděli a také neodepsals. Či Tě to obtěžuje napiš! (červenec 1929)*

*(I bought Srdínko's books About the microscopic structure of human body (histology), About the development of the human body(embryology) These are very nice, comprehensive, popular textbooks of histology and embryology. But whatever I write to you about this you never answer. I also wrote you about Voronov's attempts for regeneration and offered to send you an overview but I have not received a one word reply. I also wrote to you about thoughts which I had on Sunday and you also did not write. If it is bothering you, please let me know! (July1929))*

*Už dávno, jako student jsem toužil zpracovati si pro Tebe a sebe určitá pravidla, kterých užívající přiblížili bychom se k větší dokonalosti a k větší lásce, které je tolik a tolik potřeba. "Kdybych lásky neměl byl bych zvoncem znějícím ... ". (cf. Sv. Pavla). Dlouho jsem hledal, mnohé se mě líbilo, ale přece nevyhovovalo, buď to Tvé nebo mé povaze. Teprve nyní přišel jsem k Franklinovi a u něho jsem našel co jsem hledal. On si vypracoval pravidla. Věděl dobře, že den ovládaný určitou ctností může býti dobře a užitečně tráven. A proto vypracoval cvičení 13 cností. (Já jsem je rozšířil na 20, ale prozatím, abys měl přehled uvedu Ti jen franklinovské.)*

*(Long ago, as a student I wanted to compile for you and myself certain rules, by following of which we would approach the greater perfection and greater love which is so much needed. "If I had no love I would become a noisy gong ... ". (cf. St. Paul). I was looking for a long time, many things I liked, but they did not suit, either to your or my character. Only now I found Franklin and in him I found what I was looking for. He developed rules. He knew well that a day dominated by a certain virtue can be well and usefully spent. And therefore he worked out the exercises of 13 virtues. (I've expanded them to 20, but for now so that you have an overview I will present you Franklin's [virtues]).)*

Just like Apostle Paul did not know that his letters and letters written under his name in later times (some of which were addressed to his personal friends) would become an essential part of the Christian Biblical canon, Pavel Křivský could not have guessed that his letters to his friends and acquaintances would be read as far away from Bohemia as in Finland. This is an important

factor to bear in mind when reading and interpreting his letters – as well as any letters meant for another reader in another time

### 3.1.4 Lidice and Strahov Library

Pavel's path crosses with the destiny of one of the best-known villages of Czechlands, Lidice. Lidice was burnt down by the Nazi regime, and its inhabitants were either executed or incarcerated as a revenge because some people living in the village were falsely accused of being involved in the assassination of Protector of Bohemia and Moravia Reinhard Heydrich in June 1942.

At that time, Pavel was serving as a priest of Buštěhrad, which is a village right next to the village of Lidice. Marie Pavlíková has told Sylva Šimsová that when Lidice was on fire, a local lady informed Pavel that there were stolen weapons stashed in the church. If the Germans had known this, Buštěhrad's destiny would have been the same as that of Lidice's. Pavel had made sure that the guns had been destroyed.<sup>76</sup>

Professor Stanley B. Winters also mentions Lidice in Pavel's obituary in History Newsletter, Bulletin of the Czechoslovak History Conference. According to him, Pavel had even visited Lidice and asked if it had been possible for him to give the villagers who would be executed the last rite. The permission had been denied. Also the scouts who knew him, know this story, but to my knowledge it has not been documented anywhere else.

---

<sup>76</sup> Pavlíková 2009, 16.

# CZECHOSLOVAK HISTORY NEWSLETTER

Vol. 13, No.1 Spring 1990

BULLETIN OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK HISTORY CONFERENCE

Page 8

## PAVEL KŘIVSKÝ, HISTORIAN AND ARCHIVIST (1912-1989)

PhDr. Pavel Křivský died in Prague on December 15, 1989, in the midst of celebrations that he had awaited for many years. He was seventy-seven on November 11. Dr. Křivský was known through his writings and personally to scholars as a specialist in the Czech national renaissance, with particular attention to Bernard Bolzano, Josef Dobrovský, and Augustin Smetana. Nothing about the history of his homeland was foreign to him, however, because of his knowledge of classical and foreign languages and of heraldry, calligraphy, and other so-called auxiliary sciences of history.

Born in Bilek, a village in southeastern Bohemia, he was attending Charles University when the Nazis closed it in November 1939. Křivský, an ordained priest, offered to administer the last rites to those rounded up for execution at Lidice in June 1942 but was refused permission. He was a member of the first postwar graduating class at the university (1945/46) and produced a dissertation entitled, "O pečetech a erbech v řádě premonstrátském a cisterciáckém" sponsored by Professors Václav Vojtěšek and Vladimír Klecanda. After February 1948 he was imprisoned for many years. Upon release he became a staff worker at the Literární Archiv Památník národního písemnictví at Strahov. American scholars met him there while pursuing research in the 1960s and 1970s. Some may still recall how he would thoughtfully bring to the work table items he believed were of value that might otherwise be missed.

Dr. Křivský and his wife and co-worker, Dr. Marie Pavlíková, occupied a neat, booklined apartment in the Břevnov district that was always filled with projects of a sort that only scholars with a firm command of their craft could have undertaken. While at LAPNP, Dr. Křivský prepared several dozen valuable guides to manuscripts in the collections. Among them, one of the last, written with Dr. Pavlíková, was *Bernard Bolzano (1781-1848): Literární pučálost* (1981). Among his books and numerous articles one may cite, "Korespondence Antonína Puchmajera s Josefem Dobrovským," *Literární archiv* 8 (1973), pp. 199-256; and *Popis Strahova a jeho vodovodu z roku 1782 a jeho autor J. A. Kolbe* (1983). A tribute prepared for his seventieth birthday was sent him by sixteen Canadian, German, English, and American colleagues, most of them CHC members, and published in *East Central Europe* (1982). Among Dr. Křivský's professors at Charles University, his highest regard was for Otakar Odložilík. He was fond of repeating Odložilík's admonition to selected students: "Concentrate! Concentrate! Concentrate!" Dr. Křivský heeded that advice. In him, the noble qualities of self discipline, discretion, loyalty, friendship, and passion were combined with deep appreciation for the gift of life.

STANLEY B. WINTERS  
New Jersey Institute of Technology

FIGURE 4 The obituary of Pavel Křivský. (Courtesy of Museum of Czech Literature)

Doctor Vladimír Zikmund, who was a scout from Buštěhrad, has told me that Pavel and the priest of Lidice had good relations with one another, which indicates that Pavel may have felt responsibility about the neighbour village and its people.<sup>77</sup>

It is also plausible that Pavel communicated and shared parts of his life story with the foreign students and researchers whom he encountered in Strahov library, where he ended up working after his imprisonment, since 1967.<sup>78</sup> (I will discuss the imprisonment and amnesty more in chapter 4.) According to Marie Pavlíková, he learned English from the Czech pilots in the prison

<sup>77</sup> Personal communication with Vladimír Zikmund. 23 February 2016.

<sup>78</sup> Kopriva 2009, 11.

of Leopoldov who had served in the RAF during the war years and who had also been incarcerated during the Stalinistic era.<sup>79</sup>

Hence, we have a reason to believe that he has been able to share a story like this about his life with an outsider during the years when one had to be selective when discussing the past. Also from Marie Pavlíková's interview we can draw a conclusion that even though Pavel was not in a remarkable position in the library, he was still allowed to do and arrange the work his own way.<sup>80</sup> In this kind of situation it may have been possible to find ways to talk about sensitive topics as well.

Mrs. Alena Benešová mentions Pavel's last working years in Strahov as well. She and her husband did not consider it wise to keep in touch with Pavel during the Communist era because they did not want to cause him any difficulties. However, when her husband borrowed books from the library, he often saw the book order receipts written in a familiar handwriting, Pavel's handwriting. This way they both knew about one another.<sup>81</sup>

Also Mrs. Benešová remembered seeing Marie and Pavel on a tram in 1978. They all pretended not to know each other, but this is how she found out that Pavel had got married. Her husband had visited a second-hand bookshop near Václavské Náměstí a few years after Pavel's arrest. They had been alone in the shop and talked for a while about their common friends and acquaintances. Marie had told Mr. Beneš that Pavel was incarcerated but she had not mentioned, or even hinted about her marriage to Pavel.<sup>82</sup>

### 3.2 Introduction to the Letters via the Logic of Narrative Analysis

Pavel's letters represent a different text type from the letters written by František's and Mirek and for this reason they do not generally follow L&W. Hence L&W is not an adaptable tool in studying this part of the correspondence.

However, Labov in his book *The Language of Life and Death* introduces a different, less restrained model, which he has named the logic of narrative analysis (LONA)<sup>83</sup> I have introduced LONA in chapter 1.2.

Here are a few remarks about LONA in the context of Pavel's letters:

The most relevant points of LONA in Pavel's letters are 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.b, 6.c, 6.d, 8.a, 8.c and 8.e. The reasons for their relevance lie in the themes that Pavel discusses in his texts.

The least relevant one is obviously 7 because in written communication it is impossible to know what the writer has omitted, especially when the reader is someone who did not know the writer personally and the text is more than eight decades old. This is one of the characteristics of epistolary research, the researcher is often more or less an outsider and his or her interpretation

---

<sup>79</sup> Pavlíková 2009, 25.

<sup>80</sup> *ibid.*, 27.

<sup>81</sup> Personal communication with Alena Benešová, 21 October 2011.

<sup>82</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> Labov 2013, 223.

about the texts may differ remarkably from that of the person to whom the letter was originally addressed.

Just like Labov, I also started my analysis by asking, "What is this story about?", in order to detect the most reportable event.<sup>84</sup> This was not possible with each of Pavel's letter, because he has a tendency to teach and preach, even as a writer. I will return to this theme later in this chapter.

*Vůle povede Tě k milosrdenství, které může vyjít ze srdce širokého, totiž ze srdce, které je tak rozpjato láskou boží, že dovede všechny, ano všechny obejmouti, všemu porozuměti, všem rozuměti, se všemi míti soucit a všechno učiniti co jen je možno. Milosrdenství Tě dovede na vrchol krásného lékařství tak, jak si ho představoval na př. dr. Mareš ve spise " Pravda nad skutečnost." (srpen 1933)*

*(The will will lead you to the mercy which can go out of a wide heart, namely from the heart that is so spread (out) with God's love that it can embrace all, yes, all, understand everything, comprehend everyone, feel compassion with everyone, and does all that is possible. Mercy leads you to the top of the beautiful medicine, as imagined/conceived, for instance, by Dr. Mares in his book "The truth above reality. (August 1933))*

The letter below demonstrates how the elements of LONA are apparent in Pavel's letter writing style.

*V Želivě 11 července 1933*

*Můj milý Mirku!*

*(In Želiv 11 July 1933*

*My dear Mirek!)*

*Přijmi ode mne mnoho pozdravů a neustalých vzpomínek. Nebylo dne, abych si na Tebe nevzpoměl.*

*(Accept my greetings and many permanent memories. There was not one day that I would not remember you.)*

*Divil jsi se asi, že Ti P vyřizoval pozdrav. On totiž mě psal, že jeho bratr je bez místa, jestli tedy není v Želivě při hospodářství nějaké místo. Psal mě 6. června a já ubohý jsem mu odpověděl až 27. června t.r. Chtěl jsem Ti několikrát psát, ale nemohl jsem tak alespoň při této příležitosti jsem Ti poslal nejvroucnější přátelský pozdrav, abys věděl, že na Tebe stále vzpomínám.*

*(You are probably surprised that you received greetings via P. He wrote me that his brother does not have a job, whether here in Želiv there is a position in agriculture. He wrote to me on 6th of June and my miserable self wrote to him late on the 27th of June this year. I wanted to write to you several times, but I could not then so at least on this occasion, I send you warmest friendly greetings to let you know that I still think of you.)*

*Studoval jsem rychle a myslel jsem, že už konečně budu moci jet na zkoušky. Když poslední týden v květnu mě přepadla hrozivá malátnost, melancholie a všechny ty hrozné stavy, které s ní jsou*

---

<sup>84</sup> Labov 2013, 225.

spojeny. V celé budově jsem byl sám sdp. J. K., který pro takové věci nemá pochopení. A tak jsem byl zůstaven sám sobě. Byla to hrozná doba. Nemohl jsem nic dělat, naprosto jsem nevydržel ani číst ani studovat, ani chodit, vše mě příšerně rozdrážděovalo ale to bylo jen vevnitř napovrch to bylo velmi pěkné. Takže všichni se divili, že chci k lékaři. Jel jsem přece a ten mě napsal zdravotní dovolenou. Zakázal mě číst, psát! A tak jsem po celý měsíc lenořil ale ke svému prospěchu takže teď je to opravdu krásné a teď mě lékař uložil, abych hodně pracoval i tělesně i duševně. Práce tělesná je velmi důležitá a já poněvadž jsem ji zanedbával měl jsem ty následky (v ledvinách se tvořily přespříliš bílkoviny, krev špatně cirkulovala atd.) Teď vedle procházek pracuji na zahradě, štípám dříví, pracuji s včelama a jím jen rostlinou stravu a při tom jsem neobyčejně svěží takže teď mohu 2x tolik dělat než jsem dělal aniž bych byl malátný a unavený. Jsem jako znovu zrozen. Rostlinná strava dělá mnoho! Nikdy jsem si to ani nechtěl uvědomiti a nemyslel jsem, jak blahodárné může mítí účinky vyloučení všeho masa těžkého pro tělo.

(I studied quickly and I thought that finally I could go for the exams. When the last week in May I fell into terrible fatigue, melancholy and all the terrible conditions that are associated with it. In the whole building I was alone with dp. J.K. who has no understanding for such things. So I remained alone. It was a terrible time. I could not do anything, absolutely could not read anything, or study, or walk, I was terribly annoyed by all of it, but it was only on the inside on the surface it was very nice. So everyone was surprised that I wanted to see a doctor. I went anyway and he put me on sick leave. leave. He forbade me to read, write! So, I have been lazy for the entire month but to my advantage so now it's really beautiful, and now my doctor ordered me to do a lot of work physically and mentally. Physical work is very important and I neglected it, that is why I had these effects (too much protein was formed in the kidneys, bad blood circulation, etc.) Now, in addition to walking, I work in the garden, cut wood, work with bees, eat only vegetables, and in doing so I am extremely fresh so now I can do 2x as much as I did without being languid and tired. I am, as it were, born again. Vegetables food does a lot! I never even wanted to consider it and I never thought how beneficial effects it can have to exclude all meat which is so heavy for the body.)

Odpust mě, že jsem se tak rozepsal o malichernostech! Můžeš si vzít poučení z toho a jen proto to píš.

(Forgive me that I have written so much about such trivial things! You can take lessons from it and therefore I write it.)

Děkuji Ti srdečně za dopisy, které mě potešily, teď už naše dopisování bude pravidelnější.

(Thank you sincerely for your letters, which pleased me, now our correspondence will be more regular.)

Byl u mě jeden Belgičan. Jel s rozkazem generála řádu premonstrátského po našich kláštorech v ČSR a v Želivě se zdržel 2 dny. Velice mnoho jsem se dozvěděl o Belgii a sám se za to přimlouval, abych jel do Belgie, ale teď to nechci, až budu hotov tady t.j. až za rok a potom tam. Ale nevím jestli budu moci absolvovat celé studium (to trvá 6 let ještě!)

(I had a Belgian visitor. He came to visit our monasteries in Czechoslovakia by the command of the General of our Premonstratensian Order, and he stayed in Želiv for 2 days. I learned very much about Belgium, he himself interceded for me to go to Belgium, but now I do not want to go,

*when I'm done here within one year then I can go there. But I do not know if I can complete the entire study (it takes 6 more years!))*

*V příštím dopise až zase bude pravidelnější pořádek teď ještě to není možné, poněvadž píši narychlo, mám mnoho dopisu k vyřizování neboť o té dovolené se toho mnoho nahromadilo.*

*(In the next letter, when things are back in order, now it is not possible because I am writing in a rush, I have many letters to deal with because during the holidays, so much has accumulated.)*

*Uživej příjemně prázdnin ke svému vnitřnímu vzrůstu.*

*Zdraví Tě a neustále na Tebe vzpomíná.*

*(Enjoy a pleasant break for your inner growth.*

*Greetings to you and always remembering you.)*

*Br. Pavel O Praem*

Orientation of this letter leads to the reportable event, which is the Belgian visitor. Another thing he mentions about his daily life is dusting off old books in the library, which creates an interesting contrast, because a remarkable part of the letter is theological discourse. In a sense the books which stimulate him in his thinking are also part of the mundane day-to-day life in the monastery because they need to be kept clean.



**FIGURE 5** Zeliv Monastery library. (Photo by Turkka Kulmala)

The books in the monastery library turn up in his later life, because right after the war, in the late 1940s and 1950s Pavel worked in the Czechoslovak Ministry of Internal Affairs. One of his tasks

was to reorganise the archives of the country. During that process he also visited Želiv monastery, in order to transfer old manuscripts and other documents from the monastery to different archives.<sup>85</sup>

The complicating actions are the heavy workload and the difference between ideal world and reality. Evaluation, in turn is type 8.e, since Pavel praises Miroslav and refers to him with emotional words.

*Můj milý Mirku!*

*Můj Duch zalétá k Tobě, touží po tobě, rád by s Tebou byl spojen k neustále harmonii věčného bratrství posvěceného svatým plamenem nadšení a budoucího Tvého i mého kněžství. Jsme vzdáleni od sebe a proto dopisem, ubohým Ti výrazem toho čím srdce překypuje se spojme k velkým věcem.*

*(Dear Mirek!*

*My Spirit flies to you, craves for you, would like to be connected to you in constant harmony of eternal brotherhood consecrated by the holy flame of enthusiasm, and your and my future priesthood. We are far from each other, and therefore through this letter, only a poor expression of what the heart overflows with, let us connect in doing great things.)*

*Už dávno, jako student jsem toužil zpracovati si pro Tebe a sebe určitá pravidla, kterých užívající přiblížili bychom se k větší dokonalosti a k větší lásce, které je tolik a tolik potřeba. "Kdybych lásky neměl bych zvonceznějším ... ". (cf. Sv. Pavla). Dlouho jsem hledal, mnohé se mě líbilo, ale přece nevyhovovalo, buď to Tvé nebo mé povaze. Teprve nyní přišel jsem k Franklinovi a u něho jsem našel co jsem hledal. On si vypracoval pravidla. Věděl dobře, že den ovládaný určitou ctností může být dobře a užitečně tráven. A proto vypracoval cvičení 13 cností. (Já jsem je rozšířil na 20, ale prozatím, abys měl přehled uvedu Ti jen franklinovské.)*

*(Long ago, as a student I wanted to compile for you and myself certain rules, by following of which we would approach the greater perfection and greater love which is so much needed. "If I had no love I would become a noisy gong ... ". (cf. St. Paul). I was looking for a long time, many things I liked, but they did not suit, either to your or my character. Only now I found Franklin and in him I found what I was looking for. He developed rules. He knew well that a day dominated by a certain virtue can be well and usefully spent. And therefore he worked out the exercises of 13 virtues. (I've expanded them to 20, but for now so that you have an overview I will present you Franklin's [virtues].)*

*Jména cností s pravidly:*

*(The names of the virtues with rules:)*

1. *Střídmost: Nejez do lenosti, nepij do rozjaření! (Ta pravidla jsou důležitá, bez nich by ctnost byla dosti prázdná. Když ale ráno po modlitbách pronáším tuto větu, budeš na ni často během dne vzpomínat. Budeš se varovat přestupků.)*

---

<sup>85</sup> Operativní podsvazek. Křivský, Pavel. 201–205. Available in the archive of the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes in Prague, Czech Republic.

- (Temperance.** Eat not to dullness; drink not to elevation! *(These rules are important, without them, virtue would be quite empty. But when in the morning after prayers I utter this sentence, you're will remember it often during the day. You will avoid offenses).*)
2. *Mlčenlivost: Mluv jen to co může prospěti druhému nebo tobě: vystříhej se planého mluvení!*  
**(Silence.** Speak not but what may benefit others or yourself; avoid trifling conversation)
3. *Pořádek: Měj všechny své věci na pravém místě, konej všecko v pravý čas.*  
**(Order.** Let all your things have their places; let each part of your business have its time.)
4. *Odhodlanost: Odhodlej se vykonati co vykonati máš, odhodlání vykonej zcela jistě.*  
**(Resolution.** Resolve to perform what you ought; perform without fail what you resolve.)
5. *Opatrnost: Vydávej jen prospěješ-li jiným nebo sobě, ničím neplýtvěj!*  
**(Frugality.** Make no expense but to do good to others or yourself; i.e., waste nothing..)
6. *Příčinlivost: Nemrhej časem: zaměstnávej se ustavičně něčím užitečným: všecko zbytečné konání ihned přeruš.*  
**(Industry.** Lose no time; be always employ'd in something useful; cut off all unnecessary actions.)
7. *Upřímnost: Neužívej si žádné škodlivé šalby; myslí nevinně a spravedlivě a mluv více-li, mluv rovněž tak!*  
**(Sincerity.** Use no hurtful deceit; think innocently and justly, and, if you speak, speak accordingly.)
8. *Spravedlnost: Neublížuj nikomu, buď spravedlivý jako Kristus, který dovedl vyhnat penězoměnce z chrámu, ale který třtiny nalomené nedolomil a knotu hasnoucího nehasil.*  
*(Justice: Wrong none by doing injuries, be just as Christ, who knew how to expel the moneychangers from the temple, but he did not break a bruised reed and not extinguished a dimly burning wick.)*
9. *Mírnost: Vystříhej se extrémů: strp urážku a netrap se jí!*  
**(Moderation.** Avoid extremes; forbear resenting injuries so much as you think they deserve)
10. *Ctihodnosti: Netrp žádné nečistoty na svém těle, šatě, příbytku, věz, že tvé tělo je chrámem Boha Duchá, proto ono čisté povrchní čistotou musí být i jeho okolí tedy šat, příbytek.*

**(Cleanliness.** Tolerate no uncleanness in body, clothes, or habitation., *know that your body is the temple of the Spirit of God, therefore there must be outer cleanliness in the environment, such as clothes, shelter.*)

11. Pokojnost: Miluj pokoj Kristův, ne který dává svět, a neznepokojuj se maličkostmi nebo příhodami různými. Vzhůru srdce k Pánu bohu.

*(Tranquility: Love the Peace of Christ, not the peace that world gives, do not worry about little things or different events. Lift up, heart, to the Lord God.)*

12. Čistota: Neoddávej se smyslným požitkům, myšlenkou řečí a skutkem. Věř, že máš dárce života, chceš-li, aby budoucí život byl čistý a krásný musíš i Ty být čistým a duchovně krásným. Zbytečně se nerozptyluj, ale vždy si pamatuj, že čistou myslí, čistým tělem sloužíš Bohu, vědě, vlasti. A že potom budou platit o Tobě slova Písma sv. „abyste šli, užitek přinesli, a užitek Váš byl věčný.

*(Chastity: Do not indulge in sensual pleasures, through thought, speech and deed. Believe that you should be a giver of life, if you want the future life to be pure and beautiful, you must be spiritually pure and beautiful. Do not distract yourself unnecessarily, but always remember that with a clean mind and clean body you serve God, science, homeland. And then the words of Holy Scripture will apply to you. "You came and brought benefits, your benefits will be eternal.*

13. Pokora: Vypiš si místa z evangelií o pokoře Kristově, pročti a promysli je a následuj Krista. *(Humility: Copy sections from the Gospels about Christ's humility, read and think about them and follow Christ.)*

*Vidíš to můj esoterní bratře to je 13 ctností, které, aby Ti krásně se líbili ožil jsem na Tebe se vztahujícími myšlenkami. Víím dobře, co potřebuješ proto ti do ruky dávám těchto 13 krásných ctností, myslím, že je přijmeš s otevřenou náručí a že se naučíš myšlenkám a že podle nich zařídíš celý svůj život. Já chci, aby z Tebe byl lékař apoštol. Vznešený úřad apoštolský vkládám na Tebe já starší Tvůj bratr, jako kdysi Kristus dal svým učedníkům. Jako Kristus vychovával a dával rady dávám Ti je já a svoji modlitbou třeba ubohou a nepatrnou, ale častou zalívám duši Tvou mě milou, Krásnou rosou nebeskou, aby až přijde čas, aby nesl ovoce a ovoce Tvé bylo hojné. Už vidím Tě jak pracuješ s nadšením altruistickým pod praporem Krista, toho pokorného Krista vykresleného sv. Evangeliemi. Kéž tato slova jsou Ti útěchou a povzbuzením. Kéž jsou Ti vůdcem na cestě pravdy, dobra, krásy. Nic více si nepřěji, než, abys mě pochopil, abys poznal, co za těmi slovy stojí a aby ses chopil práce, vše zbytečné (prodloužené, blbé rozhovory) odhodil, aby ses oděl krásným rouchem apoštolových ctností, kterých je tolik, tolik potřeba.*

*(You see my esoteric brother these are the 13 virtues, so that they appeal to you, I have added a few related ideas. I know well what you need and therefore I put in your hand these 13 beautiful virtues, I think you will accept them with open arms and that you will learn the ideas and according to them you will organize all your life. I want you to become an apostle physician. Glorious Apostolic Authority I put to you as your older brother, as Christ once gave to his disciples. As Christ raised and gave advice I give them to you, and with my prayer, perhaps poor or small/ slight, but frequent, I water your soul that is dear to me with beautiful heavenly dew, so that, when the time comes, you bear fruit and your fruit is abundant. I see you as you work with altruistic enthusiasm under the banner of Christ, the humble Christ rendered in the Holy Gospels.*

*May these words be those of consolation and encouragement. If only they lead you on the path of truth, goodness, beauty. I do not wish anything more than for you to understand me, get to know what stands behind those words and get down to work, throw away all unnecessary (lengthy, stupid talks) so that you clothe yourself with the beautiful Apostle robe of virtues, which is so much needed.*

*Nyní mě co nejdříve odepiš, abych ti mohl poslati další směrnice jak můžeš, prakticky tyto ctnosti cvičiti. Zde je máš theoreticky seřazené a nyní k tomu potřebuješ praxi. Piš vše- vše mě zajímá co se týká Tebe, zvláště tvého nitra!*

*Zdraví Tě a líbá Tvůj Pavel, který se těší n Tvůj příchod do Želive.*

*31. října 1932*

*Tvůj Pavel O. Praem*

*P.S: Jedu 4. října do Prahy jako delegát na sjezd prosím Tě v ty dny zvláště o modlitby.*

*(Now please reply as soon as possible so I can send other directives how you can use in practice these virtues. Here you have them sorted theoretically and now you need to practice them. Write everything, I'm interested in everything that relates to you, especially your inner side!*

*Regards and kisses from Pavel, who is looking forward to your coming to Želiv.*

*P.S. I'm going to Prague on 4<sup>th</sup> of October as a delegate to the congress please you pray especially in these days.*

*Yours, Pavel O . Praem)*

This letter discusses Benjamin Franklin's 13 virtues. The reason for Pavel to be enthusiastic about this particular topic at this particular time is unknown.

The orientation of the letter is emotional and poetic, it refers to Pavel and Mirek's friendship, brotherhood and possibly something even deeper than that. Here Pavel also tells us two miniature narrations, one about the friendship and another one about his own spiritual path. The stories are not long and not even complete stories, but they are still central to understanding him and his relationship with Mirek.

The reportable event is Pavel finding Franklin's virtue. The virtues themselves are not distinctively narrative elements but they are informative. Mirek does not need to search for the virtues from other sources because Pavel has copied them for him.

It is also worth noting here that some people see these famous virtues as serious goals while others consider them as Franklin's mockery of earnest self-improvement.<sup>86</sup> It is, however, very clear that Pavel takes the virtues seriously.

The temporal aspect of this letter is also interesting because Pavel not only refers to past (the history of friendship) but also present (how Pavel sees Mirek and his growth) and future (what Pavel wants Mirek to become). Evaluation type is thus 8.a, because Pavel speculates about something that is not visible yet but what he hopes to see in the future.

---

<sup>86</sup> Chaplin 2015, 193.

Even though the text in this example is mostly educational, and has a preaching tone, it also narrates a small story, indirectly, about Pavel and Mirek's previous discussions, and in the light of them Pavel expresses his wish that Mirek would understand him.

The next letter looks not only to the past, but also to the writer's present moment.

*V Želivě 11. května 1933*

*Milý Mirku,*

*Vzpomínáš ve svém dopise krásných chvil našeho mládí. Byl jsi trpělivým průvodcem mého rozbouřeného vnitřního moře. Jsem Bohu za to velmi zavázán, že v dobách tak kritických svého života poslal mě Tebe. Vždyť Ty od Boha obdařen jsi zvláštním štěstím, kterého si musíš vážit. Tvoje přátelství mě dobře prospělo a dovedlo by mě velmi daleko, leč 1 rok mnohé pokazil, ale snad to v budoucnu bude vše zase napraveno hlavně zase působením z Tvé strany. Víš, že já jsem příliš citově založen, že nejsem tak abych se filosoficky vyjádřil potens actualiter. Modlitbou, prací, porozuměním zase mě pomáhej a já Ti budu neskonale vděčný. Vždyť si musíme považovati přátelství našeho, stojí na tak ideálním podkladu, přátelství duchovním o kterém jsem Ti vypravoval o které se třebaš nevědomky, ale přece jistě snažíme. Pojem přátelství – jako vůbec vše ideální- je nemravně rozvrácen, zneužívá se ke všem možným podvodům, nemravnostem. Co jsem z domova poznal jsem mnoho přátelství a mnohá jsem pozoroval, ale poznal jsem hrozné věci.*

*(In Želiv 11. May 1933*

*Dear Mirek,*

*In your letter, you remember the beautiful moments of our youth. You've been a patient guide of my inner stormy sea. I am grateful to God for it that in times so critical in my life, he sent me you. Because you're blessed by God with special happiness that you have to appreciate. Your friendship benefited me well and would lead me far, but one year spoiled a lot, but perhaps in the future everything will be back to normal again and mainly by your influence. You know that I'm too emotionally based, so I'm not, to express it philosophically, potens actualiter. Help me again with prayer, work, and understanding and I'll be eternally grateful. After all we have to regard our friendship, it has the ideal foundation, spiritual friendship that I told you about that though perhaps unconsciously, but we certainly do try to attain. The concept of friendship – as all ideal things - is immorally disrupted, abused by all kinds of fraud, immorality. Since I left home I met many friends and I watched many, but I saw terrible things.)*

*V jednom vládne podvod, ve druhém spojení ke zlému, v jiném zase jiné zlo a nejvíce přátelství poskvrněno je pohlavností, která jako nesmírná řeka kalných vod zaplavuje a ničí poslední krásu přátelství. Ano, bohužel nejčastěji na těchto pohlavních zásadách je založeno přátelství, že ničí, že je neúčinné je samozřejmé. Častokráté – jako kněz církve – povzdechnu si 'dábel, nepřítel člověka a díla božího příliš, příliš koukole nasel do přátelství – přátelství umírá! A když tohle pozoruji docela jinak vyrůstá před mým duchovním zrakem přátelství naše. Krásné, ideální, čisté – sine ruga est macula. Čisté bez stopy jakékoliv pohlavnosti. Mohu ti říci, že proti celibátu jsem se neprohřešil ani myšlenkou - jak potom proti přátelství. Je ideální vždyť má cíl, cíl vznešený. Ve jménu Boha prospěti bližnímu to je heslo života mého a to cíl přátelství našeho. Kéž bys mě pochopil a chápal mě jako kdysi v Kacířích! Věř mě, že v mnohém musíme děkovati Kacířům, tam*

*jsem začal přednášet tobě a tam jsem začal velice rychle růst neboť chtěl-li jsem Tobě přednášet musel jsem se neustále vzdělávat.*

*(In one fraud rules, in another, n association for evil (ends/purposes), in yet another, there is yet another evil, and most friendships are stained by sexuality, which, like the murky waters of an immense river, is flooding and destroying the last/ultimate beauty of friendship. Yes, unfortunately friendship is, most often, based on these sexual principles, and it is self-evident that it is destructive and useless. Often times - as a priest of the Church – I sigh that the devil, the enemy of man and God's work, sowed too much of tares in friendship - friendship is dying! And when I watch this, our friendship is growing quite differently in front of my spiritual vision. Beautiful, perfect, pure – sine ruga est macula. Clean and free of any traces of sexuality. I can tell you that I have not sinned against celibacy even with thought, so how could I sin against friendship. It is ideal after all, has a goal, a noble goal. In the name of God, benefit our neighbour that is the motto of my life and the goal of our friendship. I wish you knew me and understood me as once in Kacíře! Believe me, that in many ways we must thank Kacíře, where I began to lecture you, and there I began to grow very quickly because if I wanted to lecture to you, so I had to constantly educate myself.)*

*„Posílám Ti slíbenou pohádku. Mistr Kaplán výslovně prohlásil „pro Vás a Vaše přátele Vám podepíšu pohledy na památku. Podepsal se tam také Šejnost, známý v Kulturním světě jako pracovník o umělecké medaile, který znamenitě pracuje. A potom Bohumil Vavroušek ředitel vinohradských škol měšťanských, spolužák p. Ředitele Bruknera, také znamenitý pracovník o době obrozenské. Vydává krásný atlas našeho obrozenského baroka. Něco tak krásného jsem neviděl. Až přijedeš do Želiva na letošní dušičky /2. listopadu/ tak ti ukážu atlas Vavrouškův.*

*(I send you the promised story. Kaplan explicitly said, "for you and your friends I shall sign your postcards for a keepsake?." Also, Šejnost signed there as well, well known in the cultural world as an author art medals, who works wonderfully. And then the director Bohumil Vavroušek, school master of Vinohrady town schools, a classmate of Mr. Boukner, the director, also an excellent expert on the national revival period. He publishes a beautiful atlas of Czech Baroque.<sup>87</sup> I have never seen anything so beautiful. When you come to Želiv at this year's Halloween / 2 November / I shall show you Vavroušek's Atlas.)*

*Nebud' tak uzavřený o svém vnitru v Tvých dopisech. Kdo lépe Tě zná kdo lépe Ti rozumí. Piš o všem, vše mě potěší.*

*(Do not be so closed to the inner man in your letters. Who knows you better, who understands you better. Write about everything, everything will please me.*

*Pí S mě říkala o Tvém nedělním výletě. Zdá se mě, že chceš být zase nemocen. Mě píšeš, abych byl opatrný na své zdraví. Medice cura Te ipsum / Horatius/ Zarmucuješ mě! Chválím Tě o tom pak tě nechválím / Sv. Pavel ad Corinthios/ Nevíš, že máš míti ohledy na mě. Musím Teď býti znepokojen o Tvé zdraví. Když studuji večer zas vzpomínám jestli už zas nestůněš nevíš že máš*

---

<sup>87</sup> "Obrození" is "national revival/awakening""Obrozenské baroko" could either mean "Baroque patriotism" (Bohuslas Balbín etc.), or "selské baroko" (a style in the 19th-century village architecture.

*povinnosti ke svému stavu budoucímu o rodině ve službách Stvořitele! Ty musíš růsti duchovně i tělesně.*

*Zdravím Tě a o modlitbu prosí,*

*Tvůj Pavel O Praem*

*(Mrs S told me about your Sunday trip. It seems to me that you want to be sick again. And you write to me to be careful of my health. Medice cura te ipsum / Horace / You make me sad! I commend you for it then you do not / St. Paul ad Corinthios / Don't you know that you should have regard for me. Now I have to be concerned about your health. When studying in the evening I remember again whether you are sick Don't you know that you have obligations to your future mission of serving the family of the Creator! You have to grow spiritually and physically.*

*Greetings to you and asks for,*

*Your Pavel O Praem)*

Here again, the orientation brings the reader to the past days. It is actually a miniature narration about Mirek and how Pavel sees him. Despite the fact that Pavel is willing to be Mirek's guide in theological and philosophical questions, he is also asking for Mirek's support in the form of prayers. Complicating action in this case is Pavel's inner struggle.

Evaluation has three different aspects: 8.c and 8.d because the postcards are relevant material objects and other people signing them brings third-party witnesses to Pavel's life situation which he is describing to Mirek. It is also possible to interpret the postcards as a symbol of Pavel's willingness to keep in touch with other people from the isolation of the monastery. Also 8.e is present here, especially in the context of Mirek and their long-lasting friendship.

It is worth mentioning that Kacíř is not a town or a village, it is actually a lake and it means *heretic*. Looking at Pavel's life from today's perspective, the fact that he and Mirek started their friendship-mentoring relationship in a place like that, would seem too obvious, if this was a work of fiction. Nomen est Omen, like Professor Novotný pointed out in his e-mail to me, where he confirmed that Kacíř cannot be anything else than the lake near Chotěboř<sup>88</sup>

Pavel mentions Kacíř also in his first preserved letter from the summer of 1929.

*Nezapomeň se duchovně býti přítomen těch úvah v neděli. Se Součkem chodíme ke Kacířům jedině směr cesty poněkud měníme. Jednou začas jdeme také k Valše, také jsme se vypravili na raky ovšem s nebezpečím, že budeme chyceni a proto tohoto nebezpečného sportu jsme zanechali a Souček odložil to na Slavíkov tam, že si bezpečně zachytá. Šli jsem do Obolců a usnuli jsem tam, ale jinak lenošíme statečně. Řekli jsme si, že budou referáty, ale nebyl ani jeden. Řekli jsme že budeme psátí Varia a za celý čas ani jeden příspěvek. Také ani jednou jsme se nekoupali, poněvadž počasí je velice mizerné až včera a dnes počasí se lepší.*

*(Do not forget to be present in spirit during reflections on Sunday. With S we go to the ponds of Kacíř, we just change the direction a bit. Once in a while we also go to the ponds of Valcha and also went to catch crayfish with the risk that we would be caught. So, we quit this dangerous*

---

<sup>88</sup> E-mail from David Novotný 17 February 2017.

*sport and Souček transferred it to Slavíkov saying he would fish safely there. We went to Obolce and fell asleep there but otherwise we are chilling around . We said that we would write Varia but we did not even write one entry. We did not swim at all because the weather is miserable, only yesterday and today it is a bit better.)*

This letter includes a miniature narration about Mirek's trip with Family S, who are, as I have mentioned earlier, their mutual friends. It is also remarkable that Miroslav mentions the family later on, in his letters from Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp.

*Meine Teuersten! Es wurde mir wieder nicht gegönnt die lieben Zeilen von Euch zu lesen, den ich habe den zweiten Brief in diesem Monate vor eine Woche von Erhard bekommen. Auch Frau S hat mir einen Gruss aus Chrudim gesendet. (Mirek from Sachsenhausen 17 August 1941)*

*(My dearest ones! I was once again not allowed to read the precious lines from you because I received a week ago the second letter in this month from E. Also Mrs. S has sent me a greeting from Chrudim.)*

### 3.3 L&W in Pavel's letter

Some letters do follow L&W. This letter, as an entity, is less spiritual and more down-to-earth than most letters by Pavel. This is one possible reason why it fits into L&W better than many others. Just like some letters by František, most of which follow L&W (as I have discussed before), this letter contains news.

Abstract

*Leden 34*

*(January 34)*

Orientation

*Můj milý Mirku.*

*Těšil jsem se, že přijdu po Novém roce do Chotěboře, že s tebou se setkám a zase se osvěžím a posílím, že naše ideály povýšíme, že se s Tebou potěším, ale marně a proto musím Ti jsa zarmoucen psati.*

*(My dear Mirek.*

*I was looking forward to coming after the New Year to Chotěboř so that I meet with you again and refresh and strengthen myself and we elevate our ideals and I will enjoy ourselves, but in vain therefore I have to write to you, so sad.)*

Evaluation and implicit complicating action

*Ukončili jsme starý rok ve kterém jsme obnovili pouta přátelská ve kterém jsme se přiblížili k sobě zase tam jak jsme snili v krásných dobách tam pod duby Kacířskými, kdy jsme se poznávali a jeden druhému vnitro srdce duši otvírali. Znamenal tento rok pro nás mnoho. Počali jsme pracovati na sebezdokonalení a sebezvěštění měrou intenzivnější než v dobách předchozích. Začali jsme důležitou práci. Co je tedy naší povinností? Naší povinností je upřímně děkovati*

*Tvůrci, že nám tak ubohým tvorům, tak ubohým bytostem dovolil abychom se spojili a pokračovali.*

*(We ended the old year in which we restored our friendly ties in which we came together again as we had dreamed back then during the beautiful times under the oak trees in Kacíře when we got to know each other and opened to each other our inner, heart and soul. This year meant a lot to us. We began to work on self-improvement and self-education much more intensively than in previous times. We began the important work. What is our duty? Our duty is to sincerely thank the Creator for allowing us, such poor creatures, so miserable beings, to join together and continue.)*

Pavel is evaluating the friendship between him and Mirek and at the same time he reveals that their relationship has caused some distress for both of them in the past and that had tormented Pavel. This could be interpreted as a complicating action that had actualised itself in the past and now the friendship has been restored

Evaluation

*„Dělník je smrtelný, práce je živá“<sup>89</sup> to kéž je nám vůdcem v naší budoucí práci. Jaká bude ta práce, jaké snažení. Co nám přinese nový rok? Snad se rozletíme a oddělíme od sebe, snad klesneme, snad vysoko, vysoko vystoupíme na horu Krásného Bratrství, lásky k bližnímu a k Bohu, snad posvětíme se prací a vystoupíme vysoko ve ctnostech a sebevzdělání. To věříme- to ví Bůh.*

*("The worker's mortal, the work is alive," I wish that it leads us in our future work. What will that work be, what an endeavor. What will the New Year bring us? Maybe fly away and separate from each other, perhaps we descend, perhaps ascend high, high on the mountain of Beautiful fraternity, charity towards others and God, perhaps we are sanctified by work and climb high in the virtues and self-education. That we believe in and God knows it.)*

Evaluation has a spiritual aspect, and Pavel has focused his attention to the future. From the narrative point of view this is interesting because it speculates about the future, although at a very abstract level. It is of course possible that Mirek understands Pavel's intentions better than we who read the letter "over his shoulder".

Resolution

*Snažme se tedy abychom a) od sebe se neodloučili, ale jeden s druhým vzájemně se doplňovali, i když přijde člověk nepřítel, když přijde neštěstí ve věrnosti vytrvejme, doplňujme se, splývejme a prostupujme se, abychom hodně vysoko na perutěch lásky, citu, práce vylétli a dotkli se nebes a přinesli odtud požehnání zemi.*

*(Let us, therefore, try a) not to move away from each other, but complement each other mutually, even when human being – enemy comes or when it comes to misfortune, let us stay in fidelity, complement each other, merge and permeate each other, so that we fly very high on the wings of love, emotion, work and touch the sky and bring a blessing for the earth from there.)*

In the resolution, Pavel expresses his willingness to continue and develop the friendship. His style is poetic and he wants to make an impact not only on Mirek and the material world, but

---

<sup>89</sup> This is a quote from a Czech poet Jiří Wolker.

also the spiritual world. Pavel combines poetic and narrative style in his letters frequently. Nina Säaskilahti, who discusses diaries in her thesis, mentions that this is a typical characteristic of that genre as well.<sup>90</sup>

Just like Säaskilahti sees diaries as hybrid forms (of poetry and prose), comparable to hybrids between genres of fiction, I see letters, especially Pavel's letters in a similar way.<sup>91</sup> They also resemble fictional prose because in them Pavel speculates with something that he cannot see yet, revealing his hopes and dreams as well as his fears. Here the fears follow the news about strawberries

*Našel jsem se Součkem nádherné jahody ojedinělé exempláře okolí chotěbořského. Nevím jestli to není poslední psaní poněvadž nemoc moje se horší. Tak kdyby se dostavila katastrofa tak v ohledu duševního pokračuj a rozmnožuj!! --- a řekni, že moje poslední přání je na půdě ve stole. Nazdar! Možná poslední sbohem. Křivský! (červen 1929)*

*(I found beautiful strawberries with Soucek, a special pride of the Chotěboř region. I do not know if it is not the last writing because I am getting more sick. If a catastrophe would come, continue in spiritual growth and multiply/ spread it!! --- and please tell that my last wishes are in the attic in the table. Bye! Maybe last good-bye. Krivsky! (June 1929))*

Coda/News

*Můj bratře Mirku mám tě tolik rád, že ti to musím napsat. Píšu jen slov rád, slovo skoupé, ale výmluvné a to je vše a je více než kdybych Ti psal dlouhé přání k Novému roku, což je formalita. Kéž toto úsečné slovo, kéž tě provází při všem a chci jediné abys za to slovo mého srdce odměnil jsi se mě modlitbou, kterou potřebuji tak nesmírně, že nedovedeš si toho představit, ani pojem učiniti.*

*My brother Mirek I like you so much, that I have to write it to you. I write the word like, a word which is niggardly, but eloquent, and it is more than if I wrote you a long wish for New Year, which is a formality. I wish this clipped word may accompany you everywhere and I only want to be rewarded by your prayers for that word of my heart, I need it so extremely that you cannot even imagine it, nor understand it.*

*A prací o povznesení sebe a vzděláním sebe.*

*(And by work to uplift yourself and by educating yourself.)*

*O těch S-ých větách ústně, ale nevěř jím i když jsou Ti sympatické! Tuším z nich něco zvláštního a instinktivně cosi cítím že jsou absolutně špatné, ačkoliv jsou sympatické a ačkoliv já mám dosti S rád. Já tedy tyto věty zavrhuji i jako kněz i jako člověk!*

*(About S-'s sentences will do orally, but do not believe it even if it seems nice to you! I gather something strange from them and I instinctively feel that something is absolutely wrong, although they are nice and although I like S quite a lot. I therefore reject these sentences as a priest and as a human!)*

---

<sup>90</sup> Säaskilahti, 2011, 161.

<sup>91</sup> ibid, 161-162.

*Psal jsem Ti před Vánoce a ačkoliv jsi měl dosti času neodpověděl jsi mě! Odpouštím Petrus Pax Tibi! /Ale co tomu říká pořádek Franklinovský/.*

*Zdraví Tě a líbá,*

*Tvůj Pavel*

*(I wrote to you before Christmas, and although you had enough time you didn't reply me! I forgive Petrus Pax Tibi! / But what will Franklin's order say to that*

*Greetings and kisses,*

*Your Pavel*

*Your Pavel)*

The coda contains a mystery: What did Mirek and Pavel's old school friend S say? The S-s are mentioned in the slightly mysterious letter or a series of letters from the year of 1929 already, which means that Pavel and Mirek have known them for several years. Pavel also expresses disappointment about Mirek's answer lagging past the holiday season. This letter is not dated but it has been marked with text: *January 34*, possibly afterwards by Mirek or a third reader.

The next letter is a pure narration by the terms of L&W. The letter has a different intention compared to most of the other letters written by Pavel. It is addressed to Mirek's mother, Mařenka. I am calling her Mařenka for clarity's sake because this is the name I have been using in the earlier chapters. It is worth noting that Pavel calls her Mrs. Headmaster's Wife, instead of Mařenka.

The purpose of this letter is to ask permission for Mirek to visit Pavel in the monastery. It is interesting to note that a letter with a more down-to-earth topic follows L&W whereas those letters where Pavel's mind wanders more freely have fewer narrative elements.

I have been giving this observation some thought during my research process. We connect to each other as humans via stories. So, would it be possible that Pavel writes more narrative text when his focus is on the reader and when his mind is travelling in the land of ideas and concepts, he does not have the need to formulate a story?

Abstract

*Siloe (Želiv)*

*9. října 1932*

*(Siloe (Želiv)*

*9. October 1932)*

Orientation

*Milostivá paní řídící,*

*(Dear Mrs. Headmaster's wife,)*

Complicating action

*Mám k Vám prosbu. Když jsem byl naposled v Chotěboři, říkal jsem Mirkovi, že by se mohl ke mě podívat do Želiva. Potom jsem jel na svěcení zvonů do Sv. Kříže a říkal jsem p. opatovi o tom a ten dovolil to s obrovskou ochotou, říkal jsem to potom Mirkovi a Mírek řekl, že to rád udělal a sice od 31.října do 2. listopadu. A nyní ještě je potřeba Vašeho dovolení – ale myslím že ho jistě pustíte v tyto dny.*

*(I am pleading to you. When I was last in Chotěboř, I said to Mirek, that he might come and see me in Želiv. Then I went for the blessing of the bells at St. Cross, and I told Mr. Abbot about it and he allowed it with great willingness, then, I said it to Mírek and Mírek said he would like to come from 31 October to 2 of November. And now it is necessary to have your permission - but I think that certainly you will let him come these days.)*

The complicating action in this situation is whether Mirek receives his parents' permission to visit Pavel in Želiv monastery.

#### Evaluation

*Uděláte mě velkou radost, poněvadž Mirek je můj nejoblíbenější esoterický bratr. Já totiž těch bratrů mám sice bohatě, ale mému srdci je nejbližší právě Vás a můj Mirek, poněvadž přátelství mládí zapustilo hluboké kořeny a mění se v krásné bratrství o kterém snad Vy ani nemáte tušení. Věřte, že takový idealismus, jaký my jsme vnesli do pojmu bratrství snad je možný jen u Mirka a mě. Vy jistě dobře znáte jeho duši, a jako matka můžete hodně tušit, ale mě se dopřálo viděti více v jeho duši jako já zase dopřával aby on viděl vše v mé duši. A tak navzájem jsme kladli základy chrámu vyšších hodnot a nikdy jsme se neposkrvnili banálností - Mirek opravdu mohutně roste – a právě v tomto vzrůstu je potřebí velké podpory. Ten jeho duchovní vzrůst mě často překvapuje a proto v posledním dopise ukládám mu přímo apoštolát – On musí v této tak zmaterializované době v době kdy každý se honí za pomíjejícími požitky on musí býti více, on musí býti apoštolem a ještě více on musí býti světce lékařem.*

*(You will make me very happy, because Mirek is my most favourite esoteric brother. I have many brothers but your Mirek is closest to my heart, so my Mirek, because friendship since childhood embedded deep roots and changes in the beautiful fraternity of which perhaps you have no idea. Believe me that such idealism which we brought into the concept of brotherhood is perhaps possible only with Mirek and me. You certainly know his soul well, and as his mother you can guess a lot, but I was granted to see more into his soul, and I, for my part, granted him to see everything in my soul. And so we laid together the foundation of a temple of higher values and we have never defiled ourselves by banality - Mirek really grows robustly - and therefore there is need for a great increase in support. His spiritual growth often surprises me, therefore in the past letter, I impose apostolate directly to him - He must at this time of materialisation when in this time everyone is chasing fleeting delights, he must be more, he must be an apostle, and even more he must be a saint doctor.)*

Mirek's character and its growth are the theme of evaluation in this letter, so it is evaluation in a rather literal sense, also.

#### Result

*Je to velký úkol. Od leckoho bych nežádal. Ale žádám ho od Mirka ve kterém vlohly se tak podivuhodně krásně snoubí, že ten kdo prohlídne všechny jeho záhyby, všechno co v něm je musí*

*se diviti a musí v duchu děkovati tomu Nejvyššímu, že ráčil dopustiti a dáti člověku tolik vloh. Profesor Zima, když byl u mě v Želivě říkal, že profesori se shodují v tom, že Mirek má nadání veliké, ale strašně pohodlný. Ovšem ta pohodlnost je zaviněna nedostatkem ctížádostivosti. To dítě neví co je to ctížádostivost. Blažené dítě – z toho prýští ta pohodlnost. Jen povinnost. – Ale vše se odstraní a to mě zvláště leží na srdci a každý den prosím i toho, který zná ledví i srdce. Ušetřen ctížádostivosti může pohodlnost odstraniti a jak pozoruji má upřímnou touhu odstraniti, má sice své chyby, ale i pro ty jsem mu dal recept, takže jsem přesvědčen, že moje vise o Mírkově apoštolátu nebude nadarmo. Naše doba volá přímo po apoštolech! Ideální lékař je vynikajícím apoštolem, dopisují si s jedním takovým lékařem, přítelem slavného Gemelliho, který se stal františkánem a žasnu, jsem přímo ohromen co může lékař udělat, jak pomáhá přinášet blaženost co utrpení dovede smazat, co krásného vytvořit tak že vstupuje do stop onoho velikého Ježíše Krista, který kudy chodil všude konal dobro, všem přinášel krásu duchovní!*

*(It's a big task. I would not ask this of just anybody. But I ask of him, because Mirek's talents are wondrously and beautifully combined that anyone who inspects all of his folds, everything that is in him, must be amazed and must in spirit be thankful to the Supreme, that deigned to allow a person to have so much talent. Professor Zima, when he was with me in Želiv said that professors agree that Mirek has a great talent, but he [Mirek] is very comfortable. But the comfort is caused by a lack of ambition. The child does not know what ambition is. Blessed child – that is the origin of the comfort. Only only what is necessary. - But everything will be removed and it's close to my heart and every day I entreat also the one who knows the heart. Spared of ambition he can remove comfort and I observe he has a sincere desire to remove it, he has his faults, but I also gave him a recipe for the faults, so I am convinced that my vision about Mirek's apostolate will not be in vain. Our time absolutely calls for apostles! The ideal doctor is a great apostle, I correspond with one such doctor, a friend of the famous Gemelli, who became a Franciscan and I am amazed, I'm impressed by what a doctor can do to help bring happiness, what suffering he can make disappear, what beauty he can create that he enters into the footsteps of the great Jesus Christ, who wherever he went everywhere did good, and brought to all spiritual beauty!)*

Here Pavel discusses the end result, when Mirek will have finally grown to the occupation of his dream, which was medical doctor. Also in real life, Mirek did accomplish this goal, eventually, after the four years of incarceration in Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp, which I will discuss later in chapter 3.

Coda

*Myslím, tedy, že Mírkovi jistě dovolíte. Pro Mirka bude to míti také jistý význam, poněvadž nejen že prohlídne si vzácné věci našeho kláštera, ale bude moci načerpat u mě nových sil a povzbuzení k vědecké práci.*

*(I think, therefore, that you will certainly allow Mirek to come. For Mirek, it will also have certain importance, because he will not only to see a valuable treasure of our monastery, but will be able to draw new strength and encouragement for scientific work at my place.*

*Doufám tedy, že mě nezamítnete, ale že jistě Mírkovi dovolíte.*

*V hluboké úctě, br. Pavel o. Praem*

*Pavel Křivský O. Praem*

*P.S. Račte vyříditi projev hluboké úcty panu řídícímu.*

*(So I hope that you will not refuse me, but certainly allow Mirek.  
In deep respect, br. Pavel O. Praem*

*P.S: Kindly send greetings of deep respect to Mr. Headmaster.)*

In coda Pavel repeats the point, continues his persuasion and adds his greetings to Mirek's father.

The fact that Pavel wrote to his old school friend's mother, is in harmony with what members of his scout group told me about his character. According to them, Pavel was in a sense an ageless personality. For him it was natural to befriend people across generations.<sup>92</sup> In his first preserved letter to Mirek from the summer of 1929 Pavel also mentions Mařenka, because they are both planning to attend a telepathic session. He is inviting Mirek also, but we do not know if he ever joined Mařenka and Pavel.

### 3.4 Pavel's educational letters

As Pavel's scouts have witnessed to us earlier in this chapter, he was an educator who influenced several people. As a young man at school and in the monastery, Pavel was a budding educator already. This characteristic of his is visible in his letters to Mirek, as I will demonstrate in this subchapter.

Pavel was also working with his first scout group in Želiv, during the same years as when he was having correspondence with Mirek. There are, however, no references to the scout group in the letters.

In her interview from year 1990, Marie Pavlíková tells the following things about the group.

The group was established between the years of 1940 and 1941 and it consisted mostly of Catholic boys and girls from villages who worked in agriculture. Pavel chose those who were interested in spiritual work, self-improvement and education. Pavel had one desire that the young people who had at least some talents would go to school. He often had to face the unwillingness of parents in this respect.<sup>93</sup>

In the group, there was one interesting girl who wanted to be a priest, which was not possible, which discouraged her. She was good at theology. She graduated from Písek gymnasium and after that she left for Germany and finished her education with the help of a German friend. She returned to Prague after the war.<sup>94</sup>

This story for its own part confirms Jana Pfeifferová's experience that the scout group which Pavel established in Prague after the war became an egalitarian place for girls and boys alike, and

---

<sup>92</sup> Personal communication with a group of Scouts 20 October 2011 in Prague.

<sup>93</sup> Pavlíková, Marie 2009, 12.

<sup>94</sup> *ibid*, 13.

at least in the field of education, Pavel supported the value that we nowadays call gender equality.<sup>95</sup>

The letter to Mirek (below, written in August 1933) demonstrates what Pavel was like as a young person, he was already educating others. The themes are the fight against egoism and also self-improvement in general. Nowadays we would talk about mindfulness and meditation, so in this respect Pavel's ideas are still valid today. Also seeking opportunities to study abroad, not only for himself, but also for Mirek, shows that he understood the importance of seeing the world widely, in a similar manner as we do now. Unfortunately these big plans were never realised.

*Můj milý Mirku.*

*Psal jsem Ti 30 července a poněvadž už čas valně pokročil a ty neodpovídáš chápu se já pera, abych Ti napsal. V posledním dopise psal jsi mě, že jsi vypověděl boj ohavnému egoismu. Ó jak se potěšila duše moje zprávou o Tvé odhodlanosti zbaviti se toho co člověka strhuje do kalu úzkosti, banálnosti, vidím v tom značný pokrok, že jsi svůj egoismus poznal. Samo sebe zničití z lásky k druhým to je opakem egoismu. Apoštol národů to praví o Kristu a činí vzorem nám Krista v altruismu, chce abychom přinášeli oběti zdravému altruismu. A žádnou jinou radu Ti v Tvém boji nemohu dáti, než, že Tě upozorním na slova téhož apoštola, který v epištole ke Galatům v hlavě druhé, verši 20 praví "Žiji nikoliv já, nýbrž žije ve mně Kristus." Můj esoterní bratře tato věta je zlatým klíčem, který Ti otevře krásné chrámy božských ctností – postava Kristova je ti jistě z bible dosti známa – spoj se s boho-člověkem tak jak hovoří evangelium, s tím který třtiny nalomené nedolomil, s tím, který byl sám láskou. Potom jistě Tvé myšlenky, Tvé sklony. Tvé přání budou čistým reflexem myšlenek, přání, sklonů Ježíše, vykresleného v dokonalém obraze u sv. Pavla. Místo dřívějších předsudků, představ a názorů budeš míti úsudky, přesvědčení Vtěleného Slova. Vše budeš posuzovati a rozsuzovati slovy sv. evangelia.*

*(My dear Mirek.*

*I wrote you on July 30 and as time has progressed and you are not answering, I take my pen to write you. In the last letter you wrote me that you declared war on hideous egoism. Oh how pleased was my soul with the message about your commitment to get rid of what pulls man down to the dregs of anxiety and banality, I see how much progress you've done identifying your egoism. To destroy oneself out of love for others, that is the opposite of egoism. The Apostle of Nations says it about Christ and he makes Christ our model of altruism, he wants us to do sacrifice to a healthy altruism. And no other advice I can give you in your struggle, I only remind you of the words of the same Apostle who in his Epistle to Galatians in Chapter Two, verse 20 says "I do not live in myself, but Christ lives in me." My esoteric brother, this sentence is the golden key that opens the beautiful temples of divine virtues for you – I'm sure the Christ figure is quite known for you from the Bible -connect with the God-man as the gospel says, with the one who did not break broken reeds, who was love himself. Then surely your thoughts, your inclinations, your wishes will be a pure reflex of thoughts, desires, inclinations of Jesus, rendered in a perfect image of St. Paul. Instead of earlier prejudices, ideas and views you will have judgments and beliefs of the Incarnate Word. You will assess and judge all in the words of the Holy Gospel.)*

---

<sup>95</sup> Personal communication with a group of Scouts 20 October 2011 in Prague.

*Postava Kristova Ti nejen pomůže překonat egoismus, ale bude také léčit Tvoji vůli, která stojí u Tebe na dosti slabých základech. Přivíh se ke vtělenému Slovu k onomu zázračnému Logu a Tvá vůle bude léčena nejlepším lékařem. Ano synáčku srdce dej svému Vtělenému Bohu, ne chladné, ale planoucí. A potom Tvá vůle nebude se pachtiti za malicherným pozlátkem světa, vše ubohé, vše nízké nebude míti k Tobě přístup. Pak budeš s radostí plnit povinnosti svého stavu, s nadšením. Tvá vůle porazí vše co jí bylo překážkou a osidlem na dráze k Tvému nejvznešenějšímu ideálu léčit s pomocí Boží, všem býti všem, prokazovati dobro, svítiti ve tmách egoismu, materialismu.*

*(The figure of Christ not only will help you overcome egoism, but it will also heal your will, that stands with you on a rather weak foundation. Embrace yourself to the incarnate Word, to the miraculous Logos and your will be treated by a best doctor. Yes, dear son, give your heart to God incarnate, not cold, but blazing. And then your will not crave for petty world of glitter, all poor, all low would have no access to you. Then you'll be happy to discharge the duties of your state, with enthusiasm. Your will defeat everything that stood in the way of your most honorable ideal of curing with the help of God, to be everything to everybody, to do good, to provide a light in the darkness of egoism, materialism.)*

*Vůle povede Tě k milosrdenství, které může vyjít ze srdce širokého, totiž ze srdce, které je tak rozpjato láskou boží, že dovede všechny, ano všechny obejmouti, všemu porozuměti, všem rozuměti, se všemi míti soucit a všechno učiniti co jen je možno. Milosrdenství Tě dovede na vrchol krásného lékařství tak, jak si ho představoval na př. dr. Mareš ve spise "Pravda nad skutečnost."*

*(The will will lead you to the mercy which can go out of a wide heart, namely from the heart that is so spread (out) with God's love that it can embrace all, yes, all, understand everything, comprehend everyone, feel compassion with everyone, and does all that is possible. Mercy leads you to the top of the beautiful medicine, as imagined/conceived, for instance, by Dr. Mares in his book "The truth above reality. (August 1933))*

*Ano Tvé nadšení potřebuje mnoho ideálů, mnoho citu a vroucnosti. A toto nadšení, když spojíš se studiem budeš se přibližovati velkým lékařům, znamenitým vědcům. Když se budeš řídit citem budeš muset přinést oběti, budeš trpěti, ale utrpení Tě jen odčistí od Tvých různých poklesků, odčiniš jim různé nedostatky, své mládí lépe řečeno dětství a povede Tě čistého, krásného k Nejvyššímu a postaví Tě do stop velkého úkolu Stvořitele. Kéž by ses připojil do mého Kroužku vroucnosti, citovosti, který právě zakládám pro sebe a pro několik svých vyvolených a milých esotherů. Ona vroucnost, Marešovská vroucnost spojená s rozumem Jánošíkovým na příklad, může dělat divy v Tvé duši jako budoucího medika. Velká věc vyžaduje velké přípravy. Já nechci, abys byl obyčejným ubohým materialistickým lékařem. Proto chci a usiluji o Tvoji výchovu, proto usiluji o Belgii, abych Ti otevřel vědecky cizinu, Lovaň a.j. Já čím dál tím více chápu a chci uskutečnit sám sebe úplně obětovati, a třebaš i sebe zničit jen, aby lidství, krásné, čisté lidství žilo rozkvétalo a k bytosti Nejvyšší se přibližovalo.*

*(Yes, your enthusiasm needs a lot of ideals, a lot of emotion and warmth. And this enthusiasm when you align it with the study, you will approximate to the great doctors, excellent scientists. When you will follow your feeling, you will need to make sacrifices, you will suffer, but suffering will only purify you of your various misdemeanors, you will redress various shortcomings by it, your youth, or, to be more precise, childhood will lead you, pure and beautiful, to the Highest,*

*and place you in the footsteps of the great task of the Creator. Would you join my Circle of warmth, feeling, which I founded just for myself and several of my chosen and beloved esoterics. The ardour, the Mareš ardour connected with reason, for instance in Jánošík, can do wonders in your mind as a future medical student. A great thing takes a lot of preparation. I do not want you to be an average miserable materialistic doctor. Therefore, I want and I seek your upbringing, I aim for Belgium, to open to you science abroad, as well as Leuven.<sup>96</sup> I increasingly understand and want to bring a sacrifice of myself completely, and perhaps even destroy myself, so that humanity, beautiful and pure humanity, lives and blooms and approaches the Supreme Being.)*

*Pomyslíš, že asi, že neustále kreslím před Tebou ideály, chci pořád něco, ale tímto způsobem chci Tě povzbuditi, ukázati cestu k lepším jasnějším cílům.*

*(You think that I constantly draw ideals for you, I always want something, but this way I want to encourage you, show you the way to better and clearer goals.)*

*Brzy piš a neodkládej, nebo já už víc psát nebudu když nechceš psáti Ty!*

*Zdraví Tě a líbá Tě Tvůj, fr. Pavel Křivský*

*Modli se hojně. Vyjednávání pokračuje. V září v Choteboři na shledanou. Pavel.*

*(Write soon and do not postpone, because I'll not write more when you do not want to write? back!)*

*Greetings to you and kisses, Yours fr. Paul Křivský*

*Pray frequently. Negotiation continues. See you in September in Chotěboř. Pavel.)*

Pavel's text above supports Toolan's idea that in a narrative a beginning, a middle and an end are not necessary, or Labov's six elements. Instead, narratives must establish a situation and then a shift.<sup>97</sup> Letters such as this one in their own part create the narration about Pavel and Mirek's life, even though one cannot find the typical characteristics of L&W in the text. The development witnessed here is the personal growth of two young persons.

Some scouts in Pavel's first group considered his ideas a bit too religious or utopic, and they left the group presumably for this reason. In 1940-41 the scouts were busy with getting to know themselves, practising self-reflection and self-reformation according to Pavel's guidelines. They were also making notes on the development. Maybe these responsibilities were the reason for people leaving.<sup>98</sup> It is also possible that Mirek took some distance for the very same reason.

The letter extract below gives some ideas of what communication with Pavel was like for Mirek sometimes, in spite of them being friends.

*A mnoho s těma Tvýma novinama nejsem spokojen. --- Nic není tak utlačeno a tak znásilněno, tak prostituováno jako tisk to je věc pro všechno, to je kanál všech splášek a opravdu kdy bych se měl rozhodnout pro některé noviny nemohl bych se rozhodnouti pro žádné, poněvadž za nic žádné nestojí a Lidové noviny vědí dobře [?] co to je!! Máš špatný vkus v tomhle ohledu. Nějakou*

<sup>96</sup> Leuven has a Catholic university and Pavel most likely refers to that.

<sup>97</sup> Toolan 2016, 352-353.

<sup>98</sup> Burget 2009, 38-39.

*přednost sice mají ale toho co je tam mizerného to je nekonečně krát více!. Myslil jsem, že přece máš v tomhle ohledu šťastnější ruku a lepší rozhled. Jen čti tyto noviny s tužkou v ruce a některých věcech přemýšlej a poznáš jaké je zpravodajství, tendence, technika atd celých novin!!! Polepši se v tom ohledu.*

*Prosím Tě pošli mě výkaz četby za Leden 1933 a spolu poznámky o čtených knihách!*

*(I am not much satisfied with the newspapers from you. --- Nothing is so oppressed or raped, so prostitusized as newspapers, it is a matter for all, it is the channel of all sewage and really when should I opt for some newspaper, I could not decide for any, because none of them are worth anything and Lidové noviny understands it well! You have a bad taste in this regard. While they have some precedence but there's infinitely more crappy stuff there!. I thought that in this respect you have a more fortunate hand and better perspective. Just read these newspapers with a pencil in hand and think through some things and you will know what is news, bias, technology, etc throughout the newspaper! Improve in this respect.*

*Will you please send me a statement of all your reading in January 1933 including notes on books you read!)*

*Myslím že kvůli Tobě se budu muset několik dní zdržet v Chotěboři v únoru a vzít Tě pořádně do práce a trochu Tě pohnat. S tím Tvým hospodařením času to je až příliš povedené! Kdybych Tě měl u sebe nechal bych Tě klečet na štěpínkách několik hodin! Tak se napravuje 7 let lenošení, lenošením?*

*(I think because of you I will have to stay a few more days in Chotěboř in February and really make you work hard and to push you a bit. That time management of yours is only too crafty. If I had you with me I'd have you kneel on gravel for a few hours! So this is how you rectify 7 years of being lazy, by being lazy?)*

### 3.5 Pavel as a playful writer

Some of Pavel's letters have also non-textual elements in them. The oldest of them, written in 1929 is fragmentary and consists of several texts. It is not known whether Miroslav received the whole entity at the same time or are the pages actually parts of several letters. It is possible that there are pages missing and original entity consisted of a few more "traditional" letters

In 1929 Pavel also wrote a poem for Mirek.

*V čerstvý rov jsi klesl*

*V květu mládí uvadl.*

*Kdy navrátí se ona doba mládí,*

*Ve které jsi měl krásně žít?*

*Snad dojdeš odplaty*

*Snad budeš kámen,*

*Snad stařec sehnutý –*

*To záhada jest.*

*Kdo ji pronikne?*

*Kdo ji prozkoumá*

*Snad Kolumbus by dříve*

*Spatřil Ameriku.*

*Křivský*

*V Chotěboři 9-10/ 7 1929*

*Into a fresh grave you descended,  
You faded in the bloom of your youth.  
When will the period of youth return,  
In which you should have lived beautifully?  
Perhaps you will obtain reward  
Perhaps you will be a stone  
Perhaps an old hunch back man  
That is a mystery.  
Who will penetrate it?  
Who will examine it?  
Perhaps Columbus would earlier  
See America.*

*Křivský*

*In Chotěboř 9-10 / 7 1929*



*My own reflections:*

*Pavel's letters to Mirek are almost torn into pieces. I can tell they have been read several times. But who read them so diligently, actually? Was it perhaps Mařenka, who decided to keep them after Mirek had moved from home? I leaf through the letters aimlessly on a summer night in 2016, wondering why many of them are pierced with needles. Have they been hanging on a wall? Some letters have bigger holes in the middle of the letters. I cannot explain why Pavel's letters have been treated like this. The explanation can be mundane, but it is also possible that Mirek reacted to the letters by cutting or piercing holes into them. Yet, the letters have been preserved until today, they are with me. And I am asking the same question as the scouts: Who are you, Pavel?*

### 3.6 Pavel's Miniature Narrations

Even though Pavel's letters do not follow, some not even closely, L&W, many of them still contain miniature narrations, which tell us small but relevant details about his life and the life of people he knew. As I have mentioned before, also František's letters contain similar narrations. Maybe this is typical of letters as a text type because in them it is natural to tell about small incidents and reflect on your life.

*Vzpomínáš ve svém dopise krásných chvil našeho mládí. Byl jsi trpělivým průvodcem mého rozbouřeného vnitřního moře. Jsem Bohu za to velmi zavázán, že v dobách tak kritických svého života poslal mě Tebe. Vždyť Ty od Boha obdařen jsi zvláštním štěstím, kterého si musíš vážit. Tvoje přátelství mě dobře prospělo a dovedlo by mě velmi daleko, leč 1 rok mnohé pokazil, ale snad to v budoucnu bude vše zase napraveno hlavně zase působením z Tvé strany. Víš, že já jsem příliš citově založen, že nejsem tak abych se filosoficky vyjádřil potens actualiter. Modlitbou, prací, porozuměním zase mě pomáhej a já Ti budu neskonale vděčný. Vždyť si musíme považovati přátelství našeho, stojí na tak ideálním podkladu, přátelství duchovním o kterém jsem Ti vypravoval o které se třebaš nevědomky, ale přece jistě snažíme. Pojem přátelství – jako vůbec vše ideální – je nemravně rozvrácen, zneužívá se ke všem možným podvodům, nemravnostem. Co jsem z domova poznal jsem mnoho přátelství a mnohá jsem pozoroval, ale poznal jsem hrozné věci. (V Želivě 11. května 1933)*

*(In your letter, you remember the beautiful moments of our youth. You've been a patient guide of my inner stormy sea. I am grateful to God for it that in times so critical in my life, he sent me you. Because you're blessed by God with special happiness that you have to appreciate. Your friendship benefited me well and would lead me far, but one year spoiled a lot, but perhaps in the future everything will be back to normal again and mainly by your influence. You know that I'm too emotionally based, so I'm not, to express it philosophically, potens actualiter. Help me again with prayer, work, and understanding and I'll be eternally grateful. After all we have to regard our friendship, it has the ideal foundation, spiritual friendship that I told you about that though perhaps unconsciously, but we certainly do try to attain. The concept of friendship – as all ideal things - is immorally disrupted, abused by all kinds of fraud, immorality. Since I left home I met many friends and I watched many, but I saw terrible things. (in Želiv 11 May 1933))*

This miniature narration tells us that Mirek and Pavel's mentoring relationship was actually reciprocal, they learned from each other, even though Pavel's instructive role was more

dominant. Here Pavel also reflects on himself and reveals us something about their mutual history as friends.

*Pí S mě říkala o Tvém nedělním výletě. Zdá se mě, že chceš být zase nemocen. Mě píšeš, abych byl opatrný na své zdraví. Medice cura Te ipsum / Horatius/ Zarmucuješ mě! Chválím Tě o tom pak tě nechválím / Sv. Pavel ad Corinthios/ Nevíš, že máš míti ohledy na mě. Musím Teď býti znepokojen o Tvé zdraví. Když studuji večer zas vzpomínám jestli už zas nestůněš nevím že máš povinnosti ke svému stavu budoucímu ke svému budoucímu o rodině ve službách Stvořitele! Ty musíš růsti duchovně i telesně. (V Želivě 11. května 1933)*

*(Mrs S told me about your Sunday trip. It seems to me that you want to be sick again. And you write to me to be careful of my health. Medice cura te ipsum / Horace / You make me sad! I commend you for it then you do not / St. Paul ad Corinthios / Don't you know that you should have regard for me. Now I have to be concerned about your health. When studying in the evening I remember again whether you are sick Don't you know that you have obligations to your future mission of serving the family of the Creator! You have to grow spiritually and physically. (In Zeliv 11 May 1933))*

Pavel's critical attitude to Family S is apparent here again, and the reason still remains a secret to today's readers. Here Pavel also reveals something about Mirek's life and health by making a reference to the news he has heard about a trip Mirek has made

*V Želivě 11 července 1933*

*Můj milý Mirku!*

*Přijmi ode mne mnoho pozdravů a neustalých vzpomínek. Nebylo dne, abych si na Tebe nevzpoměl.*

*Divil jsi se asi, že Ti P vyřizoval pozdrav. On totiž mě psal, že jeho bratr je bez místa, jestli tedy není v Želivě při hospodářství nějaké místo. Psal mě 6. června a já ubohý jsem mu odpověděl až 27. června t.r. Chtěl jsem Ti několikrát psát, ale nemohl jsem tak alespoň při této příležitosti jsem Ti poslal nejrůznější přátelský pozdrav, abys věděl, že na Tebe stále vzpomínám.*

*(In Želiv 11 July 1933*

*My dear Mirek!*

*(Accept my greetings and many permanent memories. There was not one day that I would not remember you.)*

*You are probably surprised that you received greetings via P. He wrote me that his brother does not have a job, whether here in Želiv there is a position in agriculture. He wrote to me on 6th of June and my miserable self wrote to him late on the 27th of June this year. I wanted to write to you several times, but I could not then so at least on this occasion, I send you warmest friendly greetings to let you know that I still think of you.)*

This miniature narration confirms what some of the people who knew Pavel in person have personally communicated to me. Pavel had an innate need and willingness to help people in various situations.<sup>99</sup>

Here we see Pavel as something that today's world would call a people-person who was at his best when surrounded by his friends. The isolation of the monastery may have caused him grief in this respect, and the way he cordially thanks for the letter and the picture also indicate that. A few months later, in autumn 1933 he writes in a similar tone:

*Děkuji Ti co nejsrdečněji za Tvůj dopis. Překvapil mě. Myslel jsem, že teď v době tak velké práce nemáš času. A ty můj milý bratře ty přece jsi mě potěšil a ještě fotografii jsi mě poslal. Zdá se mě, že mě příliš mnoho chceš můj úkol usnadnit. Mám v Tobě přece více než přátele a bratra. Jak jsi starostlivý. Člověk musí býti za všechno zvláště za každou útěchu neobyčejně vděčný. (Siloë Bohemorum, 13-11 1933)*

*(Thank you most sincerely for your letter. It surprised me. I thought that now when you have so much work you do not have time. And you my dear brother you did please me, and even you sent me a picture of you. It seems to me that you want to make my task too easy. I have more in you than just a friend and a brother. How caring you are. One must be extremely grateful for everything especially for each consolation. (Želiv, Bohemia, November 13 1933))*

Pavel also reveals something about his monastic life, studies and health issues. Gardening and plans are also a theme here. Interestingly, as I have mentioned before, Pavel's widow Marie Pavlíková tells a memory of Pavel's mother from his childhood. He used to wander in nature with his teacher, who had established the first Scout group to Chotěboř. From those adventures Pavel brought plants and planted them in his mother's garden.<sup>100</sup>

*Studoval jsem rychle a myslel jsem, že už konečně budu moci jet na zkoušky. Když poslední týden v květnu mě přepadla hrozná malátnost, melancholie a všechny ty hrozné stavy, které s ní jsou spojeny. V celé budově jsem byl sám sdp. J. K., který pro takové věci nemá pochopení. A tak jsem byl zůstaven sám sobě. Byla to hrozná doba. Nemohl jsem nic dělat, naprosto jsem nevydržel ani číst ani studovat, ani chodit, vše mě příšerně rozdrážděvalo ale to bylo jen vevnitř napovrch to bylo velmi pěkné. Takže všichni se divili, že chci k lékaři. Jel jsem přece a ten mě napsal zdravotní dovolenou. Zakázal mě číst, psát! A tak jsem po celý měsíc lenošil ale ke svému prospěchu takže teď je to opravdu krásné a teď mě lékař uložil, abych hodně pracoval i tělesně i duševně. Práce tělesná je velmi důležitá a já poněvadž jsem ji zanedbával měl jsem ty následky (v ledvinách se tvořily přesprášené bílkoviny, krev špatně cirkulovala atd.) Ted' vedle procházek pracuji na zahradě, štípám dříví, pracuji s včelama a jím jen rostlinnou stravu a při tom jsem neobyčejně svěží takže teď mohu 2x tolik dělat než jsem dělal aniž bych byl malátný a unavený. Jsem jako znovu zrozen. Rostlinná strava dělá mnoho! Nikdy jsem si to ani nechtěl uvědomit a nemyslel jsem, jak blahodárné může mít účinky vyloučení všeho masa těžkého pro tělo. (V Želivě 11 července 1933)*

*(I studied quickly and I thought that finally I could go for the exams. When the last week in May I fell into terrible fatigue, melancholy and all the terrible conditions that are associated with it. In the whole building I was alone with dp. J.K. who has no understanding for such things. So I*

<sup>99</sup> For instance, Alena Benešová mentioned this in her personal communication in 21 October 2011.

<sup>100</sup> For reference, see subchapter about Pavel's youth

*remained alone. It was a terrible time. I could not do anything, absolutely could not read anything, or study, or walk, I was terribly annoyed by all of it, but it was only on the inside on the surface it was very nice. So everyone was surprised that I wanted to see a doctor. I went anyway and he put me on sick leave. He forbade me to read, write! So, I have been lazy for the entire month but to my advantage so now it's really beautiful, and now my doctor ordered me to do a lot of work physically and mentally. Physical work is very important and I neglected it, that is why I had these effects (too much protein was formed in the kidneys, bad blood circulation, etc.) Now, in addition to walking, I work in the garden, cut wood, work with bees, eat only vegetables, and in doing so I am extremely fresh so now I can do 2x as much than I did without being languid and tired. I am, as it were, born again. Vegetables food does a lot! I never even wanted to consider it and I never thought how beneficial effects it can have to exclude all meat which is so heavy for the body. (In Želiv 11 July 1933))*

The Belgian visitor had an impact on Pavel, too, even though he was never able to travel to Belgium in turn, himself.

*Byl u mě jeden Belgičan. Jel s rozkazem generála řádu premonstrátského po našich klášterech v ČSR a v Želivě se zdržel 2 dny. Velice mnoho jsem se dozvěděl o Belgii a sám se za to přimlouval, abych jel do Belgie, ale teď to nechci, až budu hotov tady t.j. až za rok a potom tam. Ale nevím jestli budu moci absolvovat celé studium (to trvá 6 let ještě!) (V Želivě 11 července 1933)*

*(I had a Belgian visitor. He came to visit our monasteries in Czechoslovakia by the command of the General of our Premonstratensian Order, and he stayed in Želiv for 2 days. I learned very much about Belgium, he himself interceded for me to go to Belgium, but now I do not want to go, when I'm done here within one year then I can go there. But I do not know if I can complete the entire study (it takes 6 more years!) (In Želiv 11 July 1933))*

### 3.7 Pavel as Mirek's friend and vice versa

It is possible that Mirek was a bit different kind of friend for Pavel than those he mentored during his years in monastery. He never mentions the group of young people he had gathered together in Želiv in any of his letters to Mirek. However, Mirek visits him in the monastery, which means that those two worlds were not completely separated from each other.

*Co se týče Tvého příjezdu k nám. Prosím Tě můžeš-li jen trochu, snaž se aby ses dostal do Želiva hned 31.října. Poněvadž je to nejpříhodnější. To mohu vyjít z kláštera, poněvadž je všední den. Snaž se tedy o to, pokoušej se, myslím ale, že budete míti prázdno, alespoň "Našinec" přinesl o tom zprávu. To bys vyjel v 8 [?] z Chotěboře a ve 2 hodiny 12 minut bys jel z Brodu do Humpolce, Tam je autobus, který Tě dopraví do Želiva, ale musíš říci Želiv- Klášter, poněvadž pod klášterem staví a tam já Tě budu čekat. Potom půjdeme na audienci k Jeho ctihodnosti (to je titul mého představeného a tak ho budeš také titulovat, ostatní pokud s nimi půjdeš do styku „důstojný pane“!) Pro Tebe to není, ale z pokory, kterou přikazuje Kristus to jistě uděláš. Potom bychom se podívali do Škrobárny, nyní nastala kampaň a je to zajímavé jak na jedné straně přijde brambor a na druhé straně vychází čistý škrob! Potom si vyjednáme další program 1 a 2 listopadu pak bude zpívání chor, večere a debata, na kterou se upřímně těším. (červenec 1932)*

*(Regarding your arrival to us. Please if it's at all possible, try to get to Želiv on October 31. Since it is most convenient. I can go forth from the monastery because it is a weekday. Try, therefore, try*

*to attempt, but I think you shall have a free time, at least "fellow countryman" brought this message. In that case, you would depart at 8 [?] from Chotěboř and at of 2 pm and 12 minutes you'd go from Brod<sup>101</sup> to Humpolec. There is a bus that will take you to Želiv, but you have to say Želiv monastery, because it stops at the monastery building and there I'll wait for you. Then, we go for an audience to His Honor (this is the title of my superior, so it is the title you will address him when you meet him, others if you come to contact with "reverend Sir!") It is not for you, but for the humility that Christ commands, you will certainly do it. Then we'll look at Starchactory, now is the season and it's interesting how on the one side comes potato and on the other side comes clear starch! Then we'll negotiate the following program; on 1 and 2 November, there will be a choir singing, dinner and debate, to which I look forward honestly. (July 1932))*

The route is still exactly the same, I have travelled it myself too.

*It would be a warm day, for April, I knew it at Florenc bus station. I was going to Želiv monastery for the first time. I slept most of the bus trip to Humpolec and when I opened my eyes, I saw the statue of Masaryk. It was time to get off.*

*At the small bus stop, grannies were waiting for their bus. I asked them which one would take me to Želiv and they said they do not know. Soon a bus arrived and they all got on.*

*Two minutes later a young woman came and I asked her the same question and she said it was the bus that just left a couple of minutes ago. I cursed all those grannies with their shopping bags and vegetable baskets, thanked the girl and walked to the tourist information office and asked them to call me a taxi.*

*The taxi drove me across meadows that were awakening to the summer and I understood why the fields, forests and flowers around Želiv lived in Pavel's heart and mind as long as he lived, even in the prison. He was part of the landscape as much as landscape was part of him. I could still see his soul wandering on the paths and in the areas where no person had ever touched his foot.*

*The driver made a wide circle with his hand and said: "Želiv", as he left me at the gate. Soon I watched the cloud of dust that the descending taxi left in the warm air. Pressing the visit card the driver had given me between my hands, I understood how lonely I was again.*

*Not a soul was present in this open and isolated place, except for two tenants who shouted at me angrily when I walked too close to the rental houses. The actual monastery had many doors open but it was closing itself from me, luckily not closing me inside, though.*

*(My own blog post from the spring of 2014)*

Mirek writes to Pavel in a bit contradictory feelings on 26th June 1936. He is concerned about Pavel, and as I have discussed earlier in this chapter, he had been trying to find Pavel in Emmaus.

*Tvůj dopis mě překvapil mile i nemile. – Viděl jsem Tě v duchu stále svěžího ---.*

*(Your letter surprised me pleasantly and unpleasantly. - I saw you still fresh in the spirit ---.)*

---

<sup>101</sup> The word *brod* (ford) appears in various names of Czech towns. Here it refers to Havlíčkův Brod (called Německý Brod until 1945).

Mirek asks Pavel about his health, and here we can see how Mirek's professional identity has developed and is developing further

*Teprve po Tvém dopise jsem jsi uvědomil, že nějaká menší choroba, by Tě nedovedla odvést od práce. Napiš mi prosím Tě, jak se Ti daří teď. Doufám, že slunce a klid Želiva působí blahodárně. Ovšem u Tebe to bývá s tím klidem problematické. Co se mně týče v ohledu zdravotním si nemohu stěžovat. Snad poprvé za celý letošní rok mohu vděčně říci „jsem zdrav“ a prosím jen Boha, aby mi mé zdraví zachoval a přidal k němu i zdraví duševní a aby mě vedl tam, kam chci v duševní spolupráci s Tebou dojít. Frantíku od 15.července budu v Chotěboř i - musíme se tam nějak sejit.*

*(Only by your letter, I did realize that some minor illness could not steer you away from work. Write me please, how you are doing now. I hope that the sun and calmness of Želiv has a beneficial effect on you. But with you, calm tends to be a problem. As for me in the matter of health I cannot complain. Perhaps for the first time in this whole year, I can thankfully say "I'm healthy," and I just ask God to keep my health and to add mental health to it, too, and to lead me to where I want to go, mentally cooperating with you. Frantik, from July 15th I'll be in Chotěboř, we have to meet there somehow.)*

*Život člověku přináší a zároveň tím nejnižovanějším. Jak málo je dnes onoho pravého citu-hlubokého nanejvýš obětavého a nesobeckého. – A hlavně to poslední zdůrazňuji - vždyť uvažuje-li člověk o poměru na př. mezi rodiči a dětmi – o lásce mateřské - o lásce mezi mužem a ženou-nemůže nevšimnout toho, že v těchto poměrech hraje velikou roli i jistý druh egoismu. - Je to egoismus lepšího druhu než v obyčejném slova smyslu, ale přece brání již dosažení vrcholu*

*(Human life also brings the lowest. How little of that real deep-feeling extremely, most dedicated and selfless, there is today. - And the most I stress the last - after all, if one considers the relationship, for example, between parents and children - maternal love - the love between a man and a woman – one cannot help but notice that in these circumstances, a certain kind of egoism plays a big role, too. - it's a kind of egoism better than in the ordinary words sense, but still it prevents already reaching the peak.)*

In the same letter draft Mirek has crossed out something. What is the message he wanted to send to Pavel here, we will never know. Also, we cannot be certain if he ever wrote the final version of the letter or if he sent it, after all. We also cannot know why Mirek or his mother kept this draft.

*[The following passage is crossed out]*

*Snad se nevyjadřuji jasně – dopis je konečně příliš krátký )- Nicméně je zatížena touto chybou láska mezi dvěma muži –*

*Perhaps I do not make myself clear - finally, the letter is too short) - However, the love between two men is burdened by the issue-*

*[continues after the previous crossing out]*

*k vyjádření všeho co si člověk myslí, ale můžeme si o tom promluvit ústně až se setkáme. – Přeji Ti teď hodně zdraví a svěžesti a úspěchu v práci, ve které i já Tě chci sledovat.*

*to express everything what one thinks, but we can talk about it verbally when we meet. - I wish you now a lot of health and vigor and success in work, in which I also want you to follow you.*

*Se srdečným pozdravem,*

*Tvůj přítel Mirek*

*Heartily greetings,*

*Your friend Mirek.*

Here Pavel describes his life in the monastery, his inner life, and his health issues to Mirek. This extract from February 1933 also reveals that Mirek, although being three years younger, is in the position to give Pavel advice.

*Děkuji Ti za Tvůj dopis a prosím o prominutí, že hned neodepisuji. Jsem teď velký lenoch. Pořád Ty a jiní mě říkají abych se šetřil a tak jsem začal, ale nemohu si no to zvyknout a nám z toho tak předrážděné nervy, že ani na to co Ti píši pořádně nevidím. Po druhé až mě někdo řekne abych se šetřil – nevím v čem tak mu dám pohlavek až mu hlava ulítne i kdy by byl třeba Mirek, kterého jsem poslechl. Má hloupá hlava bájí a sní ještě o dávno a dávno nemožném (?) přátelství duší a tak si řekla toho musíš poslechnout a ejhle co nezmohly rozkazy to jsi zmohl Ty začal jsem chodit spát o 9 hodině vstávat o půl 6 chodit na procházky ale teď to odnáším! Nad tím Ti nebudu dále zdržovati ale zaráží mě to, že moji tvrdou palici přece někdo na chvíli zakřikl! To je zvláštnost.*

*(Thank you for your letter and please forgive me that I did not reply right away. I am now a big slacker. You and others always tell me to take it easy, so I started but I cannot get used to it and it makes my nerves so highly-strung that I cannot even properly see what I write. Next time when someone tells me to take it easy - I do not know in what, then I'll give him a slap on his head and let his head fall off even if it is Mirek, whom I obeyed. My stupid head still raves and dreams about the long, impossible friendship of souls and so it said that she must listen to him and lo and behold, what orders did not achieve, You managed to do, I started going to bed by 9 o'clock and getting up at half past five and then I have been taking walks but now I pay for it! I will not detain you any longer but what strikes me is that my hard head was silenced for a moment by someone! This is strange.)*

The essential theme in the letter below is friendship. Orientation is a brief examination about the past. It is not known, why Pavel and Mirek were not in contact for an entire year, but this silence is remarkable because Pavel mentions it. He also refers to his health issues, which are also present in his earliest letter from the summer of 1929.

*Zase jsem páčil. Doktor to vysvětluje tím, že mám zúžení srdce, které nedodává do závitů cerebrospinálního dostatek krve a tím, že mám řadu utkvělých myšlenek. Mezi jiným jsem spálil zlomky umírajícího, takže Ti posílám zbyteček abys posoudil, rozebral a mně poslal(!)*

*(I have burned again. The doctor explains that I have a narrower heart and it does not carry enough blood to medulla oblongata<sup>102</sup> and that I have many fixed ideas. Among other things, I*

---

<sup>102</sup> It is not clear which part of the body Pavel means but medulla oblongata is one educated guess.

*have also burnt pieces/fragments of the dying one<sup>103</sup> so I will send you the left overs so that you can judge and analyze and send to me(!).*

The orientation also leads the reader thematically to the complicating action, which is the challenges in the friendship. Friendship is evaluated in this letter, as well. Evaluation type is closest to 8.a in LONA because of Pavel's idealistic views.

It is also worth noting in this context that Pavel was keen on the poet Brezina in his adulthood, in the late 1940s and early 1950s, when he had his second group in Prague.<sup>104</sup>

### 3.8 Closing Words

It is not easy to summarise even this small sample of Pavel Křivský's texts from his early years. Still, it is interesting to see that these letters discuss many of the same themes he continued thinking and developing later on in his life.

Pavel's correspondence with Mirek distanced me to some degree from L&W. As I have shown in this chapter, Pavel's letters do unquestionably follow a classic letter format, but rarely a typical L&W narrative structure.

The letters still contribute to the story of the family Lorencovi by unfolding some of the key themes of it, such as the friendship between Mirek and Pavel and also a little about Mirek's youth, partly through Pavel's letters and partly from the drafts of his own letters. Our journey with Pavel does not quite end in this chapter. A handful of letters he wrote to Mařenka during and after the Second World War have been preserved and I will discuss them later in this thesis.

Another, maybe even more essential revelation about letter writing, proceeding from Pavel's texts is the creativity and playfulness. This makes his letters unique and engaging objects.

Reading the young Pavel's letters we do not yet know about the soon upcoming Nazi occupation and the Stalinistic purges, the victim of which he would be later on. We only know a young monk and an educator-in-making, at his desk, writing his letters. What we learn from Jiří Burget is that Pavel kept up correspondences frequently and extensively:

*We had a feeling that war would end soon. Pavel had to leave Buštěhrad ---. All these years the members of his group besides meeting in person occasionally we were in correspondence with Pavel. And between one another. For Pavel it was an unbelievable act, I received a letter from him almost every week and it was the same for others. --- His correspondence was great.<sup>105</sup>*

Pavel himself reveals the same thing about the correspondences he is keeping up when writing to Mirek:

*V příštím dopise až zase bude pravidelnější pořádek teď ještě to není možné, poněvadž píší narychlo, mám mnoho dopisu k vyřizování neboť o té dovolené se toho mnoho nahromadilo. (11.7.1933)*

---

<sup>103</sup> This is ambiguous, probably concerns a manuscript.

<sup>104</sup> See Kopřiva 2009.

<sup>105</sup> Burget 2009, 38.

*(In the next letter, when things are back in order, now it is not possible because I am writing in a rush, I have many letters to deal with because during the holidays, so much has accumulated. (11 July 1933))*

Writing this chapter felt like floating further away from L&W, but this last letter to Mirek encapsulates in a sense – L&W. The questions of faith are the complicating action, resolution and evaluation, all in the same package. And not only in this particular letter, but also in Pavel's life as a whole. Maybe Pavel's letters did not drift me so far away from L&W, after all.

From my personal point of view, the best summary of Pavel's view on life was bestowed to me as early as October 2011 when I first met the members of Pavel's second scout group in Prague. During that meeting Mrs. Jana Pfeifferová told me that these are the things she learned from Pavel and cherished in her mind all her life:

Always continue, don't stop.

Always try to find a new way.

Look at different sides of the world.

Read.

Have friends.

Choose the right things.<sup>106</sup>

### 3.9 References

Jiří Burget: Výchovná a obrodná činnost Pavla Křivského mezi mladými lidmi v letech 1936 – 1948. In Kopřiva, Vladimír (ed.). *Pavel Křivský: rádce, učitel, a průvodce životem*. Praha. Kruh. 2009. 29–59.

Chaplin, Joyce E. The Autobiographies of Benjamin Franklin. In Leader, Zachary (ed.). *On Life-Writing*. Oxford. Oxford University Press. 2015. 180-200.

Keravuori, Kirsi. Saaristolaisia: *Elämä, arki ja vanhemmuus laivuriperheen kirjeenvaihdossa*. SKS. Helsinki. 2017.

Kopřiva, Vladimír (ed.). *Pavel Křivský: rádce, učitel, a průvodce životem*. Praha. Kruh. 2009.

Labov, William: *The Language of Life and Death*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press. 2013.

Pavlíková, Marie: "Pavel Křivský a Kruh (Hovoří v Londýně se Sylvou Šimsovou 2. – 6. 2. 1990)". In Kopřiva, Vladimír (ed.). *Pavel Křivský: rádce, učitel, a průvodce životem*. Praha. Kruh. 2009. 12– 28.

Sääskilähti, Nina. *Ajan partaalla: Omaelämäkerrallinen aika, päiväkirja ja muistin kulttuuri*. Jyväskylä: Nykykulttuurin tutkimuskeskuksen julkaisu 105, Jyväskylän yliopisto, 2011.

---

<sup>106</sup> Personal communication with a group of Scouts 20 October 2011. in Prague.

Toolan, Michael: *Making Sense of Narrative Text: Situation, Repetition, and Picturing in the Reading of Short Stories*. New York and London: Routledge. 2016.

Winters, Stanley B: *Pavel Křivský, Historian and Archivist*. in History Newsletter, Bulletin of the Czechoslovak History Conference. Vol. 13, No. 1, Spring 1990.

### 3.9.1 Unpublished sources

Personal communication with Alena Benešova, 21 October 2011. in Prague.

Personal communication with a group of Scouts 20 October 2011. in Prague.

(Jan Jělník, Vladimír Kopřiva, Jan Pfeiffer and Jana Pfeifferová)

Personal communication with Vladimír Zikmund. 23 February 2016. in Prague

E-mail from David Novotný 17 February 2017.

Operativní podsvazek. Křivský, Pavel. Available in the archive of the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes in Prague, Czech Republic.

## 4 Mirek – Complicating Action

### 4.1 Sachsenhausen – April 2015

*In April 2015 I was spending 4 days in Berlin and attending the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp.*

*On the last day of our visit, I went to an ecumenical memorial service, which took place in the former laundry building of the camp. To be honest, I had sort of planned to do some shopping and visit some cool places in Berlin instead, but it was hard to say no to a survivor who asked us to join.*

*Just my luck, behind us sat a group of people who had wrapped Israeli flags around themselves and they had obvious difficulties in concentrating on the actual service. Usually I have very little tolerance for people behaving disrespectfully but I soon figured out that they were relatives of a survivor or (survivors), so I decided to be patient.*

*I excused them despite their disturbing habit of taking photos with their tablets - with sounds turned on. It seemed to me that everybody else in the room had got used to this kind of behaviour - or they hid their annoyed feelings very well.*

*At the end of the service, the cantor of the Berlin Jewish Congregation stood up to sing Psalm 23 (The Lord's My Shepherd). Her voice was strong but at the same time very delicate and I wished more than ever that the people behind me stopped talking and taking photos at least for a couple of minutes. I was about to turn around and say something when I heard another voice. Someone had joined the cantor and sang along with her.*

*The singer turned out to be a very small and old man in front of us. Most likely a survivor too. Everybody listened, silently. Even the people behind us.*

*The peaceful atmosphere lasted until the end of the service. Only at the very end, the survivor who had invited me opened his mouth and said: "Konec." (= The end)*

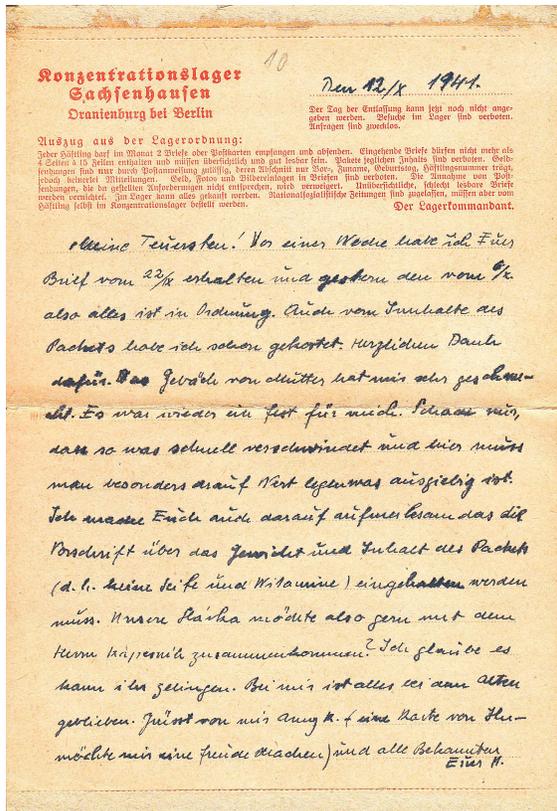


FIGURE 8 Mirek's letter from Sachsenhausen

## 4.2 Introduction to Mirek's letters from Sachsenhausen

*Paper and ink will be the last witnesses standing.*

Mirek was a nearly graduated medical doctor, only one exam was missing.<sup>107</sup> Hence he belonged to the educated Czechs, whom the Nazis wanted to eliminate. These 78 letters describe a machinery set in motion to destroy a national culture, but it was fortunately never accomplished.

According to his parents' old neighbour, Alena Benešová, Mirek participated in the demonstration against the regime in November 1939.<sup>108</sup> The student demonstrations at the time were wide, although not everyone was present in them. However, Mrs. Benešová's witness can be considered quite reliable, at least she has no obvious reasons to distort the truth.

In any case, all Czech male students from Prague (as well as from Brno) aged 20 or above were arrested and transported to Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp. Political activity or the lack thereof played no role in this operation which would be known as *Die Sonderaktion Prag*.

Sachsenhausen was a camp originally established for political prisoners, and it was certainly not a sanatorium but it was not a death camp as we understand the word now, either. Still, for those

<sup>107</sup> Matrika Doktorů XI, č. 4901 – 5500, r. 1945 – 1946. (Prague: Charles University Archive)

<sup>108</sup> Personal communication with Mrs. Alena Benešová 21 October 2011.

Soviet prisoners of war who were transferred there between September and November 1941 Sachsenhausen was an elimination camp. They lived only a couple of days because they were the victims of a neck-shooting operation the first experimental attempt in mass destruction of prisoners. During September and October 1941 alone, 9000 Soviet prisoners of war were executed.<sup>109</sup>

The murdering continued, as if on a production line, until mid-November 1941 when the operation was suspended because of a typhus epidemic. Even though the operation was supposed to stay secret, the information leaked and even some bold children who lived close to the camp asked the SS men when the next Russians would be burned.<sup>110</sup>

In Nazi Germany, political prisoners had the privilege to write home, and in Sachsenhausen this opportunity was offered every two weeks. Those who were sent to camps for ethnic or other reasons (e.g. homosexuality, disability or asocial tendencies), lacked this privilege. They were often demanded to write one postcard home, on arrival at the camp. Some of the Jewish prisoners managed to warn their relatives about the life-threatening conditions at the camp by writing: *Uncle Malakh-Amoves is also here.*<sup>111</sup>

Similar messaging happened when a typhus epidemic spread in the Gypsy camp of Birkenau in 1943. *Some [Roma] survivors tried to alert the outside world to their suffering; in a coded message, one of them referred to Baro Nasslepin, Elenta and Marepin, which are the Romany words for "great illness", "misery" and murder.*<sup>112</sup>

Political prisoners wrote things between the lines in a similar manner, and I will discuss this topic later in this chapter. Generally speaking, it is difficult to estimate how common different types of secret messages were in camp correspondences, how well they were understood by the recipients and how often they passed the censorship. Still, it was a remarkable and documented phenomenon and for this reason also worth discussing.

Fortunately, a fraction of the camp letters has been preserved until today. They offer us an opportunity to draw a vague picture – but a picture all the same – of camp life. A remarkable number of the first-hand witnesses of these cruel deeds died before they were able to tell their story, and there is only a handful of survivors with us today.

According to Paul Ricœur, the text extracts itself from the writer's present and opens itself to innumerable potential readers for the unlimited time.<sup>113</sup> This gap exposes Mirek's letters to many interpretations, and the challenge here, for me as a researcher, is refraining myself from falling into too far-fetching or too subjective interpretations.

It is also important to remember that the outsider who reconstructs the narration always comes to a different conclusion than the original addressee. This is because in epistolary communication almost always some parts are lost. Also, the writer and the intended addressee

---

<sup>109</sup> Wachsmann 2016, 262, 287–288.

<sup>110</sup> *ibid*, 263.

<sup>111</sup> Personal communication with David Novotný 20 October 2016. Malakh Amoves = the Angel of Death in Yiddish.

<sup>112</sup> Wachsmann, 2016, 462.

<sup>113</sup> Ricœur, 2000, 68.

often share a background of some kind. For example, oral communications between them and oral and written communications from other people provide them with information that e.g. a future researcher does not have. The significance of this common background is even more important in a camp correspondence than in an exchange of letters where the conditions to communicate are more free.

One of the reasons why the camp letters written by the Czech students in Sachsenhausen are remarkable is that they tell the stories of one victim group of the Second World War. Nikolaus Wachsmann has highlighted the importance of discussing the variety of victims and their stories:

*The awareness of the singularity and enormity of the Nazi war against the Jews has grown sharply --- and the Third Reich is now largely viewed through the lens of the Holocaust. The SS concentration camps, in turn, have become closely identified with Auschwitz and its Jewish victims obscuring other camps and other inmates.*<sup>114</sup>

Liz Stanley discusses the character of letters in a following way: *Letters --- are characterized by temporal and spatial interruptions, are always 'unfinished' in the sense of containing gaps, ellipses and mistakes, and also presume a response and thus an 'after'.*<sup>115</sup>

Correspondences are usually dialogical by nature. I am facing a challenge also in this respect because I only have Mirek's letters to his parents but not the letters he received from home. Hence, the nature of this particular correspondence is closer to monologue. However, Mirek makes references to letters and post cards his family and friends have sent him, which proves the actual reciprocal nature of the communication.

*Grüsst von mir, bitte, herzlich Anny, Onkel O, Jiřa, Familie H, Frau K. und alle andere Bekannten. Euer an Euch immer denkender Mirek. (5. Jänner 1941)*

*(Please send my cordial greetings to Anny, Uncle O, Jiřa, Family H, Mrs. K and all other acquaintances. Your Mirek who is always thinking of you / Yours Mirek, who always thinks of you. (5 January 1941))*

In chapter 1 I mentioned *observer's paradox*, a phenomenon that Labov discusses. Observer's paradox is the dilemma a researcher must take into account when he or she is studying how people speak when they are not being observed.<sup>116</sup> In other words, observer's presence affects their behaviour and the situation which are being observed.

When writing a private letter, one does not always take the possibility into account that an outsider may read the text. In Mirek's case the observer's paradox must be born in mind more strongly than with other writers in this letter collection. His writing is most certainly being observed by the camp authorities. The third party intervening into the choices the writer is making it stronger than in any other epistolary writing.

Another interesting point of view to the censorship could be that of an unusual and even peculiar co-author's. The camp authorities are participating in the writing process by strong guidance

---

<sup>114</sup> Wachsmann 2016, 14.

<sup>115</sup> Stanley 2004, 221.

<sup>116</sup> Labov 1997, 395.

concerning the contents and topics. The difference here is, however, that the censors and the writer do not share the same interests in the communication. They also do not openly discuss the text and the position is far from equal. One mistake from the inmate, and their writings may have fatal consequences – literally.

In this chapter I will move further forward, maybe even take some distance from L&W compared to the previous chapters. The theme of writing from a concentration camp is wide and thought-provoking, just like the theme of living under a totalitarian regime. This is why I am bringing focus also on the context and the historical era more widely than in the other chapters. Contextualising is essential, in order to understand camp letters and the situations where they have been written.

Professor Vojmír Srdečný, who had the same fate as Miroslav Lorenc, told me that the prisoners were allowed to take their personal belongings, such as letters, with them from Sachsenhausen.<sup>117</sup> On the other hand another survivor, Ing. Karel Hýbek has told me that taking personal belongings was possible but one had to transport them out of the camp in such a manner that the guards would not notice it.<sup>118</sup>

It is possible that these practices have varied in Sachsenhausen during the years when the camp was in operation, but for one reason or another, Mirek has either not taken the letters with him or he has not saved them. Missing the other side of the dialogue has an inevitable effect on my interpretations.

In the early (pre-war) camps letters were widely allowed. The intervals varied from one week to one month. At that time prisoners could be rather daring in their messages and used codes to dupe the censors. In one coded letter, a prisoner Hans Litten even asked the recipient to send him enough opium to kill himself. This happened in 1933.<sup>119</sup>

Nikolaus Wachsmann characterizes the significance of camp letters (as follows): *Bland as most messages inevitably were, they gained added significance, as visits were now [from the late 1930s onwards] only allowed in exceptional circumstances. Delayed or withheld letters could cause alarm among relatives, who were ready under great strain.*<sup>120</sup>

Also the rules did change over the years, as the following quote from Mirek proves:

*Neulich wird vom Lager gestattet die Strümpfe zu schicken, aber nur die allein. Schickt mir, bitte, einige – so bald wie möglich. Der Vater hat also doch Erfolge bei dem Fischfang? (Den 24. Mai 1942)*

*(Recently the camp has made it permissible to send socks but only them. Please send me some – as soon as possible. So, father has had some success with fishing after all? (24 May 1942))*

At first glance Mirek's letters may appear short, repetitive and impersonal. However, the more I have read them, the more they open to possible interpretations. For instance the mentioning of

---

<sup>117</sup> Personal communication with Vojmír Srdečný 11 June 2014.

<sup>118</sup> Personal communication with Karel Hýbek 20 November 2014.

<sup>119</sup> Wachsmann2016, 65, 66.

<sup>120</sup> *ibid*, 121.

fishing (above) could be a hidden reference to something else. These alternative interpretations are of course purely speculative.

The amount of text each prisoner was permitted to write per letter was limited. Sachsenhausen, like other concentration camps, had its own specific stationery printed for this purpose. The text was supposed to fit on the given lines.

This is how Wachsmann describes the significance of writing letters: *Inmates also used their spare time to write to loved ones. Prisoners could send a brief letter or postcard every week or two, though they had to stay clear of any topic that could be construed as criticism. The ideal letter, one prisoner recounted, would have read something like this: "Thanks for the money, thanks for the mail. I am fine, all is well, yours Hans."*<sup>121</sup>

Family and friends were also given instructions about the length of an acceptable letter, as follows: *A letter is not allowed to contain more than 4 pages à 15 rows and it must be clear and well readable.* This instruction, among a few others, is visible in each letter written by a Sachsenhausen prisoner, as it was printed on the stationery.

Still there has been a small opportunity here and there to convey personal, even intimate messages, just like in the quote above from 24 May 1942 where Mirek asks his father about his luck in fishing. I have also noticed that all rules were not always observed by the camp administration as religiously as one would assume.

The instructions about correspondences stated that abbreviations (as well as euphemisms and additions) are forbidden in letters.<sup>122</sup> The censors in Sachsenhausen have still let several abbreviations pass, at least in Mirek's case. I have not heard any stories from or about other Czech students having trouble with using abbreviations, either. Mirek uses them regularly. He often abbreviates names, sometimes he uses only an initial. Occasionally he abbreviates other words as well.

This example is from a letter which lacks the date but was apparently written in December.

*Ich wünsche Euch und allen, allen fröhliche Weih. und glüchl. Neu Jahr. Euer M.*

*(I wish you and everyone, everyone Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Yours M.*

However, not all prisoners were as fortunate as Mirek and other Czech students. Nikolaus Wachsmann writes in his book *A History of the Nazi Concentration Camps*:

*The death squad pursued prisoners not just for who they were, but also for what they did in Sachsenhausen. Over a brief period in 1940 Sorge [Hauptscharführer in Sachsenhausen] killed an inmate who did not greet him fast enough, one who had stumbled and one who had left ink stains on a letter (the SS suspected a secret code).*<sup>123</sup>

---

<sup>121</sup> *ibid*, 121.

<sup>122</sup> Instructions about Correspondence to Prisoners. D 30 A/25. (Oranienburg: Sachsenhausen Museum and Archive).

<sup>123</sup> Wachsmann 2016, 223.

These short letters, sometimes only notes, were a lifeline to the outside world. Writing in German, the official language of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Reich, must have been an extra challenge, although Czech university students at the time had to know German, the language of science, very well.

My focus in this thesis is not on the language itself and I have quoted Mirek (as well as other writers in this study) without marking or commenting on the typographical or grammatical mistakes. Since Mirek's first language is not German, he often misspells certain words, e.g. he writes *kennen* instead of *können*. The language of these letters would be an interesting topic for other research, but in this thesis I am concentrating on letter writing as a phenomenon.

Vojmir Srdečný has even specifically mentioned me one Czech student whose German was considered so beautiful by the Germans that he was chosen to be waiter in the SS restaurant. Most German men were at the war fronts, and for this reason it was almost impossible to have a German-speaking male waiter.<sup>124</sup> This is a good example of how *knowing German meant life*, as Primo Levi has said.<sup>125</sup> Of course Auschwitz, where Levi was incarcerated, is a different camp from Sachsenhausen where the chances to survive were remarkably better, but still knowing the language helped there in improving one's conditions.

The letters had to be written in legible German, which shut out most foreign prisoners. Any references to illness, slave labor and camp life were prohibited. Often the inmates were even forbidden to mention the fact that they were in a concentration camp.<sup>126</sup> In the case of Mirek and other Czech students, it is very obvious that they are at the camp. Mirek makes a direct mention about it and even if he did not, the specific stationery would incontrovertibly reveal where he is.

*Ich fühle mich immer wohl und kann dem Gott danken, dass ich mich die ganze Zeit so gut gehalten habe. Wie geht es Euch in dieser Hinsicht? Ihr habt mir geschrieben von Euern, sich besserenden Nerwenzustand. Ich begreife es, aber doch wir sind nicht allein in dieser Stellung und meine Gesundheit ist hier doch in kleinerem Gefahr, als wenn ich in dem Kriege ware. (Den 19. Mai 1940)*

*(I always feel good and may thank God that I have had it so good all the time. How is it going for you in this respect? You have written to me that your nerves are in a better condition. I understand that, but surely we are not alone in this situation and my health here is in less danger than if I was in war. (19 May 1940))*

Dr. Veronika Sušová-Salminen has kindly allowed me to use her grandfather's messages home from Germany. He was in forced labour working in an aeroplane factory and was allowed to send messages called *Lebenszeichen* (sign of life) to tell his family that he had survived a bombing raid. He was allowed to write the messages in Czech.<sup>127</sup>

---

<sup>124</sup> Personal communication with Vojmir Srdečný 20.2.2013.

<sup>125</sup> Wachsmann 2016, 510.

<sup>126</sup> *ibid*, 482.

<sup>127</sup> Personal communication with Veronika Sušová-Salminen 26.11.2013

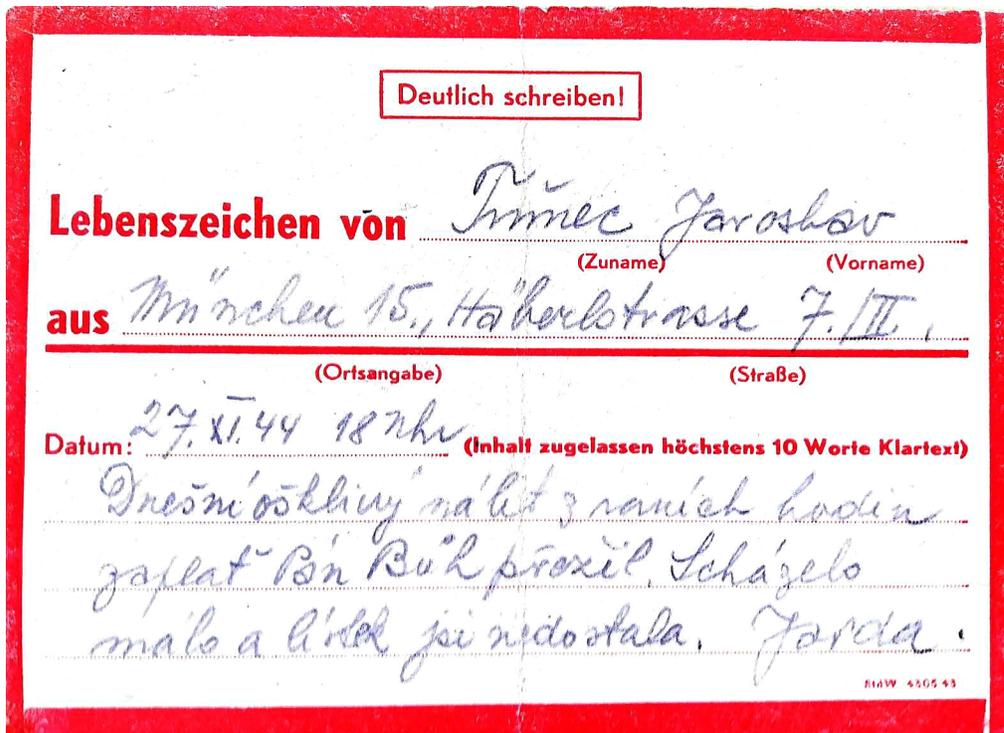


FIGURE 9 Lebenszeichen. (Courtesy of Veronika Sušová-Salminen)

Short messages of this kind, as well as camp letters, serve also a ritualistic function. The person who was absent, was alive and able to write a message.<sup>128</sup>

*Despite their enforced blandness, the letters still mattered to prisoners as did the eagerly awaited replies they sometimes received; knowledge that their loved ones were alive proved a source of great strength.*<sup>129</sup>

For research ethical principles' sake I want to mention the Finnish connections to Concentration Camp Sachsenhausen at this stage. I personally have no connections in my family history to the Third Reich or any of the Nazi Concentration camps, but according to the latest research, two Finnish SS volunteers, *Unterscharführer* Väinö Länsisalmi and *Sturmmann* Johan Isola were transferred from the Finnish rehabilitation unit (located in Graz) to Oranienburg in summer 1942.<sup>130</sup>

This coincides with the last months of Mirek's incarceration, but these two SS volunteers who are known to have served in Sachsenhausen did not work as guards but were placed there to do menial jobs, even the same ones as what the prisoners did.<sup>131</sup>

Wachsmann also mentions the foreign Camp SS men and their feeling of alienation in their job. They generally joined the Guard Troops around camps and worksites and had for this reason less direct contact with inmates.<sup>132</sup>

<sup>128</sup> Keravuori 2017, 274.

<sup>129</sup> Wachsmann 2016, 482.

<sup>130</sup> Swanström 2018, 171.

<sup>131</sup> *ibid.*, 171-174.

## 4.3 L&W in Camp letters

The length of Mirek's incarceration was approximately three years (November 1939 – December 1942). His letters from Concentration Camp Sachsenhausen, despite being written under heavy censorship, still do formulate narrations, and these narrations can be analysed with model of narrative structure proposed by William Labov and Joshua Waletzky (from now on L&W).

In this chapter I will not discuss the different narrative elements of L&W as much in detail as I did in chapter 1 when analysing František's letters. These letters are very repetitive because of the censorship, and for this reason it is essential to focus on smaller details in order to detect the narrations. Miniature narrations typical of František and Pavel's correspondences are missing in Mirek's letters because anecdotes and incidents of daily life are not permissible or safe topics.

These letters are the complicating action in the master story of the whole family correspondence. They tell the reader about the time when Mirek and his family, as well as the whole nation, are suffering. The narration takes a turn from a relatively carefree life of a young person (that we learned to know via Pavel's letters in chapter 2) to that of a political prisoner.

I have had the privilege to speak with a few Sachsenhausen survivors, and during these discussions some of them have been not only curious but also a little skeptical about my interest in camp letters. From their point of view, the letters were only short messages written out of obligation and they would not reveal anything remarkable about the camp life.<sup>133</sup> Contrary to the survivors' views, these are narrations from the camp. The narrations are subtle and the communication is indirect, but they are narrations, nevertheless.

The recipient of Mirek's letters is always his father Josef but they are actually addressed to several people, usually his family and friends, because his possibilities to communicate with the outside world are limited. It is interesting to note, though, that it was Mirek's mother Mařenka who has kept these letters among other family correspondences, including František's love letters from her days of youth.

### 4.3.1 Bowing letters

William I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki's use the concept *bowing letters* in their classic research on immigration history *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*. A bowing letter is written by or to a member of a family who is absent for a certain time and its function is to demonstrate the familial solidarity during the separation.<sup>134</sup>

In bowing letters, greetings are the most indispensable expressions. The writer of a bowing letter often mentions their good health and enumerates family members.<sup>135</sup>

---

<sup>132</sup> Wachsmann 2016, 363.

<sup>133</sup> Personal communication with Karel Hýbek, 19 February 2015.

<sup>134</sup> Thomas& Znaniecki1996, 25.

<sup>135</sup> *ibid*, 26.

As the example below indicates, these characteristics exist also in Mirek's camp letters. Greeting family and friends is an essential part of his correspondence. He also mentions his health several times, since it was the obligation, ordered by the camp authorities.<sup>136</sup>

*Abstract*

*Oranienburg 18/II 1940.*

*(Oranienburg 18 February 1940)*

*Orientation*

*Meine liebe Eltern!*

*Vor einer Woche habe ich Euren lieben Brief bekommen – und einige Tage davon auch das Paket. Ich danke euch für Beide.*

*(My dear parents!*

*I received your precious letter a week ago – and a couple of days later also the package. I thank you for both of them.)*

*Complicating action*

*Was mich betrifft, ich schreibe Euch regelmässig alle 14 Tage – wie es hier erlaubt ist. Ihr kennt aber öfter schreiben als Ihr es bisher getan habt – in dem ungefüterten Umschlage und immer mit der Adresse des Absenders an der Rückseite.*

*(When it comes to me, I write you regularly, every fortnight – as it is allowed here. But you can write more often than what you have done so far – in an envelope without a lining and always sender's address on the backside.)*

*Evaluation*

*Es ist natürlich dass Ihr um meine Gesundheit Sorge habt, aber es ist wirklich so, wie ich es schon mehrmal geschrieben habe. Eben deswegen, weil ich mich in den letzten Tagen in Prag nicht ganz wohl fühlte, wie es --- vor jeder Prüfung vorkommt – kann ich jetzt, da ich mich in voller Gesundheit befinde, mit vollem Recht schreiben, dass mein Gesundheitszustand besser als in Prag ist. Die regelmässige Verteilung des Essens hier wirkt sehr gut auf meine Gedärmeschwierigkeiten. – Wie seid Ihr aber mit dem Dr P zusammengekommen? D hat mir auch geschrieben, dass sie einen Brief von meiner Mutter bekommen hat. – Was macht Ihr denn das hinter meinem Rücken? – Auch von J.K. habe ich schon zweie Karten bekommen.*

*(It is natural that you worry about my health but it is really so, as I have already many times written. Even because I didn't feel so good during the last days in Prague – as is the case before every exam – I can now, that I have my full health, completely rightfully write that my state of health is better than what it is in Prague. The regular food rations issued here have a good impact on my intestinal problems. – But how is it that you have encountered Dr. P? D has also*

---

<sup>136</sup> Personal communication with Vojmir Srdečný 18.6.2013.

written to me that she has received a letter from my Mother. –Why are you doing this behind my back? I have also received two cards from J.K.)

Resolution

– Als (ich) mir das Paket von Hause gemeldet wurde und ich wartete auf die Herausgabe – da hatte ich das Gefühl eines Kindes unter dem Weihnachtsbaume – etwas, was ich schon lange nicht erlebt habe. Besonders die Dinge zum Essen sind mir zugute gekommen. – In dem nächsten Pakt sendet mir, bitte, keine Wäsche- die kann ich hier nicht brauchen. Sonst kennt Ihr mir mehr von Schockolade und Backwerk schicken. – Etwas was nicht leicht bricht. Auch die Bonbons haben das Vorteil dass sie lange aushalten. Kurz sendet mir vom Essen was Ihr für gut haltet und lasst bitte das Paket zu Hause verzollen (es kann das Postamt versorgen).

As I was informed about a package from home and I waited for the delivery – I had the same feeling as a child under the Christmas tree. That was something that I had not experienced in a long time. Especially the food items have done me good. - Please do not send any underwear in the next package, I cannot use them here. On the other hand, you can send me more chocolate and cakes. – Something that does not break easily. Also the sweets have the advantage that they stay good for a long time. In short, send me food that you consider good and please do the customs declaration at home (the post office can take care of that).

Coda

– Ich grüsse und küsse Euch herzlich – Euer Mirek

(I cordially greet and kiss you – yours Mirek)

Even though hunger and disease were the greatest killers before the mass executions had begun, in 1940 also prisoner suicides shot up. In April alone, 26 prisoners are said to have killed themselves in Sachsenhausen. Some running in a fit of despair into the electrified fence and others doing the same after having planned their death well in advance.<sup>137</sup>

In this letter Mirek tries to convince his parents that he is doing better than before his incarceration. Also he mentions mutual acquaintances and gives thanks for the food package. He even claims that regular eating at the camp helps him with his intestinal problems. Camp food certainly does not have that effect and it is possible that this is either written to please the censors, or if he has no problems with digestion in his normal domestic life, it can be a message to his parents which they should be able to translate into the opposite: the food is of low quality and it is causing me intestinal problems.

The need to express solidarity and staying together, at least in thoughts, is strongly present. The same is true of many of his other letters as well.

---

<sup>137</sup> Wachsmann 2016, 225.

### 4.3.2 Narrative structures

One possible reason why Mirek's camp letters follow a perceivable narrative structure may be that letters are usually fully formed texts and the writer's intention is – most of the time – to create a coherent text to fulfil the key role of delivering the message(s).

One could even argue that camp letters combine the epic narrative and the narrative about daily life. When analysing personal stories about life and death, Labov writes: *Both genres [epic narrative and narratives about personal experience] strike a note of high seriousness: they deal with the fundamental problems of human existence: death and the danger of death and the relation of the living to the dead.*<sup>138</sup>

Could anyone summarise the themes of camp letters any better? Also Nina Sääskilahti points out that death is an essential source of motivation in modern life writing.<sup>139</sup> In this respect, Mirek's camp letters are discussing the core issues of life writing and life itself. They are of high significance, even though the writer has no freedom of expression, due to camp conditions.

After the arrival of this letter, there is almost a one-month gap, even though Mirek mentions that he is writing regularly. The reason for the gap is unknown, the letter may have gone missing in delivery, it may have not passed the censorship or maybe it has been misplaced by Mirek's parents. It is also possible that he has written letters to his girlfriend Anny, even though – as we shall see later on – he writes in another letter that he is allowed to write to one person only.

In May 1942, Miroslav mentions his health again, and his dental health in particular.

*Was mich betrifft, ich befinde mich im ersten Gesundheitszustand auch um meine Zähne braucht die Mutter keine Sorgen zu haben. Mit dem Inhalt Eueres Packetes war ich, wie immer, sehr zufrieden.*

*(When it comes to me, my state of health is first rate and Mother does not need to worry about my teeth at all. As always, I was very happy with the contents of your package.)*

One of the Czech students, Jiri Volf has told that when he was arrested, he had been beaten with truncheons so that he lost four teeth.<sup>140</sup> Volf is probably not the only one, and for this reason, Mirek's mother's question about his teeth is understandable.

When studying Mirek's letters (as well as other letters) it becomes apparent for a modern-day reader that one complicating action is that some things he mentions will remain unknown forever. As an outsider it is impossible to know, e.g. what news Wlasta has.

*Der Bericht vom Wlasta hat mich wirklich überrascht. (8./VIII 1940)*

*( Wlasta's account has really surprised me. (8 August 1940))*

For Mirek's parents this element would not be a complicating action at all, and this indicates that in a letter narration the narrative elements can have a different role, depending on the reader's (or listener's) perspective.

---

<sup>138</sup> Labov, William 2013, 177.

<sup>139</sup> Sääskilahti 2011, 134.

<sup>140</sup> Wachsmann 2016, 200.

As I mentioned in Chapter 1, Jerome Bruner defines complication as *the disturbance in the story*, and it is trouble that defines complication. Trouble is the element which comes into being from the imbalance of narrative elements.<sup>141</sup>

In Mirek's letters, the key complicating actions are: separation from home, family and friends, communication problems because writing is limited and letters and packages are getting lost in the mail.

*I met Poul Nielsen, a Danish survivor of Sachsenhauen, very briefly, on April 18th 2015. He was giving a speech about his experiences on the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of the camp at Memorial and Museum Sachsenhausen.*

*We exchanged a couple of e-mails about letter writing during his incarceration.*

> 15. toukokuuta 2015 kello 1:10 Poul Nielsen <dk.erhverv@mail.dk> kirjoitti:

>

> Liebe Johanna Kulmala !

>

> Zwei Mal im Monat war allgemein für Briefwechsel, in einen guten Block, d.h.

> wo der Blockälteste in Ordnung war,

> bekam man Papier, Tinte und Feder, Geld vom angehörige einbezahlt für

> Briefmarken war auch nötig.

> Ich habe meine Briefe selbst geschrieben und für meine Kameraden gemacht

> oder geholfen. Viel Arbeit !

> Empfang und Sendung immer in deutsch.

> Blockälteste war der verantwortliche Häftling für die Ordnung im Block.

>

> Lesen sie übrigens über Nacht und Nebel auf Ihren computer !

> mit freundlichen Grüßen Poul Nielsen

It is also worth mentioning that similar characteristics of bowing letters are present also in Pavel's letters which have been discussed in chapters 2 and 4. Even though Pavel's letters are not exactly family letters but letters to friends, many of them were written in separation, in a monastery environment.

---

<sup>141</sup> Bruner 1997,63

By writing letters, a person constructs their identity. The writer expresses their subjective views on life and events. The writer is also in the position to choose what is told and what remains untold.<sup>142</sup> In a prison camp, the writer's position is of course weaker due to censorship. Still, even the limited power to define oneself is a remarkable improvement.

#### 4.4 Postal Services in Nazi-Germany

The letters seem to be written regularly, at the intervals of two weeks. Some exceptions to this rule can be explained by letters having gone lost. Apparently the Third Reich had a reliable postal service because the vast majority of letters reached Miroslav's parents in Bohemia. During the three years in Sachsenhausen he mentions only 13 times about missing a letter from his parents. From today's perspective it sounds like a lot, but if all other letters, except for those 13, reached the intended destinations during the war and under strict censorship, I would consider it a good result, if we assume that the parents wrote at least the same number of letters to Mirek that he wrote to them (78).

*Sonntag ist immer der schönste Tag hier im Lager, weil uns da die Briefe herausgegeben werden. (Den 2./VI.1940)*

*(Sunday is always the nicest day here at the camp because that's when the letters are issued. (2 June 1940))*

Miroslav received mail on Sundays and he was allowed to receive mail from more than one person, however, he was not allowed to address his letters to anyone else than his parents. This is something that his acquaintance Frl. P could not understand. On June 30 1940 Miroslav writes to his parents:

*Ich begreife nicht warum die Frl. P nach andere Erklärungen brauchte – wegen meines Schweigens, als ich geschrieben habe. Es war doch klar. Ich kann Ihr nur die Grüße ausrichten lassen. (Den 30 Juni 1940)*

*(I do not understand why Frl. P needed further explanations about my silence than what I have written. Surely it was clear enough. I can only send her my greetings. (30 June 1940))*

This extract indicates that the prisoners were permitted to write to one address only and they were allowed to send greetings to other people via these short messages. In nearly every letter Mirek greets people, usually mentioning them by name and thanking them for their messages and packages. However, as I have stated earlier, it is also possible that Mirek wrote to other people too, such as his girlfriend Anny. The stories by other survivors confirm that writing to more than one person or address was allowed. I will discuss this topic later in this chapter.

The letter below is a rather typical letter from Mirek to his parents. What we do learn from it about postal services and the practices at the camp is that the letters are delivered on Saturdays.

Between 29 March and 26 April 1942 the letters are missing. The reason is not necessarily troubles in delivery, the letters may have been misplaced at home or given to friends or relatives

---

<sup>142</sup> Keravuori 2017, 104.

who may have wanted to keep them. Also, the censorship may have destroyed the letters. However, Mirek's letter from 29 March 1942 indicates some sort of congestion in the postal service.

*Es tut mir leid dass Ihr meinen letzten Brief nicht bekommen habet. Vielleicht kommt er verspätet. I[ch] war in meiner Erwartung nicht so enttäuscht. Ja - das Packet war (leider muss ich schon sagen war) wirklich ausgezeichnet. Herzlichen Dank dafür.*

*(I am sorry that you have not received my previous letter. Maybe it comes late. I was not disappointed in my expectations like that. Yes, the package was (unfortunately I must already say was) really excellent. Cordial thanks for that.)*

Also on 26 April 1942 Mirek misses his parents' letter, but it is possible that he has received and sent some between these weeks and they have simply disappeared afterwards.

*Diesmal habe ich leider Eueren lieben Brief vergebens erwartet. Hoffentlich werde ich ihn später bekommen. Am besten wäre es, wenn wir uns nicht mehr auf bloßen Briefwechsel beschränken brauchten, aber das ist immer noch nur ein Lied der Zukunft das auf sich so lange warten lässt. Ja, der dritte Frühling ist schon da – es ist schon 2 ½ Jahre seitdem ich Euch, meine Lieben, nicht gesehen habe.*

*(This time I have unfortunately waited for your precious letter in vain. Hopefully I will receive it later. It would be best if did not need to only exchange letters but that is still a song of the future that makes us wait so long. Yes, the third spring is already here – it is already 2 ½ years since I have seen you, my dearest ones.)*

For comparison, Jaroslav Franc has dated letters in the approximately the same time frame as follows: 15 March, 12 April and 26 April. He also says thanks for the letters he has received. This confirms that the mail has been delivered and sent also during the one-month break in Mirek's correspondence. This indicates that the camp administration has no role in it and the reasons for the break can only be speculated.

If one takes a closer look and is fortunate enough to find sources, one can see Mirek making references to the current situation at home. The issues are most likely mentioned in his parents' letters, as is the case in the quote below.

*Ich dachte dass Květa schon eine Stelle hat, wie er mir geschrieben hat, oder macht er das wegen schwereren Versorgungsverhältnissen in Prag? Was Arnold betrifft, da wunderte mich mehr dass er mir überhaupt schrieb, als die letzte Nachricht von ihm. Von der Zuteilung der Lebensmittel bei Euch weiss ich nicht so viel wie Ihr denkt – und es würde mich interessieren. (24 Mai 1942)*

*(I thought that Květa already had a position?, as he has written me, or does he do that because of the serious supply conditions in Prague? When it comes to Arnold, I was more surprised that he writes to me in the first place rather than at the latest news from him. I do not know about your food rations as much as you think – and that would interest me. (24 May 1942))*

Rationing had been ordered in the Protectorate in October 1939, only a few weeks before the Czech students had been arrested and sent to Sachsenhausen. In Germany itself, the system had been introduced several weeks earlier. At the beginning rationing was more generous in the

Protectorate than in Germany. Flour rations were relatively generous, and those of sugar were also significantly larger than in Germany. The rations kept diminishing as the war proceeded but they were at least honoured in the sense that the system did not discriminate against the Czechs.<sup>143</sup>

## 4.5 Letters as Physical Objects

*"I read [your letter] again and again and won't part from it until my last breath." Chaim Herman of the Birkenau Special Squad in November 1944 in his final note meant for his wife and daughter in France.*<sup>144</sup>

The situation above is not only heartbreaking because of the historical context but it also describes the significance of a letter as a physical object. The recipient knows that they are holding the same sheet of paper that the writer has been holding. The letter was a tangible link and the closest contact between people separated by space.<sup>145</sup>

Similar types of discourses are possible also in less dramatic situations, such as in this passage from František.

*Ten jediný dopis od Vás nosím jako malé dítě sebou a umím jej již skoro nazpaměť. Máte ještě stále obavu, že se Vám shroutí všechny představy o mne, až se někdy uvidíme, nebo až si vyměníme podobenky (Podbřežice, 3 September 1908)*

*(The only letter from you, I carry with me and I've almost memorized it. You are still concerned that all your imaginations will fall apart about me, when we see each other someday, or when we exchange photos. (Podbřežice, 3 September 1908))*

In L&W, the story (often) begins with an abstract, which one way or another, summarises the forthcoming narration. In letters, this type of initiation is possible, although not common. In my article in *Scriptum 2/2017* I stated that letters as such (as physical objects) and the date when it has been written, can function as an abstract of some kind. Concentration camp letters have the specific stationery printed for the purpose and often the Third Reich stamps on them. These elements, along with the date, are objects which non-verbally summarise the story of the letter. The stationery tells the reader immediately the writer's location and the purpose of the letter.<sup>146</sup>

The instructions for the reader printed on the stationery may be even more informative than a traditional abstract of L&W. For example, they warn the reader not to make any inquiries about the camp conditions or the length of the incarceration, and they also define what items are permissible in the mailed packages and what not. The instructions which are intended to guide the recipient in writing the reply, in fact turn into a guideline for reading the letter sent from the camp. When certain topics are forbidden, the reader needs to develop skills to read between the

---

<sup>143</sup> Mastny 1971, 83.

<sup>144</sup> Wachsmann2016, 482.

<sup>145</sup> Eiranen 2016, 44.

<sup>146</sup> Kulmala 2017, 24.

lines.<sup>147</sup> In a sense, here the skill essentially human, the ability to interpret and reinterpret texts laughs sardonically at the totalitarian regime.

One of the reasons why Mirek's camp letters follow L&W closely may be these instructions. They guide the writer not to write about most of the topics characteristic of camp life. Maybe this is why the writer is being led (unintentionally) to write a stereotypical narrative text.<sup>148</sup>

Surprisingly, some remarks about camp life were possible for Miroslav. Understandably, he only makes brief references, such as mentioning the meaning of friendship and sense of belonging to the group of young people. In January 1940 he writes:

*Die Kameradschaft gibt dem Menschen genug Kraft und Lebensfreude unter allen Umständen.*

*(Comeraderie gives one plenty of strength and joy of life in all circumstances.)*

Non-textual factors have been interpreted as part of correspondence also in other studies. For instance, Kirsi Keravuori, who has studied self-learned writers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Finland points out that sending e.g. clothes, clean bedsheets or lingonberries is a token of love and care, and thus also an essential element of a family correspondence.<sup>149</sup>

Primo Levi, who is one of the best-known first-hand witnesses of the Holocaust, mentions that he envied the political prisoners in Auschwitz for their privilege to correspond with loved ones. For him, the moment when others received their mail was gloomy; the unprivileged felt isolated, even expelled from humankind.<sup>150</sup>

Stanley explores further the time of a letter and letter writing:

*Letters --- share some of the temporal complexities of photographs: they not only hold memory but also always represent the moment of their production, and have a similar 'flies in amber' quality. This 'present writing, even after the death of the writer and addressee; and their addressee is 'always listening' too.*<sup>151</sup>

Since we do not have many (genuine) photographs about the prisoners' life in Sachsenhausen, the letters home may be viewed as such. Camp letters are idealistic and written for propaganda purposes, just like the pictures taken from camp life. They say that the camera never lies, but we know that is not necessarily true.

Letters do lie too, but I believe in the power of written word and the moments of truth it can convey, penetrating the facades of propaganda. For instance, hope and losing one's hope emerge from letters in a different manner than in texts created afterwards. Letters carry traces of momentary experiences and the unpredictability of human life.<sup>152</sup>

---

<sup>147</sup> ibid, 24-25.

<sup>148</sup> ibid, 25.

<sup>149</sup> Keravuori 2016, 49.

<sup>150</sup> Levi 2009, 103–104.

<sup>151</sup> Stanley 2004, 208.

<sup>152</sup> Keravuori 2017, 179.

Moreover, letters make a dialogue possible, and that dialogue has certain conventions. Commenting on received letters and the quality of postal service is an essential part in the culture of letter writing in Europe.<sup>153</sup> This characteristic is visible also in Mirek's letters.

*Meine Teuersten! Vor einer Woche habe ich endlich einen Brief von Euch erhalten. Wir haben schon Pech mit dem Schreiben zu letzten Zeit. Eine Woche vorher erhie[ll]t Ich die Karte von Onkel O. – Gestern Karte von Jiřa und Květa. (Den 17. Mai 1942)*

*(My dearest ones! A week ago I finally received a letter from you. We have indeed had bad luck with our writing lately. A week earlier I received the card from Onkel O and yesterday from Jiřa and Květa. (17 May 1942))*

Christina Douglas discusses the significance of letters as material objects in her doctoral dissertation, in which she analyses correspondences of two young Swedish couples in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. According to her, having the opportunity to hold the same sheet of paper as the writer, brings the feeling of intimacy to the reader. For this reason, even insignificant letters can be touching relics of the writer.<sup>154</sup>

Unfortunately, the censorship struck the correspondence now and then, despite the fact that Miroslav never even hinted about the monstrosities of the camp life. As I mentioned before, there is no way for us to know how many letters written by Miroslav did not pass the control, but we do know from what he writes that some of his parents' did not.

*Schade nur, dass ich von Eueren Briefe nur eine Hälfte bekommen habe mit der Zensurbemerkung: "Deutlich und leserlich schreiben!" (8.8.1940)*

*(It is just a pity that I have received only a half of your letter with a censor's note: "Write clearly and intelligibly!" (8 August 1940))*

Nikolaus Wachsmann mentions an incident that happened in summer 1940. Prisoner Alfred Wittig was given to the hands of fellow prisoners because of his attempt to escape. All prisoners had had to stand at attention deep into the night, while he had been searched for. Dozens of prisoners who had suffered the previous night trampled him to death. The cause of death in this case was recorded accurately because the SS had not been directly involved in it.<sup>155</sup>

A remarkable part of the valuable writing space was spent on thanking for packages and letters and giving instructions, which also changed now and then.

*Den Satz von den Packeten – den ich einmal geschrieben habe, habt Ihr richtig verstanden und nachgefolgt, die Verhältnisse haben sich aber inzwischen verändert. Es darf nur ein Packet gesandt werden. Was die Briefe von dem Bekannten betrifft, da gilt aber das, was ich geschrieben habe. Hier bringt alles, was von ausen kommt, eine Erfrischung. (den 30 Juni 1940)*

*(The sentence about the packages – which I have once written, you have understood and implemented right, but the situation has changed since. Only one package is allowed. When it*

---

<sup>153</sup> *ibid*, 116.

<sup>154</sup> Douglas 2011, 45..

<sup>155</sup> Wachsmann 2016, 536.

*comes to the letters from acquaintances, what I wrote is valid. Here everything that comes from outside brings refreshment. (30 June 1940))*

Miroslav obviously suffered from the limitation of space. Despite the censorship, he still would have had things to ask.

*Die Berichten von den Verwandten und Bekannten interessieren mich sehr – ich kann mir nicht wegen Mangel an Platz alles nachfragen, was ich wissen möchte. (6.10.1940)*

*(The news from the relatives and acquaintances interests me very much – I cannot because of lack of space ask everything that I would like to know. (6 October 1940))*

Ing. Jaroslav Franc has also sent four letters from Sachsenhausen where the greeting is missing altogether. He simply begins his writing from the first topic. This was probably done in order to save space.

Abstract

*Den 2. März 1941*

*(2 March 1941)*

Orientation

*Meine Teuersten!*

*(My dearest!)*

Complicating action

*Den Brief, von dem Ihr mir in der letzten Karte geschrieben habet, habe ich leider noch nicht erhalten. Mit der Karte aber bekam ich noch einem Brief von A und ich möchte ihm heute seine Fragen beantworten. Das Büchlein von Ihm würde mir nicht ausgegeben, aber der zugelegte Brief ja.*

*(The letter that you mentioned in the latest card I have not yet received, unfortunately. But together with the card I also got a letter from A and I would like to answer his questions today. I was not given the booklet he sent me but I did receive the letter attached to it.)*

Evaluation

*Es dürfen keine Bücher ins Lager gesandt werden. Er freute sich, dass er einen Urlaub bekommen hat und seine Freunde besuchen konnte. Schade, dass es auch bei uns nicht möglich ist.*

*(It is not allowed to send any books to the camp. He was happy that he had been admitted a holiday and he could visit his friends. It is a pity that it is not possible for us also.)*

Resolution

*Für uns bleibt nur die Hoffnung mit einem endgültigen Urlaub, den wir schon so lange vergebens erwarten.*

*(With us remains only the hope of interminable? holiday that we have waited for so long in vain.)*

Coda

*Richtet aus meine herzlichen Grüsse an alle Bekannten.*

*Euer Mirek*

*(Send my cordial greetings to all acquaintances*

*Yours Mirek)*

This letter demonstrates the contradictions one needs to live with as a researcher. Earlier Mirek asks for books but now he writes that they are not permitted at the camp. Also other survivors have told me that writing to more than one person was possible. However, Mirek lets his parents understand that writing to one person only is permissible. One reason may be that he simply did not want to write to anyone else but his parents, not even to his girlfriend Anny.

Jaroslav Franc has sent a couple of letters to his girlfriend and future wife Maruska, which confirms the narrations of other survivors. What is interesting in Franc's case compared to Mirek is that he greeted slightly different persons in his letters, even when he sent them to his parents' address. Sometimes the letter was addressed Mother, other times for Father or Father and Uncle, sometimes just for his dearest (*Meine Teuersten*).

Abstract

*Den 17./VIII. 1941*

*(17 August 1941)*

Orientation / Evaluation

*Meine Teuersten! Es wurde mir wieder nicht gegönnt die lieben Zeilen von Euch zu lesen, den ich habe den zweiten Brief in diesem Monate vor eine Woche von E bekommen. Auch Frau S hat mir einen Gruss aus Chrudim gesendet. Diese Woche habe ich dann erhalten eine Karte von I und eine von ZM. Ich danke Euch herzlich für das Packet, das ich wieder in Ordnung erhalten habe.*

*(My dearest ones! I was once again not allowed to read the precious lines from you because I received a week ago the second letter in this month from E. Also Mrs. S has sent me a greeting from Chrudim. This week I received a card from I and also one from ZM. I thank you cordially for the package that I again received without complications.)*

Complicating action

*Was soll ich schreiben? Ihr könnt Euch doch allein vorstellen, dass meine Gedanken alle Tage bei Euch weilen – die ich schon fast zwei Jahre nicht gesehen habe. Die Zeit vergeht so schnell!*

*(What should I write? Surely you can imagine yourselves that my thoughts remain every day with you – who I haven't seen for almost two years already. The time goes by so quickly!)*

Result or resolution

*Hauptsache ist, dass meine Gesundheit immer gleich gut ist.*

*(The main thing is that my health is as good as always.)*

Coda

*Grüsst von mir, bitte, Onkel O. und alle Verwandten – auch Anny K. – Herzlich grüsst u küsst Euch Euer M.*

*(Please, send my greetings to Uncle O and all relatives – also Anny K. – Cordial greetings and kisses for/to you, your M.)*

Here we see Mirek reflecting his own writing, wondering what he should write. At this point he has been writing under censorship in brutal conditions for nearly two years. One can only imagine the stress and anxiety in the moment captured in the letter.

## 4.6 17th November 1939

*Fiction gives eyes to the horrified narrator (Paul Ricœur)*

DOCUMENT 489-USSR

*PROCLAMATION IN NEURATH'S NAME, 17 NOVEMBER 1939: ON ACCOUNT OF ACTS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST GERMANS BY "CZECH INTELLECTUALS", THE CZECH UNIVERSITIES HAVE BEEN CLOSED FOR 3 YEARS; NINE PARTICIPANTS HAVE BEEN SHOT AND A LARGE NUMBER HAVE BEEN ARRESTED*

*Bekanntmachung!*

*Trotz wiederholter ernster Warnungen versucht seit einiger Zeit eine Gruppe tschechischer Intellektueller in Zusammenarbeit mit Emigrantenkreisen im Ausland durch kleine oder größere Widerstandsakte die Ruhe und Ordnung im Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren zu stören. Es konnte dabei festgestellt werden, daß sich Rädelsführer dieser Widerstandsakte besonders auch in den tschechischen Hochschulen befinden.*

*Da sich am 28. Oktober und am 15. November diese Elemente hinreißen ließen, gegen einzelne Deutsche tätlich vorzugehen, wurden*

*die tschechischen Hochschulen*

*auf die Dauer von drei Jahren geschlossen,*

*neun Täter erschossen*

*und*

*eine größere Anzahl Beteiligten in Haft genommen.*

*Prag, den 17. November 1939*

*Der Reichsprotektor Böhmen und Mähren*

*gez. Freiherr von Neurath<sup>156</sup>*

---

<sup>156</sup> Trial, XXXIX, p. 534; see Mastny 1971, 117, 246)

In his book *Prague in Danger*, Peter Demetz describes the chain of events that led to the closure of Czech universities. The process started during the autumn and winter of 1938 when the German university removed Jewish faculty and students (about 10 percent of the enrolment). Since Mirek was a student of medicine, it is worth mentioning that half of the expelled teachers were from the medical faculty.<sup>157</sup>

Mirek studied in the Czech university and not in the German one, but according to Demetz, *the university clinics were left in a deplorable state*.<sup>158</sup> This must have affected Mirek's studies, as well as his fellow students, regardless of their first language or ethnicity.

September 1<sup>st</sup> 1939 the German University became juridically an educational institution of the Reich. Ten weeks later the Czech university was closed and it would remain so for three years. The closing had preceded the student demonstration on November 15<sup>th</sup>, motivated by the death of a medical student Jan Opletal on November 11<sup>th</sup>. His funeral a few days later, on November 15<sup>th</sup> turned into an anti-German demonstration.<sup>159</sup>

Jürgen Tampke describes the events: *A furious Hitler not only ordered von Neurath and Frank to close all Czech universities for three years, but also ordered the detention of a large number of students. Frank complied by having nine 'ringleaders' shot and by deporting 1200 students to concentration camps. This sufficed to temporarily pacify the situation in the protectorate*.<sup>160</sup>

After the closing of the Czech university and the student demonstrations, on the early morning of 17<sup>th</sup> November, Gestapo arrested all male students in Prague and Brno student dormitories. The Czech students who were under 20 years of age, Slovak, Yugoslavian and Bulgarian citizens as well as members of the Fascist *Vlajka* group were sent home. The rest were transferred to Oranienburg and later to Sachsenhausen. Nine student functionaries were shot and about 1200 students of Czech nationality were transferred to Oranienburg and to Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp.<sup>161</sup>

These Czech students were part of the increasing inmate population of Sachsenhausen, which nearly doubled from August 1930 (6,563 prisoners) before the year of 1939 was out (12,168 prisoners). One can only imagine the situation at the camp, where these young Czech men entered, uniforms, bedding etc. were short in supply. Barracks were packed.<sup>162</sup>

Professor Jan Šabršula has told me that the arrest happened early in the morning. He had arrived in his dormitory room from a concert only a couple of hours earlier. He heard shouting and commands and opened the room door. He saw Gestapo arresting his fellow students and breaking the doors.

Šabršula's roommate, who was younger than him, wanted to lock the door but he said it is no use because Gestapo are entering anyway. When the officers came and commanded the two students to come out, Šabršula reached for his portfolio where his *Ausweis* was. It would not be

---

<sup>157</sup> Demetz 2008, 35.

<sup>158</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>159</sup> Demetz 2008, 35, 79–81 & Tampke 2003, 65.

<sup>160</sup> Tampke, 2003, 65.

<sup>161</sup> Demetz 2008, 81–82.

<sup>162</sup> Wachsmann 2016, 210.

permitted to leave the house without the documents. The officer pushed him against the wall and he and his roommate left the room only with the clothes they were wearing.<sup>163</sup>

The oppressing measures were not supposed to end here. In late August or early September 1940, *A Memorandum about the Future of the Protectorate and the Czech People* was presented to Hitler. The Czech language was to be reduced to a local dialect, high schools and later also elementary schools were supposed to be German only.<sup>164</sup>

The far-reaching plan was to assimilate the “racially” valuable Czechs as Germans, others were to be depoliticized and neutralized, resettled somewhere in Eastern Europe or submitted to a *Sonderbehandlung* (meaning physical annihilation).<sup>165</sup>

In his letter dated 30 June 1940 Mirek asks his parents if they have any news about the university: *Besonderes die Frage unserer Hochschulen interessiert mich. (Especially the question about our high schools interests me.)*

Hitler’s aversion for the Czechs in his younger days, when the nationality conflict was wrecking the Habsburg monarchy, is well-recorded. According to Vojtech Mastny, *he [Hitler] had hated the sight of Czechs coming to Vienna “penniless and dragging their worn-out shoes over the streets of the city” only to “install themselves in key positions soon afterwards.”*<sup>166</sup>

It is worth noting that there is a rumour about Hitler claimed to have said that Bohemia and Moravia would be colonized with German peasants and that Czechs shall be removed from Central Europe because they would always be *a seat of Hussite-Bolshevik subversion*. These statements, however, are fictitious.<sup>167</sup>

Still, the official policy of Protectorate did not differ remarkably from the above mentioned rumour. Tampke writes about the situation as follows:

*Von Neurath’s policy for Czech people in the Reichsgau and Protectorate was to “assimilate Czechdom, that is, Germanize about half the Czech population” The other half of the Czech people were to be deprived of power in various ways, eliminated or removed from the country. Those affected included “in particular mongoloids and a large section of the [nation’s] intellectuals.”*<sup>168</sup>

*Frank understood Germanization as “national mutation of racially suitable Czechs”, but he added that those who could not be racially absorbed, as well as members of the intelligentsia who were hostile to the Reich and other destructive elements, should be dealt with the means of “special treatment” – Sonderbehandlung.*<sup>169</sup>

The incarceration of the university students was a shocking surprise to many Czechs. At the initial stage, the German occupation had been less oppressive than many of them had expected.

---

<sup>163</sup> Personal communication with Jan Šabršula 8 April 2014.

<sup>164</sup> Demetz 2008, 178.

<sup>165</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>166</sup> Mastny 1971, 11.

<sup>167</sup> Tampke 2003, 50.

<sup>168</sup> *ibid.*, 60.

<sup>169</sup> *ibid.*, 60.

Also, as the first non-German nation to be subjugated by the Nazis, the Czechs were in a unique situation. They had not been defeated in a military conflict but instead, their spirit had been broken earlier, by the Munich Pact. Also, what had affected the attitudes at the beginning of the occupation was the fact that the older generation had experience about serving Austrian masters, and for this reason the situation did not appear as new as one might assume<sup>170</sup>

At the time when the Czech students arrived at the camp, some of the atrocities that would shadow the upcoming years were taking place. In October-December 1939, dozens of prisoners were poisoned with mustard gas in Sachsenhausen infirmary. These were probably the first such experiments. Doctors applied mustard gas onto the arms of prisoners, in order to test the effectiveness of potential remedies. These tests were ordered by Himmler who was affected by widespread hysteria about possible chemical attacks on German troops.<sup>171</sup>

Also, right after the arrival of the Czech students, November 22, 1939 a 14-year-old Austrian prisoner Heinrich Petz was executed.<sup>172</sup>

Despite the disastrous plans to destroy the educated Czechs, the vast majority of the Czech students survived the ordeal. By 1943 many students had been released in small groups, thanks to President Hacha's successful negotiations with the Nazi occupiers. However, fifteen students died in the camp and three in May 1945 at the barricades of the Prague uprising.<sup>173</sup>

The letter below was written only a couple of days or weeks before Mirek was released.

Abstract

*Den 18. Januar 1942.*

*18 January 1942*

Orientation

*Meine Teuersten! Ein bisschen verspätet habe ich Eueren lieben Brief von 28./XII erhalten. Auch Familie M hat mir eine Karte gesandt.*

*(My dearest ones! I have received your precious letter from 28 December a bit late. Also Family M has sent me a card.)*

Evaluation

*Euere Weihnachten in diesem Jahre waren also noch weniger freudig als die vorigen, da auch Jiřa fehlte. Euere Nachricht von ihr hat mich sehr überrascht. Ich hoffe aber, dass sie schon, indem ich diese Zeilen schreibe, wieder gesund ist und dass sie sich ausgiebig erholt hat.*

*(Your Christmas this year was also less happy than the previous one because also Jiřa was missing. Your news about her surprised me a lot. But I hope that she, as I write these lines, is healthy already and that she has recovered thoroughly.)*

---

<sup>170</sup> Mastny 1971, 57, 101.

<sup>171</sup> Wachsmann, Nikolaus: A History of the Nazi Concentration Camps, 2016, 231.

<sup>172</sup> Wachsmann, Nikolaus: A History of the Nazi Concentration Camps, 2016, 218.

<sup>173</sup> Demetz, Peter: Prague in Danger, 2008, 81-82.

### Complicating action

*Ich war in diesen Tagen mit meinen Gedanken wieder und wieder bei Euch. Wie ein Traum kommt mir das vor, dass ich Euch, meine lieben, wieder sehen könnte.*

*(I was these days again and again with you in my thoughts. It occurs to me, like a dream, that I could see you again, my dear ones.)*

### Result or resolution

*Wir sind schon gewöhnt an alles, so dass man kaum von einer Enttäuschung sprechen kann. Ich bin gesund, innerlich völlig ausgeglichen und an Geduld fehlt es mir auch nicht.*

*(We are used to everything, already, so that one can hardly talk about a disappointment. I am healthy, inwardly I'm in total balance and I am not lacking patience either.)*

### Coda

*Ich danke Euch auch für Euere Packete die ich erhalten habe. Herzling küsst Euch M.*

*(I also thank you for your packages that I have received. Cordially kisses you your M.)*

For some unknown reasons, the Czech students were liberated from Sachsenhausen biannually. At Christmas and on Hitler's birthday. The Czech students could not find any logical order in which the releases were carried out.<sup>174</sup>

### Abstract

*Den 23./XI 1941.*

*(23 November 1941)*

### Orientation

*Meine Teuersten, Eueren lieben Brief vom 17./XI. habe ich bekommen.*

*(My dearest ones, I have received your precious brief, dated 17 November.)*

### Complicating action

*Auch bei mir hat der 17. Nov. viele Erinnerungen hervorgerufen. Es ist schon mehr als zwei Jahre als ich Euch, meine lieben, zum letztenmale gesehen habe und bis jetzt bleibt nur Hoffnung, das endlich uns das Schicksal doch freundlicher zulachen wird. Wir haben uns hier schon gewöhnt und es kommt uns nicht mehr schwer das ertragen, was die Zeit bringt.*

*(17 November has brought back many memories to me as well. It is over two years already since I last saw you, my dear ones, and until now only a hope has remained that the fate finally laughs [sic] at us in a more friendly manner. We are used to being here and it is not difficult anymore to bear whatever the time brings.)*

### Evaluation / Resolution

---

<sup>174</sup> Personal communication with Karel Hýbek, 20 November 2014.

*Hauptsache ist dass ich immer gesund bin und hoffe dass auch bei Euch der Fall ist. Ich kann --- denken wie schwer die letzte Zeit für den Dr. S sein musste, ebenso wie für die anderen. Es freut mich dass auch die Sache mit Jiřa und O. zu Ende ist – ich hoffe endgültig.*

*(The main thing is that I am always healthy and hope that you are also. I can --- imagine how difficult the last times must have been for Dr S, as well as for the others. It makes me happy that the thing with Jiřa and O has ended –I hope permanently.)*

Coda

*Grüsst von mir Anny und alle Bekannten. Es ist gut dass aus unserem Weihnachtskreise schon nur einer fehlt. Es küsst Euch M.*

*(Send my greetings to Anny and all acquaintances. It is good that only one is missing from our Christmas circle. Kisses from your M.)*

The day of mass arrests of the Czech students, 17 November 1939 is mentioned in this letter where days, months and years passing is one theme. The suffering caused by separation from home and family is the complicating action, possibly not a typical complicating action but still reflects the narration emerging from these camp letters.

Time passing by and counting the days is a key theme in the prison letters. In the small notebooks that the prisoners held in their breast bags, they documented their days in incarceration.

Milan Šimečka, a Czechoslovak dissident, describes in his prison letters submerging oneself into something as abstract and divorced from prison life, as French grammar.<sup>175</sup> When it comes to the Czech students in Sachsenhausen, I have noticed similar survival strategies. Jaroslav Franc has shown me his tiny book which he kept in the breast pocket. He wrote mathematical formulas in it and that way he also diverted himself from his surroundings.<sup>176</sup>

---

<sup>175</sup> Šimečka 2002, 5.

<sup>176</sup> Personal communication with Jaroslav Franc 25 June 2015.



FIGURE 10 Jaroslav Franc's breast pocket. (Photo by Turkka Kulmala)



FIGURE 11 Jaroslav Franc's notebook (Photo by Turkka Kulmala)

On the other hand, Karel Hýbek wrote notes about the remarkable events in the camp in his notebook and his way of escape was copying poetry.

In the camp conditions anything could be resistance since everything was forbidden.<sup>177</sup> For example those aforementioned breast pockets and the small notebooks in them were not permitted, even though they were commonly worn under the clothes.

Paul Ricœur states poignantly: *Fiction gives eyes to the horrified narrator.*<sup>178</sup> I would like to extend this idea to non-textual narrations too. Jaroslav Franc's notebook from his years in Sachsenhausen has several pages full of mathematical formulas. The lines of calculus tell a story of a person who is determined to live on. Sometimes the language of mathematics speaks more powerfully than the human language, and this is one of those occasions.

## 4.7 Narrations from the Camp and Outside

*Prisoners who kept secret diaries, for example, frequently agonized over the limits of testimony. "The language is exhausted", the Norwegian Odd Nansen wrote on 12 February 1945. "There are no words left to describe the horrors I have seen with my own eyes." And yet, Nansen kept writing, almost every day.*<sup>179</sup>

### 4.7.1 Gloves and other hidden messages

> 9. toukokuuta 2015 kello 15:05 Poul Nielsen <dk.erhverv@XXX.dk> kirjoitti:

>

> Liebe Johanna Kulmala !

>

> Ihre Interesse freut mich und ich beeile mich zu antworten.

>

> Am 14. Mai 1944 habe ich meine Eltern gebeten, Frau Schjønning seinen Sohn

> Vagn zu grüssen.

> Vorgeschichte, Vagn DN 73089 arbeitete mit mir auf Aussenkommando Klinker

> und hat beide seine

> Beine gebrochen, und kam zum Hauptlager 2km. weg. Dazu hatte ich keine

> Verbindung und wusste

> deshalb nicht ob er überlebt hatte. Hat er. ( und Frau Schj. hatte

> Kontakt )

---

<sup>177</sup> Wachsmann 2016, 499.

<sup>178</sup> Ricœur 1990, 188.

<sup>179</sup> Wachsmann 2016, 223.

>

> Am 25. Juni 1944 Erste Mal die Radio Frage.

>

> Am 6. Aug. 1944 schrieb meine Eltern: Wenn du zurück kommst, fangen wir an

> die Terrasse zu überbauen.

> also habe ich regelmässig gefragt, wann fängt Ihr an mit den Terrassenbau an

> ? ( wie lange dauert den Krieg noch ? )

>

> Am 5.Sept. 1944 Seit Ihr ab und zu in der Anlage ? Direkt beim Eltern Haus

> war eine Anlage mit einen Bunker gebaut !

>

> Der Briefwechsel war einigermaßen regelmässig bis 4. Märts 1945, wo wir vom

> Roten Kreuz in Neuengamme für weitere

> Transport nach Schweden gesammelt wurden.

>

> alles gute für Ihre Arbeit, ich höre gern mehr, viele freundliche Grüsse

> Poul Nielsen ( DN 73085 )

>

>

> -----Oprindeligt meddelelse-----

> From: johanna.kulmala@xxx.fi

> Sent: Friday, May 08, 2015 4:28 PM

> To: dk.erhverv

> Subject: Einige Fragen über das Briefwechselln in Sachsenhausen

>

> Lieber Herr Nielsen,

>

> viele Grüsse aus Finnland. Es war sehr angenehm, Ihnen in Sachsenhausen zu

> treffen und auch Ihr Zeitzeugnis zu hören.

>

> Was mich besonders interessiert war Ihre Erzählung über den Brief, wo Sie  
> gefragt hatten, ob das Radio immer noch funktioniert und daraus haben Ihre  
> Eltern verstanden, dass Sie die Nachrichten des BBC meinen.

>

> Also, ich möchte gern wissen, ob Sie auch andere ähnliche heimliche und  
> versteckte Botschaften geschrieben oder bekommen haben. Auch alle  
> Erinnerungen  
> über Briefscheiben wären sehr wertvoll für mich, weil ich meine Forschung  
> über  
> Sachsenhausen Briefe mache.

>

> Mit besten Grüßen,  
> Johanna Kulmala aus Finnland

In a narration formed by a prison correspondence, the key complicating action is the separation from friends and family. This theme becomes apparent in several different ways. In the letter below, Mirek asks for pictures of places familiar to him and hopes that his girlfriend Anny would send him a card. We also learn that he had German friends.

The letter was written close to the first anniversary of 17<sup>th</sup> November, the day of the incarceration and Mirek refers to himself and his friends as old inmates. This is a way to build his identity and express his position, in order to reassure his parents that he is doing well.

Abstract

*Den 3. November 1940*

*(3 November 1940)*

*Meine Teuersten! Ich danke Euch herzlich für Eueren lieben Brief von 28/X.*

*(My dearest ones! I thank you cordially for your precious letter dated 28 October)*

Complicating action

*Bei dem nächsten Schreiben (auch Packet) vergisst nicht, bitte, mein neues Nummer zu schreiben (14.576).*

*(When you write next time (also package), please, do not forget to write my new number (14.576))*

#### Evaluation

*Um mich braucht Ihr keine Sorgen haben. Mir geht es wie innerlich, so auch ausserlich ganz gut – so weit es nur in einen K. Lager möglich ist.*

*(You don't need to worry about me. I am doing rather well both inside and outside – as much as it just is possible at a concentration camp.)*

#### Resolution

*Es wird in einigen Tagen schon ein ganzes Jahr sein, seit wir hier sind und so alten Häftlinge kann nichts mehr aus dem Gleichgewicht bringen.*

*(In a few days we have been here one full year and nothing can push such old inmates out of balance anymore.)*

#### Complicating action

*Grüsst von mir, bitte, Anny K. Es wäre mir sehr lieb, wenn sie mir auch – neben meinen deutschen Kameraden – wenigstens eine Karte schreiben möchte.*

*(Give my greetings to Anny K., please. It would mean so much to me if she also – just like my German friends – could send me at least a postcard.)*

#### Coda

*Ihr vergisst auch nicht, was ich von den Ansichtskarten geschrieben habe. Hier sieht man doch so gern die bekannten Orte und Personen, wenn auch nur auf dem Bilde. M.*

*(Do not forget what I have written about picture postcards. It is so nice to see familiar places and people here, even as a picture only. M.)*

In the introduction I pointed out that prisoners and their families did (understandably) their best to make a favourable impression to the Nazi regime, and the prisoners were not one consistent group, as we maybe would like to believe. In many of his letters, Miroslav mentions Annicka, his girlfriend whose one parent was German and who tried to help his parents in making appeals to the regime to have him released.<sup>180</sup>

This, however, does not contradict the solidarity that prisoners experienced among each other. P Jan Šabršula has told me that German political prisoners were loyal friends to the Czech students during the camp years.<sup>181</sup> This is a very remarkable point because some of the German prisoners had adopted racist attitudes towards not only the Jews but also Slavic nations.<sup>182</sup>

---

<sup>180</sup> Personal communication with Mrs. Kvapilová and Mrs. Linková 18.10.2011.

<sup>181</sup> Personal communication with Jan Šabršula April 8<sup>th</sup> 2014.

<sup>182</sup> Wachsmann 2016, 223.

Another Sachsenhausen prisoner Leon Szalet had worked with political prisoner from the penal company for a short time. It had been difficult for 48-year-old Szalet to keep up and the colleagues used to insult him furiously, call him lazy like all Jews and beat him until he collapsed. However, Szalet talked highly of another left-wing prisoner, his courageous block elder Harry Naujock for helping him in every possible way in those brutal conditions.<sup>183</sup>

It is worth mentioning in this context that in the summer of 1940 took place the shoe-testing, during which a group of inmates were forced to run around a 700-metre track for 40 kilometres every day wearing boots which were tested for military purposes. Very few of the victims of this cruel test survived longer than a couple of weeks.<sup>184</sup>

The Czech students were not used for this purpose but they have been aware of the test. My friend and survivor Vojimír Srdečný has even been contacted by the owner of the company whose boots were tested because she had wrongly assumed that Mr. Srdečný was one of the victims of this particular torture.<sup>185</sup>

Another remarkable thing to be noted is that also in the summer of 1940 a mass-transport from Poland arrived in Sachsenhausen. After that the Polish were the biggest group of prisoners at the camp.<sup>186</sup> This is probably the reason why Miroslav felt like a camp veteran already.

Mirek was able to return to the familiar sceneries only in his mind, and this separation, even alienation from home is one of the key themes in his letters. For a contemporary writer (and reader), the letters provide insight into the theme of separation. Writing about the camp life is challenging for someone who has no personal experience of it, and for this reason, camp letters are valuable sources and they can also be used as writing prompts in the creative process.

The names of people mentioned in Mirek's letters, on the other hand, provide very little or hardly any information on the daily life at home. Certain names, such as Jiřa, are mentioned several times but we learn very little about these people. Occasionally it is possible to find out how the person mentioned in a letter is related to Miroslav, but in most cases it is not, because he usually refers to people by first names, or sometimes by initials only.

Another aspect I have paid attention to in the camp letters is mentioning physical work, fresh air and exercising. Miroslav refers to someone else (O) doing physical work, and he also writes about the effects of fresh air and exercising on himself. However, as he is not allowed to write about the life at the camp, this could be interpreted as a subtle, indirect message to his parents about his own situation, doing heavy work in ruthless conditions. This quote is from a letter written in the summer of 1940 when the cruel boot testing was taking place.

*Jetzt im Sommer wäre mir die körperliche Arbeit zugute – ich bin doch daran gewöhnt – aber dann möchte ich mich gern der Arbeit widmen die ich angefangen habe. (den 30 Juni 1940)*

*(Now, in the summer, physical work would do me good – as I am used to it, mind you – but on the other hand I would like to commit myself to the work that I have started. (30 June 1940))*

---

<sup>183</sup> *ibid*, 237.

<sup>184</sup> Morsch & Ley 2010, 80.

<sup>185</sup> E-mail from Jana Folprechtová 1 March 2019.

<sup>186</sup> Morsch & Ley 2010, 84.

The previous winter (1939-1940) was called “the first hunger winter” because it was exceptionally cold in Europe. Also the cruelties, diminished food portions, and illnesses ended thousands of lives within a few months.<sup>187</sup>

This is what Mirek writes home at the beginning of year 1940

*Wir leben wie früher – nur nach dem Regen ist Frost und Schnee gekommen, zuzeiten Tauring und dann wieder Frost und die Zeit vergeht so, dass man mit Bewunderung sieht, dass sich schon der erste Monat des neuen Jahres zu Ende neigt, und dass schon mehr als ein Vierteljahr vergangen ist, seitdem ich Euch meine Teuersten, nicht gesehen habe. Hat sich etwas verändert während der Zeit bei uns? Wie geht es Frau K? Ich denke auch auf unsere Wintersportler und bedauere dass ich nicht in diesem Jahre die Schlittschuhe anziehen kann. (den 21. Jänner 40)*

*(We live like before – only after the rain has just been followed by frost and snow, occasionally thaw and then again frost, and the time goes by so that one only sees in bewilderment the first month of the new year close to its end and it is already more than a quarter of the year since I have seen you, my dearest ones. Has anything changed during that time at home? How is Mrs. K? I also think of our winter athletes and feel sorry for not being able to put on my skates this year. (21 January 1940))*

The availability of winter coats, gloves and ear warmers was also a problem. According to the survivors, the camp leaders often forbid wearing them and punished the prisoners for challenging the rule. The prisoners working on constructions made caps out of empty cement bags to protect themselves from cold and humidity, which led to punishments as well.<sup>188</sup>

Later the rules appear to have changed because Mirek asks for underwear. I have mentioned earlier in this chapter that sending socks was suddenly allowed in May 1942. About six months later sending clothes was allowed.

*Mir wäre zwar auch am liebsten, wenn ich hier keine Wäsche brauchen würde, aber nach bisherigen Erfahrungen halte ich für notwendig sich für näherndes Winter zu vorbereiten. Ich kann gebrauchen alles was warm ist – hauptsächlich Wäsche – auch Leibbinde ist gut. Taschentücher und Schale brauche ich nicht. (den 25./IX 1942)*

*(I would prefer, however, if I didn't need any [more] underwear here but based on previous experience I find it necessary to be prepared for the upcoming winter. I have use for everything warm – mainly underwear – also a waistband<sup>189</sup> is good. I do not need handkerchiefs or scarves. (25 September 1942))*

Mirek does ask for warmer clothes a year earlier though, indirectly. The message is hidden the last clause before the final greetings, *vergisst nicht Rukavice*.<sup>190</sup> Rukavice is not a name, but it

---

<sup>187</sup> *ibid*, 74.

<sup>188</sup> *ibid*, 75.

<sup>189</sup> The source for the term Leibbinde – waistband: Chris McNab. *Hitler's Eagles: The Luftwaffe 1939-45*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2012, p. 111: “Supplementary Angorawäsche (angora wool underwear) was issued, and some were lucky enough to receive a 37–42cm by 120–150cm flannel Leibbinde (waistband), a traditional item which helped maintain body core temperature.”

<sup>190</sup> German for *don't forget Rukavice*.

means gloves. This means he is freezing. This is an example how it has been possible to communicate something indirectly from the camp.

On September 29, 1942 Heinrich Himmler inspected Sachsenhausen and he was probably aware of the fact that earlier on the same year, Sachsenhausen SS had committed the bloodiest massacre of Jewish people in the German heartland since the 1938 pogrom.<sup>191</sup>

In revenge for the assassination of Reich-Protector of Bohemia and Moravia Reinhard Heydrich, around 250 Jews had been executed on May 28-29, 1942, apparently inside the neck-shooting barrack built for Soviet POWs, which I have mentioned before in this chapter. By Himmler's visit, Sachsenhausen had only a few hundred Jewish prisoners left. He ordered the deportation of Jews from all the concentration camps on German soil to be transported to Auschwitz or Majdanek.<sup>192</sup>

In the middle of all these atrocities, some of which Mirek may have been aware of, one would expect plenty of discourse about weather because that is a safe topic and the censors might not pay attention to it. However, Mirek writes about weather only in 9 letters out of 78. Often the reason to discuss the weather is that he wants to express something else, such as assuring his parents that he will survive the winter.

Abstract

*25/X.1942*

*(25 October 1942)*

Orientation

*Meine Teuersten! Herzlichen Dank für Eueren lieben Brief und für das Wäsche-Packet.*

*(My dearest ones! Cordial thanks for your precious letter and the underwear package.)*

Evaluation /Complicating action

*Mit dem Inhalt war ich zufrieden – jetzt brauche ich keine Sorgen haben, das ich im Winter frieren werde. Letzte Woche habe ich bekommen Karten von Anny und Inka.*

*(I was happy with the contents – now I don't need to worry about being cold in winter. Last week I got cards from Anny and Inka.)*

Evaluation/Result or resolution

*Es freut mich das S einen guten Posten hat – es wäre besser, wenn sie in ihren Fach arbeiten könnte, aber im Kriege muss jeder opfern etwas von eigenen Interessen zum Gunsten des Ganzen. Die Tante V ist wirklich eine harte Natur. In solch–einem Alter ist das --- dass sie alles überstanden hat. Was den Herrn und Frau A betrifft, da kennt Ihr die gewöhnliche Gabe um die Kleinigkeit überschreiten. Das Schicksal von Z ist wirklich schwer, sie muss auf alles vorbereitet sein. Da hatte B doch mehr Glück.*

---

<sup>191</sup> Wachsmann 2016, 332,

<sup>192</sup> *ibid*, 333.

*(I am happy that S has a good position – it would be better if she could practise her own profession but in war everyone must offer some of their own interests for mutual benefit. Aunt V is truly tough. At such an age it is --- that she can take everything. When it comes to Mr. and Mrs. A, you know how it is customary to disregard things of little consequence. The fate of Z is really hard, she must be prepared for everything. B had better luck there.)*

Coda

*Herzlich küsst und grüsst Euch M.*

*(Cordially kisses and greets you M.)*

Since we know that the conditions in the winter of 1939-40 were harsh for the prisoners, it is worth noting that Mirek starts the letter with the expression of joy about the good news and maybe that is also an attempt to cover the hidden message about freezing.

Abstract

*Den 9./XI.1941*

*(9 November 1941)*

Orientation

*Meine Teuersten!*

*(My dearest!)*

Evaluation

*In den letzten 14 Tagen konnte ich wirklich zufrieden sein mit meiner Post. Vor einer Woche die Karten von Anny K und Olda K. – gestern der Brief von Euch und Karte von Jiřa aus N.M. und ausserdem noch das Packet. Richtet, bitte, allen meinen Dank und herzlichen Gruss. Es ist fast unglaublich wie die Zeit vergeht. Ich sehe in meinen Erinnerungen Olda vor mir – einen kleinen blondhaarigen Jungen und er ist schon in der Septima.*

*(In the last 14 days I could be really happy with my post. A week ago (the) cards from Anny K and Olda K. – yesterday the letter from you and a card from Jiřa from N.M. and furthermore/also the package. Please express to everyone my gratitude and cordial greetings. It is almost unbelievable how the time goes by. I see Olda in my memories in front of me – as a small fair haired boy and he is already in the seventh grade.)*

Complicating action / Evaluation

*Mit den warmen Dingen [der]Slávka geht es, aber nur extra, nicht mit dem anderen auch wir hatten wir hier häftige Schneefälle, aber jetzt ist das Wetter wieder besser. Euere Nachrichten von den verschiedenen Bekannten sind wirklich interessant. Alles geht vorwärts, nur hier als ob das Leben stehen geblieben ware.*

*(With the warm things from Slavka it goes but otherwise not.<sup>193</sup> It snowed heavily also here but the weather is better now. Your news from different relatives is really interesting. Everything moves on, only here it seems like life was standing still.)*

Coda

*Grüsst von mir alle Bekannten, vergisst nicht Rukavice – Es grüsst und küsst Euch Euer M.*

*(Greetings from me to all acquaintances. don't forget Rukavice – Your M. greets and kisses you.)*

Mirek has signed several letters with his initial only, like in this one above. He has filled the whole space available for writing, obviously feeling a need to express himself and keep in touch. He must have suffered from the limited possibilities to communicate and writing under the censorship.

One of the questions I have often been asked is if Mirek ever included any hidden messages in his letters from Sachsenhausen. I have not found anything else as explicit as asking for the gloves, all other examples I am discussing in this thesis are more speculative because we do not know the context of the letters well enough.

At the early stage of his imprisonment he mentions a brown hat that should be taken from the drycleaner's. The receipt is in his small purse. Tante Horák knows where the drycleaner's is. It is possible that Mirek is communicating something else here, but it is equally possible that his intention is the same as the literal meaning of his words. In any case, it seemed to be possible to write sentences that could have more than one explicit meaning.

*Ich habe meinen braunen Hut bei fma [Firma] Dolejš reinigen gelassen. (Tante H weiss wo es ist.) Die Zettel davon ist in meiner kleiner Geldtasche. (Ich hoffe dass Ihr sie in meinem Zimmer in Prag gefunden haben, ebenso wie die Brusttasche und das Einlagebuch. Den Hut lasst mir, bitte, bei der Tante, in Prag. (den 7. Jänner 1940)*

*(I have had my brown hat cleaned by the Dolejš company. (Aunt H knows where it is.) The receipt is in my small money pouch. (I hope you have found it in my room in Prague as well as the breast bag and the bank book. Arrange the hat for me, please, with the help of aunt, in Prague. (7 January 1940))*

Vojmir Srdečný was able to include a Czech sentence in one of his letters from Sachsenhausen. He had written: *Grüsst R. S. Otěmžu.*<sup>194</sup> This reads backwards: *Už mě to sere*, which means: *This pisses me*. Thus far I have not found any similar messages in Mirek's letters – unfortunately.

According to Nikolaus Wachsmann, prisoners did try to send indirect messages in their letters. Some of them were way too obvious and put their writers at a serious risk, such as questions like: *How is Uncle Winston getting on?*<sup>195</sup>

Some prisoners succeeded in smuggling secret messages outside, and around Auschwitz, the Polish resistance received not only secret messages but also a few documents stolen in the

---

<sup>193</sup> The original German sentence leaves room for interpretations.

<sup>194</sup> Personal communication with Vojmir Srdečný 20.2.2013.

<sup>195</sup> Wachsmann, 2016, 482.

camp. The inmates involved in the smuggling took enormous risks in the process. They were ready to do that in the hope that the news about the camp conditions would reach the wider world. Contrary to expectations, some of their attempts were successful.<sup>196</sup>

#### 4.7.2 Friendship and other human connections

Gerard Genette writes in his book *Paratext* that *an author's letters reveal an exact (particular) idea of what he wants to say about his work to a definite individual correspondent, a message that may even have no value or meaning except to that correspondent ---*.<sup>197</sup> Miroslav is not an author in the strictest meaning of the word, but he is a writer all the same, and he refers to his life, both inside and outside of the camp.

For this reason, I interpret the names he mentions, no matter how unknown to today's reader, as part of the narration.

The fact that Mirek had many friends to whom he sent greetings and whose news he was eager to hear, tells also something about his personality and character. The plot and the character(s) are also closely connected together. In *Time and Narrative volume 1* Ricœur refers to Frank Kermode who has stated that character development means more narration and plot development, in turn, enriches the character.<sup>198</sup>

However, Professor Novotný has made a point worth noting that Mirek never writes about his fellow prisoners. Not even when he thanks for the food, he never mentions sharing it, even though sharing was a common practice among the Czech students in Sachsenhausen.<sup>199</sup> It is not possible to draw any conclusions about Mirek's character or attitude to his peers, based on his Sachsenhausen letters only, but it is possible to use these observations in character building when writing fiction about life at the camp.

Abstract

*Den 16. Juni 1940*

*(16 June 1940)*

Orientation

*Meine liebe Eltern!*

*(My dear parents!)*

Orientation/Complicating action

*Trotz meiner Erwartung habe ich gestern keinen Brief von Euch bekommen – hoffentlich werde ich am nächsten Samstag glücklicher sein. Am Anfang dieses Monats hatte ich hier zwei Pakete.*

---

<sup>196</sup> *ibid*, 482, 492.

<sup>197</sup> Genette 1997, 373.

<sup>198</sup> Ricœur 1993, 37.

<sup>199</sup> Personal communication with Vojmir Srdečný, 14 November 2012 and David Novotný 20 October 2016.

*Der eine, von Euch, würde deswegen zurückgeschickt. Den anderen, von der Tante H, habe ich bekommen- ich danke Ihr vielmals dafür.*

*(Despite my expectations I didn't receive a letter from you yesterday – I hope I am more lucky next Saturday. At the beginning of this month I had two packages. The one from you was for this reason sent back. I got the other one, from Aunt H – I thank her many times for that.)*

Complicating action/Evaluation

*In den letzten Zeit, so reichen auf die Ereignisse, denke ich wie an öfter an Euch und daran wie Ihr Euch dazu stellt. Wie sieht es bei uns aus? Schreibt mir etwas von Eueren Leben, alle Kleinigkeiten interessieren mich. Ich stelle ich vor die Mutter bei der Hausarbeit und den Vater in Geaten, oder wie er grosse fische bei der Elbe herausangelt. Nach einem halben Jahre der Abwesenheit, hat man aber nicht mehr so klare Vorstellungen und das, was man vom Hause im Innern sieht nähert sich mehr einem Traum, als der Wirklichkeit. Sonst ist hier alles unverändert. Wir haben uns auf alles so gewöhnt, auf alles was du dem --- Leben hehört. Nur die Anfänge sind immer schwierig und wir sind lange keine Anfänger mehr- und das, dass man hier nicht allein ist, gibt ihm genug Ausdauer und Kraft.*

*(In the recent times, which have been very eventful, I think of you more often and how you are doing. How does everything look at home? Write me something about your life, all small things interest me. I imagine mother doing housework and father in the garden, or how he catches big fish by the Elbe. After half a year of absence one has no clear images anymore and what one can inwardly see from home resembles more like a dream than reality. Otherwise nothing has changed here. We have got used to everything, also everything that belongs to --- life. Only the beginnings are always difficult and we have not been beginners for a long time anymore – and the fact that one is not here alone, gives enough endurance and strength.)*

Resolution / Complicating action

*Mann (hat) kann sich hier ebenso freuen, wie zu Hause – nur mit dem Unterschiede, dass hier dazu viel weniger genügt. Man lernt bescheiden zu sein und das ist gut für das Leben. Kommt Ihr mal nach Prag, da kennt Ihr den Herrn Direktor H (Smichov, Barrandova 4.) besuchen und fragen ob sein Neffe Pepik nach Dobroslavice zur Ernte fahren wird.*

*(One can be happy here, like at home – only with the difference that here much less is enough for that. One learns to be modest and that is good for life. If you sometimes go to Prague you can visit Mr. Director H (Smichov, Barrandova 4.) and ask if his nephew Pepik is going Dobroslavice for the harvest.)*

Coda

*Bleibt nur gesund und guter Laune. Grüsst von mir alle Bekannten.*

*Mit herzlichen Grüssen und Küssen Euer Mirek.*

*(Stay well and keep your spirits up. Greetings from me to all acquaintances.*

*With cordial greetings and kisses. Yours Mirek)*

The people Mirek mentions in the letters, cannot be placed in any chronological “slot” of the narration, but they add relevance to the story, just like the aforementioned monthly food packages from his parents. They tell a tale of an attempted dialogue between a prisoner and his loved ones. He tries to stay in touch with everyone but is only allowed to write short letters to his parents.

Vojmir Srdečný has emphasised the connection between the prisoners which continued beyond the war. Many victims of the Nazi regime turned to Communism in the 1940s, because ideologically it seemed to promise a better world. Even though the Czech students who survived Sachsenhausen did not all share the same political views, they still shared the friendship established in the camp.<sup>200</sup>

*Mir geht es ganz gut. Gott sei dank bin ich immer gesund und was den Aufenthalt hier betrifft – man gewöhnt sich so, dass man sich nur schwer ein anderes Leben noch vorstellen kann. Auch hier hat das Leben seine fröhliche Seiten neben den unangenehmen und so sieht es hier aus wie überall dort, wo viele junge Leute zusammen sind. (den 22. September 1940)*

*(I am doing quite well. Thank God I am always healthy and when it comes to staying here – one gets used to it so that one would find it difficult to imagine another way to live. Also here life has its happy sides beside with the unpleasant ones and and here it looks like in any place where plenty of young people are gathered. (22 September 1940))*

When Mirek mentions the young people together, he allows us to see a small glimpse of the community spirit among the prisoners. Something similar we can also see in Václav Havel’s prison letter to his wife Olga on the New Year’s Eve in 1979:

*New Year’s Eve was interesting: I even had two moving experiences. (Alexandre Dumas “A kind word in prison is worth more than the most expensive gift in freedom.” My colleague and I sang! (I sometimes sing with him, and oddly enough we’re on key.)<sup>201</sup>*

Juliane Brauer writes about the Czech students in her book *Musik im Konzentrationslager Sachsenhausen*. According to Brauer, the Czechs actually were a homogeneous group with a strong community spirit. They were all young and educated people, eager to arrange cultural activities.<sup>202</sup>

Abstract

*Den 10. Oktober 1942*

*(10 October 1942)*

Orientation

---

<sup>200</sup> Personal communication with Vojmir Srdečný 18 June 2013

<sup>201</sup> Havel 1991, 64.

<sup>202</sup> Brauer 2008, 167.

*Meine Teuersten! Ihr kennt Euch meine Freude vorstellen wenn ich solch eine Woche habe wie die letzte: Eine Karte von Inka, Packet und Brief von Euch heute auch noch Karten von Květa und Boža Šidlof dazu.*

*(My dearest ones! You cannot imagine my joy when I have such a week as the last one: A card from Inka, a package and a letter from you and today also cards from Květa and Boža Šidlof to boot.)*

Evaluation/Complicating action

*Mit dem Inhalt des Packets war ich sehr zufrieden – ich muss aber immer wieder daran denken mit welchen Schwierigkeiten Ihr das alles besorgt. Die Sport ist gut. Wie erträgt L ihre Schicksal? Sie hing so an dem P. Die Geschichte mit J ist schlimm. Ja er hat Recht – warum sollte er sich das ganze Leben verderben – aber wem bleiben die Kinder?*

*(I was very happy with the contents of the package – but I must time and again wonder how difficult it has been for you to put it all together. The sport is good. How is L bearing her fate?? She was so dependent on P. The story about J is bad. Yes, he is right – why should he ruin his whole life – but with whom will the children stay?)*

Result or resolution

*Es hat sich schon so viel verändert während meiner Abwesenheit – nur in der “breiteren Familie.” – Man kann sich nicht wundern – es sind schon beinahe drei Jahre. Ich bin neugierig ob diesmal Euer Hoffnungen nicht wieder fehlschlagen werden. – Es wäre schon, aber es heist für uns nur warten.*

*(A lot has changed during my absence – only in the “extended family”. – That is no wonder – it is almost three years already. I am curious to see if your hope is not failing you this time again. – It would be [time?] already but we can only wait for now.)*

*Herzlich küsst Euch Euer M.*

*(Cordially kisses you your M.)*

Christmas is approaching, and for this reason the hopes about liberation are high. As I mentioned earlier, Christmas was one of the two liberation days, but who was liberated when, was random. The students were not able to figure out any logic in it, even though they tried.<sup>203</sup>

In the letter below, from earlier time, spring 1940 we can see the hope to return home, not aware yet that releases happen twice a year.

Abstract

*Den 5. Mai 1940.*

*(5 May 1940)*

Orientation

---

<sup>203</sup> Personal communication with Karel Hýbek, 20 November 2014

*Meine Teuersen!*

*Ich danke Euch für Eueren lieben Brief, den ich vor einer Woche bekommen habe.*

*(My dearest!*

*I thank you for your precious letter that I received a week ago.)*

Complicating action

*Gestern habe ich auch das schon von Euch erwählte Schreiben von AK erhalten. Ich kann ihr nicht allein schreiben und die Fragen, die sie mir stellt, kann ich weder auf dieser Weise beantworten. Richtet Ihr, bitte, meinen Dank und viele Grüsse aus .*

*(I received yesterday the writings from AK selected by you. I cannot write to her separately and I cannot answer her questions in this way either. Please send her my thanks and many greetings.)*

Evaluation

*Mir geht es immer gut, mit meiner Gesundheit konnte ich die ganze Zeit, seit meiner Abfahrt, völlig zufrieden sein. Nur das Eine fehlt mir –und das ist das Heim. Wie prachtvoll wäre es, wenn ich diese schöne Frühlingszeit unter --- zubringen könnte. Wir müssen aber alle geduldig sein. Endlich kommt doch der Tag, da wir wieder zusammen kommen werden – und unsere Freude wird umso grosser sein, je schwerer und länger die Trennung war. Nach meiner Rückkehr möchte ich mich so bald wie möglich der Arbeit --- . Am besten wäre es wenn ich in ein Krankenhaus, Sanatorium oder sogar nur zu einem Arzte gehen könnte. Oder wenigstens möchte ich mich einem Beruf ---, das mit der Medizin --- zusammenhängt.*

*(I am always doing good, I have been the whole time since I left fully satisfied with my health. Only one thing is missing – and that is home. How splendid would it be if I could spend this beautiful spring time under ---. But we must all be patient. Finally comes the day when we can get together – and the more difficult and longer the separation, the greater will be our joy. After my return I would like to commit myself to the work as soon as possible ---. The best would be if I could work in a hospital, sanatorium or even work with a single doctor. Or at least I would like to have a job --- that has something to do with medicine.)*

Resolution

*Es ist aber alles noch die Frage der Zukunft. Jetzt bin ich hier und muss warten. Bei dem Blick auf die erwachende Natur, habe ich mich daran erinnert, dass sich schon der Muttertag nähert. Am liebsten möchte ich dir, Mutter, eine Blume bringen und dich ans Herz drücken, aber in dieser Lage kann ich dir nur so in einem Briefe viel Glück und Gesundheit wünschen und vielleicht auch eine Hoffnung geben, dass, was wir alle so sehnlich erwarten, nicht mehr lange auf sich warten lässt.*

*(But all of that is a question of the future. I am here now and I need to wait. Looking at the awakening nature, it suddenly dawned on me that it is Mother's day soon. It would be most pleasant for me if I could bring you a flower and hug you closely, but in this situation I can only wish you happiness and health this way, in a letter, and maybe give hope that what we all are longing for so passionately will not keep us waiting much longer.)*

Coda

*Grüsst von mir alle bekannten. Es küsst und grüsst Euch Euer M.*

*(Greetings to all acquaintances from me. Kisses and greets your M.)*

A year later the disappointment about not being chosen to be released and the willingness to still keep up the good spirits is apparent.

Abstract

*Den 27./IV.1941*

*(27 April 1941)*

Orientation

*Meine Teuersten!*

*(My dearest!)*

Complicating action

*Diesmal habe ich den, wie immer, sehnlich erwarteten Brief nicht bekommen. Ist er vielleicht wieder zurückgeschickt worden?*

*(This time I have not received the letter, which I always long for. Has it been sent back again, maybe?)*

Evaluation

*Anny danke ich für ihren leider missgeglückten Versuch mit dem Packet. Was das Geld betrifft – es ist ganz richtig wie Ihr es macht. Der Februar hat uns alle in diesem Jahre ein bisschen enttäuscht, aber wir vertragen es schon ganz ruhig. Man hat sich auf alles, was zu dem Lagerleben gehört so gewöhnt, dass man sich das Zivilleben kann noch vorstellen kann. Nur die Briefe können das ein bisschen annähern, was einmal war.*

*(I thank Anny for her unfortunately unsuccessful attempt with the package. When it comes to the money, you have done it right. February was for us all a bit of a disappointment this year, but we pretty much have peace with it already. One is so used to everything that belongs to camp life that one cannot even imagine civilian life anymore. Only the letters can bring back to me a bit of what once was.)*

Result or resolution

*Wir schreiten jetzt dem Frühling und Sommer entgegen, und das genügt schon das wir gute Laune und neue Mut kriegen.*

*( We are now approaching spring and summer and it is enough that we have good spirits and new courage.)*

Coda

*Herzlich grüsst und küsst Euch Euer M.*

*(Cordially greets and kisses you your M.)*

I see similarity between the words at the end of the letter and the lyrics of the Sachsenhausenlied. It is possible that Mirek was inspired by the song.

*Wir schreiten fest im gleichen Schritt  
Wir trotzen Not und Sorgen  
Denn in uns zieht die Hoffnung mit  
Auf Freiheit und das Morgen  
Denn in uns zieht die Hoffnung mit  
Auf Freiheit und das Morgen*

*Was hinter uns, ist abgetan  
Gewesen und verklungen  
Die Zukunft will den ganzen Mann  
Ihr sei unser Lied gesungen  
Die Zukunft will den ganzen Mann  
Ihr sei unser Lied gesungen*

This is what [www.holocaustmusic.ort.org](http://www.holocaustmusic.ort.org) knows about The Sachsenhausenlied:

*The 'Sachsenhausenlied' (Sachsenhausen song) was created in the winter of 1936 by the German political prisoner Karl Wloch, along with his communist friends Bernhard Bästlein and Karl Fischer. They based the song on the well-known workers' melody 'Die Bauern wollten freie sein' (The peasants wanted to be free), and agreed that it should be used as a means of strengthening the prisoners' unity and to reflect an anti-fascist spirit. As was the case with many commissioned camp songs, it was originally approved by the SS, and prisoners were frequently ordered to sing it. Later, however, the song was forbidden, although it made the transition from forced to voluntary music and continued to be sung in secret.<sup>204</sup>*

Mirek also writes about hope, which is one of the themes of the song.

*Ja, die Hoffnungen sind schön – auch ich bin nicht ohne ihnen, aber man darf nicht zu weit gehen – die Enttäuschung ist immer schwer. Die Mutter ist also beruhigt was meine Gesundheit betrifft. Ich möchte nur dass Ihr beide auch in solchem Gesundheitszustande seid und bleibt, bis ich mit Euch, meine lieben wieder zusammen kommen werde. (Den 25./IX 1942)*

*(Yes, hope is beautiful – and I am not without it, but one should? not go too far – the disappointment is always difficult. Mother is in peace when it comes to my health. I just hope you both are and will remain in the same state of health until I can met you, my dear ones. (25 September 1942))*

---

<sup>204</sup> The direct link to the page where the quote can be found:  
<http://holocaustmusic.ort.org/places/camps/central-europe/sachsenhausen/sachsenhausenlied/>

Vojmir Srdečný has told me that he met at the camp Josef Cařkář, mayor of a small town called Poděbrady. He had been one of the Czech legionaries who had fought against Austria-Hungary in the 1<sup>st</sup> World War. The war had thrown him to Siberia, enlisted to the Imperial Russian Army. In Siberia he had learned how to stay warm and avoid frostbites. During the several hours of roll call in Sachsenhausen, on cold winter days, the Czech students learned to keep themselves in a constant, small movement to stay warm and eschew freezing. Mr. Srdečný had visited Cařkář who had also kept in touch with other Czech survivors of Sachsenhausen.<sup>205</sup>

I also learned that Cařkář had known Mirek also but now it is too late to ask anything. His grandson only remembered Cařkář mentioning Mirek's name but that was all he could recall<sup>206</sup> During my research process I have had tears in my eyes because I have been touched by the life stories of different people. Very rarely have I shed tears of desperation.

None of the other survivors whom I had met remembered Mirek and now, hearing how close I had been to find a person who could have told me something about him pushed me over the limit. I could not control my emotions, and I wept.

### 4.7.3 The Šidlof Family

In his book *Prague under Danger* Peter Demetz writes about the restrictions the Czech Jews faced in their lives:

*As of February 20, 1940, Jews were not allowed to attend cinema or theater performances; in March, their identity documents had to be stamped with the big letter J; on May 17 they were forbidden to linger in Prague's parks, gardens, or forests (at least the Jewish community opened the garden of its old people's home), were not allowed to keep pigeons or to use taxis, and, in trams, had to stand at the rear end of the second carriage (if there was only one carriage, they had to wait for the next train with two carriages).*<sup>207</sup>

Mirek had Jewish relatives, from his father's side, in the Šidlof family. His aunt had married a Jewish man.<sup>208</sup> He mentions them two times by name, which is rather interesting and daring and once he possibly asks about them indirectly.

The first time, Mirek's indirect inquiry takes place in May 1941, when the restrictions that Demetz mentions have been in force for over a year already. Mirek's parents certainly have not written about this topic, but it is possible that he has heard about the anti-Jewish regulations from other prisoners in Sachsenhausen.

This is actually a very realistic scenario because between September and December 1939 about a thousand Polish-born Jews arrived in Sachsenhausen. One of them, Leon Szalet has witnessed later that he was greeted by SS men who *jumped on us like wild beasts*. He himself was beaten unconscious.<sup>209</sup>

---

<sup>205</sup> Personal communication with Vojmir Srdečný 6 March 2014.

<sup>206</sup> Personal communication with Marek Ďurčanský 6 March 2014.

<sup>207</sup> Demetz 2008, 63.

<sup>208</sup> Personal communication with Petr Šidlof 19 October 2012.

<sup>209</sup> Wachsmann 2016, 231.

Jan Šabršula has also told me that he has seen with his own eyes Jewish people being destroyed in Sachsenhausen. He emphasized the fact that he was an eyewitness to the Holocaust.<sup>210</sup>

It is worth pointing out that Jews suffered also in the hands of other inmates. They would scream insults and beat their Jewish fellow inmates. However, not all German prisoners were guilty of these acts of racism, loyal friends existed there also for the Jews.<sup>211</sup>

Mirek mentions the bad news from Chotěboř, this may be a reference to the Šidlofs because they lived in Chotěboř at that time. Of course, this time and era brought bad news several times and since Chotěboř was the place where Mirek and his parents had lived when he was a child, this sentence may indicate also something else, something that today's reader cannot comprehend.

In April 1941 two physicians, Friedrich Mennecke and Theodor Steinmeyer, who had broken their Hippocratic Oath, came to Sachsenhausen to start the "euthanasia" program, where they selected the prisoners "unworthy of life". The next rounds of selections for annihilation would take place in Auschwitz, Buchenwald, Dachau, Ravensbrück, Gross-Rosen and Neuengamme. Thousands of prisoners perished, and this was the turning point for the concentration camps to become killing fields, as they are mostly remembered today.<sup>212</sup>

Abstract

*Den 25.Mai 1941*

*(25 May 1941)*

Orientation

*Meine Teuersten! Ich danke Euch herzlich für Eueren lieben Brief vom 15./V.*

*(My dearest ones! I thank you cordially for your precious letter dated 15 May)*

Evaluation

*Der Salami aus dem letzten Packet hat wirklich prima geschmückt. Richtet aus Familie B meinen Dank dafür und auch viele herzlichen Grüsse von mir. Der Vater hatte bisher wirklich Pech mit den Fischen, aber jetzt fängt schon an ein besseres Wetter und ich hoffe, dass er bald einen Träger bestellen müssen wird um seine Beute wegtragen zu können. Wo seid Ihr mit dem Pepik H zusammengekommen?*

*(The salami sent in the previous package tasted excellent. Send my thanks to Family B for that and also many cordial greetings. Father has had really bad luck with fishing until now but now the weather is getting better and I hope that he soon needs to call a porter to carry away his catch. Where have you met Pepik H?)*

---

<sup>210</sup> Personal communication with Jan Šabršula April 8th 2014.

<sup>211</sup> Wachsmann2016, 237.

<sup>212</sup> ibid, 240–242.

#### Result or resolution

*Die Nachrichten von Chotěboř sind nicht grade erfreulich, vielleicht wird es aber nicht ganz so ernst sein.*

*(The news from Chotěboř is not exactly happy, but maybe it will not be really that serious.)*

#### Coda

*Wie ist das mit Euerer Gesundheit? Grüsset von mir Anny, Frau K, Onkel O, Jiřa und alle Bekannten. M.*

*(How is it with your health? Greetings from me to Anny, Mrs. K, Uncle O, Jiřa and all acquaintances. M.)*

In October 1941 Mirek mentions the Šidlofs by name and again he is asking in the same context how things are looking in Chotěboř. This is the reason why I think it is possible that the first example above also refers to the Jewish relatives in a bit more careful manner.

According to Wachsmann, at the same time, in autumn 1941, mobile gas vans were tested in Sachsenhausen. The vehicle was a lorry converted to a gas chamber by conveying the exhaust gases into a closed cargo box. Similar vehicles would later be used for exterminating Jewish population in Eastern Europe. The victims of the testing were, once again, Soviet POWs, who were gassed this time instead of being shot.<sup>213</sup>

#### Abstract

*26./X.1941.*

*(26 October 1941)*

#### Orientation

*Meine Teuersten! Herzlichen Dank für Eueren lieben Brief vom 20./X. Es ist immer eine grose Freude für mich, auch wenn ich nicht immer grade erfreuliche Nachrichten erfahre.*

*(My dearest ones! Cordial thanks for your precious letter dated 20 October. It is always a great joy for me, also when the news I hear is not exactly happy.)*

#### Complicating action

*Ja – von den Ereignissen, die Ihr erwähnt, habe ich gewusst, nur die genauen Angaben nicht. Wie geht es ZM? – und wie sieht es aus in Chotěboř mit der Familie Šidlof? Ist auch bei uns etwas neues vorgekommen? Ich versuche oft mich zu uns übertragen und mich vorstellen wie es alles aussieht, aber es ist kaum möglich.*

---

<sup>213</sup> Wachsmann 2016, 269.

*(Yes, I have known about the events that you mention, just not the exact details. How is ZM doing – and how does it look in Chotěboř for the Šidlof family? Is there anything new at home? I often try to transfer myself home and imagine how everything looks but that it is hardly possible.)*

Evaluation/Result or resolution

*Auch in den normalen Zeiten verändert sich viel im Laufe von zwei Jahren – und jetzt im Kriege sind die Veränderungen viel- viel größer.*

*(Even in normal times many things change during two years – and now during the war time the changes are much, much bigger.)*

Coda

*Anny K danke ich viemals für ihre Aufmerksamkeit. Grüsst von mir herzlich Onkel O. – Jiřa (kommt sie oft nach Mochov?) u alle Verwandten u Bekannten. Herzlich grüsst u küsst Euch M.*

*(Many thanks to Anny K for her thoughtfulness. Send my cordial greetings to Uncle O. – Jiřa (does she come to Mochov often?) and all relatives and acquaintances. Cordially greets and kisses your M.)*

It is important to note here that a month earlier something dramatic had happened. Viktor Klemperer writes about it, based on his personal experience:

*Today I ask myself again the same question I have asked myself and all kinds of people hundreds of times; which was the worst day for the Jews during those twelve years of hell?*

*I always, without exception, received the same answer from myself and others: 19 September 1941. From that day on it was compulsory to wear the Jewish star, the yellow piece of cloth with 'Jew' printed on it in black, the word framed by the lines of the two telescoped triangles, a word consisting of thick block of capitals, which are separated and given broad, exaggerated horizontal lines to effect the appearance of the Hebrew script.<sup>214</sup>*

The regulation entered into force both in the Reich and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, which means that it must have applied to the Šidlofs as well.

The other letter where Mirek mentions Šidlof family is dated in March 1942. And there the reference to the struggles of the Jewish relatives is obvious.

Abstract

*Den 1. März 1942*

*(1 March 1942)*

Orientation

*Meine Teuersten! Eueren lieben Brief vom 23/2 habe ich erhalten.*

*(My dearest ones! I have received your precious letter dated 23 February.)*

---

<sup>214</sup> Klemperer 2006, 155.

## Evaluation

*Wie ich aus ihm und auch aus den vor(her)igen Briefen erfahren habe, sorgen meine Cousins und Cousinen wirklich tüchtig um die Population. Es ist eine erfreuliche Erscheinung – nur weiter in diesem Tempo. Handelt sich es in Euerem Briefe nicht um den Herrn Mužik (nicht Mařík)? Was die Ausstattung des Packetes betrifft, da kann man auch bei den grössten Forderungen nicht von weniger Sorgfalt sprechen – ich war sehr zufrieden – nur die Süsigkeit habe ich erwähnt.*

*(As I learned from it and your previous letters, my cousins have taken care of the populace very skillfully. That is a delightful phenomenon – just continue the same way. Is it not Mr. Mužik that your letter is about (and not Mařík)? When it comes to putting the package together, there can be no talk of lesser care even when it comes to my biggest requests – I was very happy – I only mentioned the sweets.)*

## Complicating action

*Ich glaube dass es für Familie Šidlof jetzt schwere Zeiten gibt,  
(I believe that the times are now difficult for Family Šidlof,)*

## Result or resolution

*aber auch hier – wie bei uns allen – gibt es die Hoffnung, dass es nur vorübergehend ist. Die Aussichten der S sind also besser in der letzten Zeit – nu[n] wollen wir hoffen dass sie nicht wieder enttäuscht sein wird.*

*(but also here – like with us all – there is hope that it would pass. S's prospects are also better than lately – now we just hope that she will not be disappointed again.)*

## Coda

*Es küsst Euch M.*

*(Kisses from your M.)*

## 4.7.4. Nature and outdoors

In his prison letter (26<sup>th</sup> September 1981) Milan Šimečka writes: *Apart from a lot of things I have come to understand here, I have fully come to realize the enormous importance of nature in human lives.*<sup>215</sup> Also Mirek's letters have references to this, for instance in the letter below

## Abstract

*Den 3. August 1941*

*(3 August 1941)*

---

<sup>215</sup> Šimečka 2002, 9.

## Orientation

*Meine Teuersten! Es war wieder ein freudiger Sonnabend für mich. Ich habe diesmal ausser Deinem lieben Brief, Vater, noch eine Karte aus Chotěboř und eine von Anny aus dem Urlaubsaufenthalt bekommen. Herzlichen Dank dafür.*

*(My dearest ones! It was again a happy Saturday for me. This time I not only received your precious letter, Father, but also a card from Chotěboř and another one from Anny, from her holiday. Cordial thanks for them.)*

## Complicating action

*Ich hoffe, dass die Mutter auf ihren Reisen sich wengstens ein bischen erholen wird indem sie auf andere Gedanken kommen wird. Wie gern möchte ich auch alle die bekannten lieben Orte wieder mal besuchen aber das alles wird doch noch kommen – auch Dein --- Vater wird wieder zum Vorschein kommen*

*(I hope that mother can refresh herself at least a bit on her travels and that way have something else to think about. How pleasant would it be also for me to visit all the familiar and dear places again. But that all will happen – also your --- Father will appear again)*

## Evaluation/Result or resolution

*– wir müssen nur warten, gebe Gott dass nicht mehr lange. Mit mir und meiner Gesundheit ist alles bei dem Alten.*

*(- we must only wait, so help us God that it would not last long. With me and my health everything is as before.)*

## Coda

*Grüsst von mir herzlich alle Bekannten, Onkel O, Anny. Herzliche Grüsse und Küsse von Euerem M.*

*(Send my cordial greetings to all acquaintances, Uncle O, Anny. Cordial greetings and kisses from your M.)*

The comment about the person *O.* doing *Feldarbeit* (in the quotation below) opens interesting possibilities for interpretations. It can be agricultural work or possibly some other kind of field work, such as building military fortifications. Then Mirek continues by praising fresh air and exercising, which is a clearly addressed to the camp authorities rather than his parents.

*Die Feldarbeit kann dem O. nur zu Nutzen sein auch wenn er daran nicht gewöhnt ist. Ich habe allein auf mir kennen gelernt, was die frische Luft und Bewegung macht. (Den 2. Juli 1942)*

*(The fieldwork can only be useful for O, even while he is not used to it. I myself have learned the effects of fresh air and exercising. (2 July 1942)*

Warm weather brings positive memories to Mirek's mind:

*Jetzt, wenn das Wetter warmer wird, gedenke ich selbstverständlich des Badnes bei Presov. (Den 2./VI 1940)*

*(Now, that the weather is becoming warmer, I obviously think of swimming at Presov. (2 June 1940))*

Nature is not only friend and an element of hope, different weather conditions can also be prisoners' enemies too. For instance, hot weather may ruin the contents of the valuable food packages.

Abstract

*Den 16./VIII 1942*

*(16 August 1942)*

Orientation

*Meine Teuersten! Heute konnte ich wieder mit meiner Post zufrieden sein. Ausser Euerem lieben Briefe habe ich auch noch eine Karte von Inka und eine von Jiřa bekommen.*

*(My dearest ones! Today I could be happy with my post again. Along with your precious letter I also got a card from Inka and another one from Jiřa.)*

Complicating action

*Ich danke Euch auch für den Packet. Leider war aber der kleinere Becher nicht dicht genug und ein Teil des Inhalts war ausgegossen. Das sind die Schwierigkeiten der warmen Jahreszeit.*

*(I thank you also for the package. Unfortunately the smaller can was not tight enough and some of the contents had leaked. Those are the difficulties of the warm season.)*

Evaluation

*Sonst war ich aber zufrieden. Es ist gut das Ihr mir in Eueren Briefen von allen Bekannten und Verwandten schreibt. Man kann sich wenigsten auf ein Paar Momente wieder in die Verhältnisse übertragen, die mir schon beinahe fremd sind.*

*(But otherwise I was happy. It is good that you write to me in your letters about all acquaintances and relatives. One can transpose oneself at least for a few moments into conditions which for me are estranged by now.)*

Result or resolution

*Wie hat sich wohl alles in der Zeit meiner Abwesenheit verändert! Wie ich mich verändert habe, das werde ich erst nach meiner Rückkehr erkennen!*

*(How everything must have changed during my absence! How I have changed, that will I realise only after my return.)*

Coda

*Es küsst Euch herzlich M.*

*(Cordial kisses. Yours M.)*

The letter above contains also self-reflection. The time spent in Sachsenhausen has taken its toll. Also camp life (with all its brutalities as we readers in the future know) has become normal daily life to Mirek and his fellow inmates.

In March 1940 Prague experienced the so-called 50-Year Flood.<sup>216</sup> The news has reached Sachsenhausen too and Mirek refers to it when writing home.

*Den 21. April 1940*

*(21 April 1940)*

*Orientation*

*Meine Teuersten!*

*Nimmt erstens meine herzlichen Grüsse an. – Vor einer Woche habe ich von Euch das Paket bekommen. Mit dem Inhalt bin ich sehr zufrieden gewesen, ich danke Euch dafür.*

*(My dearest ones! First accept my cordial greetings. – A week ago I received your package. I was very happy with the contents, I thank you for that.)*

*Evaluation*

*Jetzt, wenn das Wetter so schön ist, bin ich wieder öfter zu Hause in den Gedanken. Ich stelle mir vor wie de Vater in dem Garten arbeitet, und ich möchte ihm so gern helfen. Ich freue mich --- auf das Augenblick, bis ich wieder nach Hause kommen werde. Wie ich gehört habe, hat es bei uns grose Überschwämmungen gegeben. Schade, dass ich das nicht gesehen habe. Ich hoffe aber, dass ich in diesem Sommer gelegenheit habe werde, in der Elbe zu baden. Habt Ihr --- Pavel auf seine Briefe geantwortet?*

*(Now that the weather is so nice, I am more often at home in my thoughts. I imagine how Father works in the garden and I would so much like to help him. I am looking forward to the moment when I can return home again. As I have heard, there have been huge floods at home. Pity that I have not seen it. But I hope that I will have a chance to swim in the Elbe this summer. Have you -- - answered Pavel's letters?)*

*Coda*

*Grüsst, bitte, von mir Frau K, Jira, L, Familie H, --- und alle bekannten. Es küsst und grüsst Euch vielmals und auf das Wiedersehen sich freut. Euer Mirek.*

*(Please send my greetings to Mrs. K, Jira, L, Family H --- and all acquaintances. Many kisses and greetings, and looking forward to seeing you again, your Mirek.)*

---

<sup>216</sup> E-mail from Jana Viktorínová (City of Prague Museum), 1 November 2018.

The only reason I wanted to visit Děčín was that František had lived there with his family before the Second World War. They had fled to Prague, like many other Czech-speakers, when Germany occupied the Sudetenland.<sup>217</sup> I have no other connection to this small town, close to the German border. The town gave me nothing new about František, and the meaning of this visit would become clear for me a bit later, when writing my thesis.

*Only when arriving in Děčín I began to look for other places to visit than the museum which I had decided to check out. It turned out that the oldest hungerstone of Elbe is in Děčín of all places. It appears when the water is low enough. The dry years have been engraved on it. The newest year I find is from the 1990, and I suppose this year will be engraved on it too.*

*Drought like this is startling and it raises questions. It says on this stone: "Wenn du mich siehst, dann weine." (If you see me, cry.) We could not detect the text but I guess there still is a feeble text, somewhere. The stone had been placed in the 15th century but the years we could recognise were from the 17th century.*

*(Blog 17 October 2018)*

The Elbe is maybe the strongest element of nature in Mirek's Sachsenhausen narration. From the perspective of human life, it flows eternally and crosses Germany, but its starting point is in Mirek's home, Northern Bohemia. The significance of the Elbe has also been recognized in Helga Krook's dissertation *Minnesrörelser* (Movements of Memory).

Krook characterises her dissertation:

*Minnesrörelser, Memory movements, is the title of my doctoral dissertation in literary composition, published in 2015 as six separate books, contained in a box. It is a study of inherited and hidden memories, minnen in Swedish, mainly memories that might be encountered geographically and symbolically, that no one personally bears or can express any more. Memories that are not one's own, that do not even come from the country in which one grew up.<sup>218</sup>*

One of the writer persons in Krook's composition is Anja Nachaum who creates poetry, and here is one of her poems about Elbe.<sup>219</sup>

*Leva under Elbes mun*

*Vid Elbes mun*

*det rivs upp*

*glider*

*slår ut river*

*Sova under Elbes mun*

---

<sup>217</sup> Personal communication with Věra Chrastná 25 February 2012.

<sup>218</sup> Krook 2018, 12.

<sup>219</sup> Krook 2015, 7.

*mynning under Elbes mun*

*mynna i Elbe*

*(nynning)*

*Elbe flyter i havet*

*Fortfarande sig*

*en smal ränna*

*där man kan säga*

*mellan land och land*

*det finns inget hav*

*men Elbe finns*

*där enorma containerfartyg*

One of the moments when Mirek saw the Elbe can be discovered from his letter to Pavel on 26 June 1936, about two years before Nazi Germany occupied Czechoslovakia. To be exact, it is the draft of the letter to Pavel, which Mirek has kept for some reason. In his letter he describes the bicycle trip he has just made.

*Potom jel jsem rovněž na kole do Chotěboře a Nového Města na Moravě. - Po čtrnáctidenním pobytu tam vypravil jsem se do Lipska, kam mě pozval jeden z mých známých Na cestě zastavil jsem se v Drážďanech v obrazárně. Kdybych Ti měl popisovat dojmy, které jsem prožíval při prohlídce obrazů holandských a italských mistrů - nebo pověstné Madony sixtínské potřeboval bych ještě jeden takový dopis. V Lipsku jsem právě zastihl veletrh - a tak jsem šel celou tu dobu ve spěchu a shonu - prožíval jsem spoustu nových dojmů - a teprve teď od začátku září vracím se do starých kolejí a nalézám opravdovou zálibu v učení. – Tak to by byl povrch, ale letošní prázdniny měly pro mě také větší význam protože přispěly k mému vývoji duševnímu. Vzpomínal jsem při tom na Tebe - protože, celý postup je skoro přesně dle Tvé předpovědi a já věřím, že je to řízením vyšší moci, že já stále a stále přicházím do styku s lidmi, kteří sami kráčí k Bohu - volí cestu v dnešní době tak neobvyklou.*

*(Then I also rode a bike to Chotěboř and Nové Město na Moravě. - After a two-week stay there I went to Leipzig, where I was invited by one of my friends-on the way I stopped at the picture gallery in Dresden. If I had to describe the impressions that I was experiencing on a tour of paintings by Dutch and Italian masters, or the famous Sistine Madonna I'd need one more such letter. I was in Leipzig in the time of the fair - so I went all the time in a hurry and bustle, I experienced a lot of new impressions, and only now at the beginning of September I return to normal and I find a real penchant for studying. – So it would be much for the surface but this year's holiday had a greater meaning for me, too, because it contributed to my intellectual development. I thought of you because the whole process is almost exactly according to your*

*predictions and I believe it is guidance by Higher powers that I always come into contact with people who themselves walk on the path towards God – today so unusual.)*

The extract above also reveals that Mirek has friends in Germany. Maybe the same ones whom he mentions to his parents in one of his Sachsenhausen letters. It also confirms us that he was an experienced user of the German language, which is considered as one of the vital skills for surviving in a Nazi concentration camp.

On April 25, 1945, American and Soviet soldiers met on the Elbe, splitting the remnants of the Third Reich in half. The German surrender came less than two weeks later, in the early hours of May 7, 1945.<sup>220</sup>

*In my dream I am sitting on a bench at a graveyard. Suddenly I see Václav Havel sitting next to me. He says: "See, this is how democracy works here at the graveyard. We all end up down under, whatever our status has been."*

*I realise that this is the graveyard of Vinohrad and Havel is buried here. I stand up and go looking for his tombstone. When I find it, Havel disappears and soon I wake up wondering why my mind is preoccupied with the dream and the saying: "The pen is mightier than the sword."*

*Browsing the photos on my camera from yesterday, I understand.*

*(Blog 28.6.2015)*

#### 4.7.5 Home and Food

*A theme I wanted to write about: what is home? A certain horizon to which one relates. --- The hiddenness of that horizon. The more urgently one relates to it as a result. The outline of this horizon changes (sometimes it is created by mountains, at other times by an urban skyline), the arrangement of people, relationships, milieus, traditions, etc. changes, but the horizon "as such" remains. As something absolute. Something that merely assumes different concrete forms. The paper has run out –*

*I kiss you, Vašek*

*(Václav Havel to Olga Havlová, 4 October 1980)*

The letter below creates a narration which follows L&W rather closely – even very closely – because the order of the narrative components of L&W may vary slightly and the narration is still coherent. The interesting new topic in this letter is travelling, dreaming of taking a train to all the familiar places. Even though this is not a travel story, one can still when reading these lines travel with Miroslav to his *vlast*, or *Heimat*.

Abstract

*Den 28. September 1941.*

---

<sup>220</sup> Wachsmann 2016, 544.

*(September 1941)*

Orientation

*Meine Teuersten!*

*(My dearest)*

Complicating action/Evaluation

*In den letzten vierzehn Tagen habe ich wieder vergebens gewartet auf ein Schreiben von Euch. Hoffentlich wird es am nächsten Sonnamt<sup>221</sup> anders. Heute ist eben der Tag an dem ich gewöhnlich in Heřmaň weilte. So gern möchte ich mich auch dismal in einen Zug setzen und mit einer hundert km Schnelligkeit zu den Orten fahren, die ich schon so lange nicht gesehen habe.*

*(The past fourteen days I have waited for a text from you, again in vain. I hope next Saturday is different. Today is precisely the day when I usually stayed in Heřmaň. I would like so much to get on a train also this time and travel with the speed of 100 kilometres per hour to the places that I have not seen in such a long time already.)*

Evaluation

*Zwei Jahre, wie sich bei uns alles in der Zeit verändern musste. Ich bin neugierig wie die Kinder, die ich gekannt habe, aussehen. Z. b. die kleine B.R. oder O.M.*

*(Two years, how everything at home must have changed in the meantime. I am curious how the children whom I have known look now. For example the small B.R. or O.M.)*

Result or Resolution

*– Hoffentlich wird es nicht mehr so lange dauern wie es gedauert hat, bis ich dass alles wieder sehen werde.*

*(-Hopefully it does not last as long as it already has until I can see everything again.)*

Coda

*Bleibt nur gesund und haltet geduldig aus. Grüsst u. küsst Euch M.*

*(Just stay healthy and remain patient. Greets and kisses your M.)*

In this letter the significance of food packages from home is apparent. In my discussion with Jaroslav Franc I learned that at first some of his fellow students refused to eat the camp food but soon they simply had to. The food was always of low quality, e.g. soup containing small wedges of root vegetables. Sometimes there was a type of ersatz coffee on offer, and it was made of acorn.<sup>222</sup>

---

<sup>221</sup> *Sonnamt* is a colloquial form for Saturday in German and typical of Berlin dialect. One can speculate if Mirek's German has been to some extent affected by the local dialect, after nearly two years in Sachsenhausen.

<sup>222</sup> Personal communication with Jaroslav Franc, 25 June 2015.

About six months after Mirek's letter (above) would come to light that several Sachsenhausen SS-men had embezzled food from the camp kitchen, store rooms and gardens. This action had been systematical and Commandant Hans Loritz tried to put a lid on the affair and put the blame on one of the prisoners, but this time the strategy failed and the corruption among the SS became apparent.<sup>223</sup>

The endemic corruption was exposed and it turned out that prisoners had been forced to make items such as paintings and furniture, even a sailing boat to Loritz. Also his villa, his dream house, on the Wolfgangsee had been built by prisoners. When Loritz came under scrutiny, the prisoners were currently putting finishing touches on the villa.<sup>224</sup>

Vojmir Srdečný has told me that using the skilled prisoners the way Commandant Loritz did was common among the SS. A Czech painter Josef Čapek, who represented Cubism as well as his own unique style, was asked to paint for the SS men. When the works were ready, the SS men approached the Czech students to ask if Čapek really was an artist because his paintings were incomprehensible for them.<sup>225</sup>

Jaroslav Franc told me, in turn, that he once got one kilogram of chocolate for Christmas from home. When the package arrived, he was commanded to arrive at the SS office and made sign a document where he donated the chocolate to the fighting soldiers at the frontline. As he said, in reality those chocolates did not travel even one kilometre away from the camp.<sup>226</sup>

According to Wachsmann, the Reichsführer SS Himmler had permitted prisoners to receive food packages from outside in late October 1942. In practice this meant reviving the old practice from the prewar camps.<sup>227</sup> However, as the quotations from Mirek's letters prove, the Czech students were allowed to receive the packages throughout their incarceration.<sup>228</sup>

*Mit dem Sendungen ist es jetzt so: Wir bekommen sie einmal monatlich und zwar immer am Anfang des Monats. Das erste Paket ist mir also am Anfang Mai ausgegeben worden, das zweite aber darf ich nicht bekommen und es ist, wie ich vermute, zurückgeschickt worden. Künftig sendet mir, bitte, die Pakete so, dass sie zwischen dem 1.-5- jedes Monats ankommen. (Den 19. Mai 1940)*

*(With the postal deliveries it is like this now: We receive them once a month and always at the beginning of the month. So the first package was given to me at the beginning of May and the second one I cannot get and it is, as I am assuming, sent back. Please, send me the packages in the future so that they arrive between the 1st and the 5th day of the month. (19 May 1940))*

In his first approximately 10 letters (20.11.1939 – 19.5.1940) Mirek gives instructions to his parents about what to send and what not. Later on, sending the packages becomes a routine and Miroslav seldom mentions them – until this letter on November 22<sup>nd</sup> 1942, when he writes:

---

<sup>223</sup> Wachsmann 2016, 383.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid, 384.

<sup>225</sup> Personal communication with Vojmir Srdečný 20 February 2013.

<sup>226</sup> Personal communication with Jaroslav Franc, 25 June 2015.

<sup>227</sup> Wachsmann 2016, 422.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid, 423.

Jetzt wenn keine Beschränkung mehr besteht, ist das möglich gründlicher verpacken. Sonst genügt mir aber das was Ihr mir geschickt habt völlig- ich weiss dass es nicht leicht ist alle die Dinge aufzutreiben.

(Now that there are no limitations anymore, it is possible to prepare the package more carefully. Otherwise what you have sent me is totally enough – I know that it is not easy to gather all those things.)

At that time the German Army was focusing its attention to Stalingrad and there must have been fewer and fewer resources for prisoners. Vojmír Srdečný told me that not every political prisoner in Sachsenhausen received food packages from home because not everyone's family was able to procure groceries and that is why those who were more fortunate, shared theirs.<sup>229</sup> The quotation above shows the challenges people at home in Bohemia were having in gathering the food to be sent to the prisoners.

In his book *The Language of the Third Reich*, Victor Klemperer mentions that it was still possible to buy good soap during the Stalingrad days (in the area of the Reich): *You can buy it, you have to organize it.*<sup>230</sup>

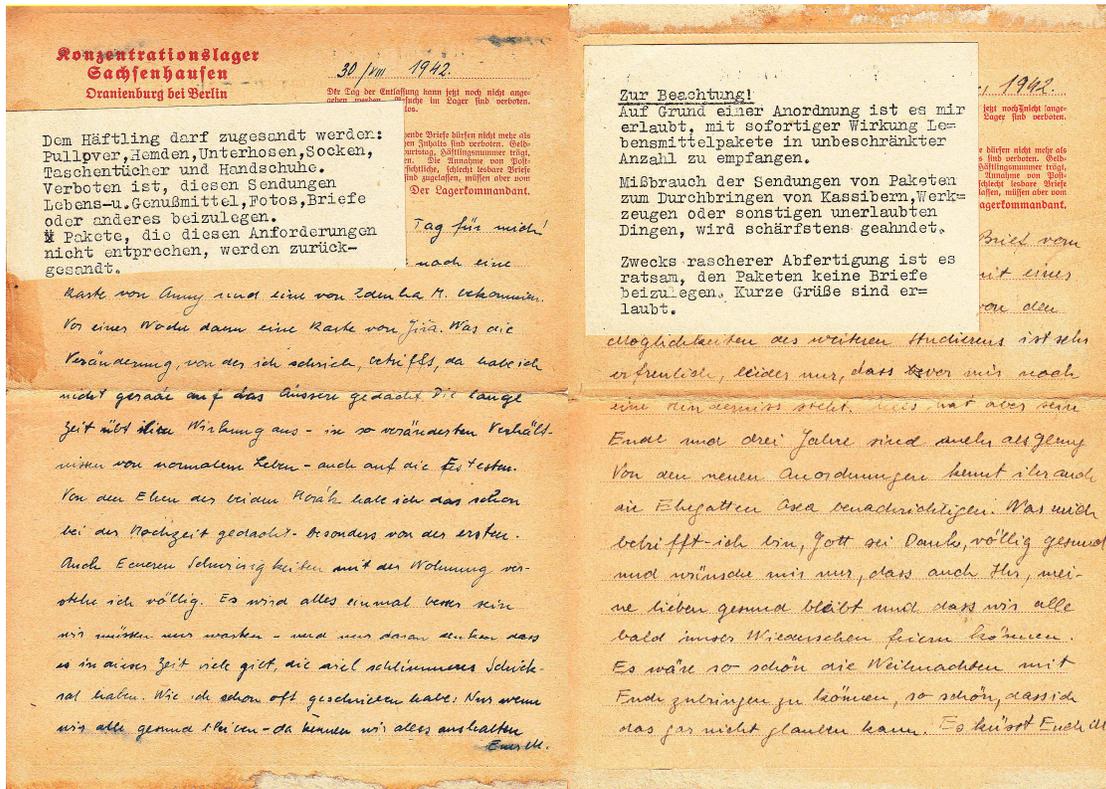


FIGURE 12 Mirek's letters with added slips of paper with further instructions, dated 30.8.1942 and 8.11.1942

<sup>229</sup> Personal communication with Vojmír Srdečný 20.2.2013.

<sup>230</sup> Klemperer 2006, 95.

For thousands of other prisoners, lifting the ban from food packages meant survival. Helena Dzedziecka, a Ravensbrück prisoner, testified after her release that the parcels "kept us alive". The significance of the extra food was even more remarkable than what it would have been earlier during the war years because since early 1942, Germany suffered a general food crisis.

Here one can also see Mirek being completely untruthful when he writes about the camp conditions. He claims that his health is much better than at home, thanks to medication and diet. The parents must also be aware of it because the food packages are very much in demand and Mirek thanks for them. A very interesting double standard where you on one hand cannot write about the camp conditions but at the same time you can. What remains a secret to a reader in current time is what Miroslav wants to communicate to his mother.

Abstract

*Den 12. September 1942*

*(12 September 1942)*

Orientation

*Meine Teuersten!*

*(My dearest ones!)*

Evaluation/Complicating action

*Wieder eine Erfrischung in der Eintönigkeit des hiesigen Lebens – ein Brief von zu Hause! Er bringt mit der Freude immer wieder Heimweh in das Herz, aber so ist es schon im Leben. Jede Freude muss durch Schmerz ausgekauft werden. Um meine Gesundheit braucht Ihr keine Sorgen haben – die ist viel besser als zu Hause mit allen Medikamenten und Diät. Behält die Zettel von dem letzten Briefe! Bis die Zeit kommt, werde ich schreiben was ich nicht brauche. Mit dem Packet war ich sehr zufrieden – der Inhalt des Bechers ist immer in Ordnung – letztenmals war das eine Ausnahme.*

*(Again something to refresh the monotony of the life here – a letter from home! Along with joy, it always brings longing for home into my heart as well, but such is life. Every joy must be bought with pain. You do not need to worry about my health – it is much better than at home, with all medicines and diet. Keep the slip of paper included in the previous letter! When the time is right, I will write what I do not need. I was very happy with the package, canned goods are always fine – last time was an exception.)*

Result or resolution

*Euer Einfall mit den neuen Dingen war auch sehr gut. Die Bemerkungen von Frau Č sind interessant. Mutter Mutter! Ich denke oft – besonders in letzter Zeit an Euch, wie es Euch geht. Hoffentlich kommt schon für uns ein glückl. Tag.*

*(Your idea about the new things was also very good. The remarks from Mrs. Č are interesting. Mother, mother! I often think of you – especially during the recent times, how it is going for you. I am hoping for happier days for us.)*

Coda

M.

Below is another example of Mirek's comments and instructions on the packages.

*Auch vom Inhalte des Packets habe ich schon gekostet. Herzlichen Dank dafür. Das Gebäck von Mutter hat mir sehr geschmeckt. Es war wieder ein Fest für mich. Schade nur, dass so was schnell verschwindet und hier muss man besonders drauf Wert legen was ausgiebig ist. Ich mache euch auch darauf aufmerksam das die Vorschrift über das Gewicht und Inhalt des Packets (d.h. keine Seife und Vitamine) eingehalten werden muss. (Den 12/X 1941)*

*(I have already tasted the contents of the package. Cordial thanks for it. Mother's bakings tasted very good. It was again a feast for me. It is just a pity that it disappears so quickly and here one must value especially what goes for a long way. I also point out to you that the rules on the weight and contents of the packages (i.e. no soap nor vitamins) must be observed. (12 October 1941))*

Jaroslav Franc writes home, on 6 October 1941:

*Viel hat sich von dieser Zeit geendert, als ich das [Herbstnatur] zum letztemal durchlebte, nur Ihr in mir seid immer dieselbe, ich liebe Euch nur um mehr, wie alles, was mir so entfernt ist. U. ich? Ihr braucht keine Sorge haben, alles was ich hatte, bleibt in mir u. täglich bin ich reicher u. mein Geist stärker.*

*(A lot has changed from the last time since I experienced that [nature in autumn], only you in me are always the same, I love you just more, like everything that is so far from me. And I? You do not need to be worried, everything that I had stays in me and I am richer every day and my spirit stronger.)*

*Ihr braucht keine Sorgen haben [You do not need to be worried]* is possibly something the Czech students wrote "in unison", as a collective narrative because Jaroslav Franc is using exactly the same words here as Mirek in his letters.

Political prisoners were allowed to have money in their possession. Mirek mentions the money 8 times. However, he probably had not many opportunities to spend it because he writes that the parents do not need to send it as often as they do.

*Was Geld betrifft – da brauche ich nicht so viel – eine Hälfte möchte mir genügen. (den 2. Juli 1942)*

*(When it comes to money – I do not need it so much – a half is enough for me. (2 July 1942))*

Jaroslav Franc has told me that there was a shop and a canteen in Sachsenhausen, but in reality there was nothing much to buy.<sup>231</sup> As I have mentioned above, Nikolaus Wachsmann writes in his book *KL: A History of the Nazi Concentration Camps* that from the late 1930s onwards, the

---

<sup>231</sup> Personal communication with Jaroslav Franc 25 June 2015.

relatives were banned from sending food or any other goods, but money transfers were allowed, in order to buy additional supplies in SS-run canteens.<sup>232</sup>

Since there are no traces from the ban in Mirek's letters and he regularly thanks for the food packages throughout his time in Sachsenhausen, the practices must have varied in different camps and maybe even from one prison group to another.

*Oranienburg 4./VIII 1940*

*Meine Teuersten!*

*Ich danke Euch herzlich für das Packet, das ich diesmal schon den 3./VIII bekommen habe. Die Vorschriften haben sich jetzt ein bisschen verändert. Künftig soll man nicht genau den Inhalt angeben – nur einfach: "Lebensmittel" – Es soll ordentliche Verpackung haben. Rauchwaren, Konserwen, Honig, Taschentücher u Medikamente dürfen nicht gesandt werden. Es grüsst und küsst Euch herzlich Euer M.*

*Oranienburg 4 August 1940*

*My dearest ones!*

*I thank you cordially for the package which I received already on 3 August this time. The rules have changed a bit now. In the future one should not list the exact contents – just simply: "Groceries". It should be packed carefully. Sending tobacco, preservatives, honey, handkerchiefs and medicines is not allowable. Greetings and kisses to you, your M.*

It is worth mentioning here that other prisoners in Sachsenhausen paid attention to the Czech students due to their relative wellbeing. No signs of physical abuse were visible in their bodies and due to food and clothing sent from home, they seemed to be warm and well nourished.<sup>233</sup>

*Euere Nachricht von den Möglichkeit des weiteren Studium ist erfreulich, leider nur, dass vor mir noch eine Hinderniss steht. ( 8/XI 1942)*

*(Your news about the possibility to continue studies is delightful, just unfortunately I still have one obstacle in front of me. (8 November 1942))*

In his email to me, the head of Charles University Archive Marek Ďurčanský sheds some light to the question what Mirek means when he mentions continuing studies. One explanation is that the Czech universities were originally meant to be closed for three years and this period ended in November 1942. But in the end, the universities stayed closed. We do not know how much information Miroslav had about the situation in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. According to Ďurčanský, nobody expected that the Nazis would re-open the Czech universities a few months after the assassination of Reichsprotektor Heydrich.<sup>234</sup>

Another possible interpretation is that Mirek is aware of the possibility offered to some students, especially in the field of medicine and natural or technical sciences to study in the German universities. Taking this opportunity was, however considered as betrayal and those

---

<sup>232</sup> Wachsmann 2016, 120.

<sup>233</sup> Brauer 2008, 167.

<sup>234</sup> Email from Marek Ďurčanský 29 October 2018.

who did it faced problems after the war. Maybe an opportunity of this kind was mentioned in the letter of his parents, but According to Ďurčanský, the first explanation seems more probable.<sup>235</sup>

Vojtech Mastny discusses the same topic in his book *The Czechs under the Nazi Rule: The Failure of National Resistance 1939-1942*. The first announcement of the plan to open the universities for the Czech students was published on 1 March 1941, and it was limited to "non-political" disciplines, such as medicine, engineering and forestry. The studying opportunities were also limited, to universities in solidly German areas, excluding border towns such as Strasbourg, Vienna and Königsberg.<sup>236</sup>

The number of applicants among the Czechs is not known but 33 of them were accepted, and their admission was based on a high racial rating. After the first semester, one applied for German citizenship and another expressed interest to join the Waffen-SS. Another opportunity to apply was opened in the autumn of 1941. Only fifteen applied on the first two days, ten on the third and two on the fourth day.

Abstract

*30/VIII 1942.*

*(30 August 1942)*

Orientation

*Meine Teuersten! Wieder ein freudiges Tag für mich! Ich habe ausser Euerem lieben Briefe noch eine Karte von Anny und eine von ZM. bekommen. Vor einer Woche dann eine Karte von Jiřa.*

*(My dearest ones! Again a happy day for me! Along with your precious letter I received a card from Anny and another one from ZM. A week ago a card from Jiřa.)*

Complicating action/Evaluation

*Was die Veränderung, von der ich schrieb, betrifft, da habe ich nicht gerade auf das Äussere gedacht. Die lange Zeit übt ihre Wirkung aus – in so veränderten Verhältnissen von normalem Leben – auch auf die Festesten. Von den Ehen der beiden H habe ich das schon bei der Hochzeit gedacht – besonderes von der ersten- Auch Eueren Schwierigkeiten mit der Wochning verstehe ich völlig.*

*(When it comes to the change I wrote about, I didn't exactly mean the exterior circumstances. The long time has its effect – in conditions so different from normal life – also in the most permanent of things. As regards both Hs' marriages, this occurred to me already at the wedding party – especially regarding the first one. I also totally understand your difficulties with the apartment.)*

---

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.

<sup>236</sup> Mastny 1971, 137.

## Result or resolution

*Es wird alles einmal besser sein wir müssen nur warten – und nur daran denken dass es in dieser Zeit viele gibt, die viel schlimmeres Schicksal haben. Wie ich schon oft geschrieben habe: Nur wenn wir alle gesund bleiben – da kennen wir alles aushalten.*

*(Everything will be better one day, we only need to wait – and bear in mind that nowadays there are many who have a much worse fate. As I have written many times already: as long as we all just stay healthy we can push through everything.)*

## Coda

*Euer M.*

*(Yours M.)*

This letter indicates the gap between Mirek's life at the camp compared to that of his parents' at home. His parents' concerns about their living conditions are different from those of his in Sachsenhausen. However, he shows understanding towards his parents' struggles.

Mirek and his parents understand the concept of change in a different manner. He refers mainly to inner change and the change in relations whereas parents mention more concrete issues, concerning their daily life.

It is also interesting to note that even though criticizing the regime is strictly forbidden, commenting of the postal services and their functions appears to be permissible.

## Abstract

*Den 2. Februar 1941*

*(2 February 1941)*

## Orientation

*Meine Teuersten! Gestern hat mir wieder Euer lieben Brief eine Freude gemacht, umso grösere, dass ich auf ihn so lange warten musste.*

*(My dearest ones! Yesterday your precious letter made me happy again, the greater the joy that I had to wait for such a long time.)*

## Evaluation

*Es war aber nur ein Zufall, sonst ist es nicht so streng, wie Ihr aus meinem vorletzten Briefe sehen könnt. Dasselbe gilt von der Bahnhofsansichtskarte.*

*(But it was only a coincidence, otherwise it is not so strict, as you can see from my previous letter. The same applies to the railway station postcard.)*

## Complicating action/Result or resolution / Evaluation

*Und ich – ja auch ich stellte ich mir vor, wie schön es wäre, wenn ich zu Weihnachten zu Hause erscheinen könnte, aber es ist so lange her und wir müssen wieder warten. Nur Geduld in dieser*

*Hinsicht haben wir schon eine gute Schule bekommen und die Gesundheit mit bischen frohen Mutes genügt um alles zu überwinden. Es freut mich das Pepik geschrieben hat.*

*(And I – yes I also imagined how lovely it would be if I could just appear home for Christmas, but a lot of time has passed and we must wait again. We have had a good schooling in patience now already and health with a bit of happy spirit is enough to overcome everything. I am happy that Pepik has written. )*

Coda

*Grüsst von mir, bitte, Anny, Onkel O, Jira, Familie H, Frau K. - auch Frau W und alle Bekannten. M.*

*(Please send my greetings to Anny, uncle O, Jira, family H, Mrs. K and also Mrs. W and all acquaintances. M.)*

As a reader “from the future”, I wonder if Mirek asked for the photo about the new railway station in his hometown Mochov because it would be a way to memorise also other things he has left behind, and also give him one more thing to see when he returns, something new and interesting.

Also Milan Šimečka asks similar things about home in his prison letters:

*Is there still the great big stove in the middle of the room at Miro's? Whenever I place my hands on it I can feel the warmth transfer to them from the bricks. Is there still the picture of the little red-roofed cottages and the leaping game, and the little colored lights in the aquaria with the fish swimming back and forth. And homemade wine on the table with little corn cobs and homemade sausage?<sup>237</sup>*

Jaroslav Franc told me when I interviewed him in June 2015 that a postcard his parents had sent him to Sachsenhausen was sent back home because the picture was politically unsuitable. It was a postcard made of a photo of Jaroslav's father when he was working in Vienna as a carriage driver.

---

<sup>237</sup> Šimečka 2002,



**FIGURE 13** Jaroslav Franc's postcard: his father at work in Vienna. (Courtesy of Jaroslav Franc)

Jaroslav Franc told me that one of his friends in Sachsenhausen had heard the news from home that his girlfriend had got engaged to someone else while he was incarcerated. The friend had died within ten days.<sup>238</sup> This indicates that what happens at home does have an impact on the well-being of an inmate.

*Ich kann mir nicht mehr vorstellen wie das Zivilleben aussieht – es ist alles so entfernt und die Erinnerungen haben schon lange ihre Schärfe verloren. Den 4. Januar 1942*

*(I can hardly Please send my cordial greetings to Anny, Uncle O, Jiřa, Family H, Mrs. K and all other acquaintances. Your Mirek who is always thinking of you / Yours Mirek, who always thinks of you. (5 January 1941) how the civilian life looks like anymore – it is all so far and the memories have lost their best edge a long time ago. (4 January 1942))*

In February 1942 Sachsenhausen commandant Hans Loritz handed over to the Gestapo several civilians caught smuggling letters for prisoners or giving them food and drink.<sup>239</sup>

#### 4.7.6 Holidays and other special occasions

It is the darkest season, December 2018 and around the Independence Day (6th December) I decide that I need a break from Sachsenhausen letters.

---

<sup>238</sup> Personal communication with Jaroslav Franc 25 June 2015.

<sup>239</sup> Wachsmann 2016, 487.

After the Epiphany it gets better. On evenings when the snow falls on my yard, I read on. I have lived in Turku the biggest part of my life and I have never seen as much snow here as I did in January 2019. It kept coming down, it was surreal.

And often my mind travelled to the exceptionally cold winter of 1939. The 80th anniversary of closing the Czech universities would be this year.

#### Abstract

*Den 1./XII.1940*

*(1 December 1940)*

#### Orientation

*Meine Teuersten. Ich habe Eueren Brief vom 25./XI. erhalten – ebenso wie den, in dem Ihr mir von den Weihnachtsgeschenken geschrieben haben.*

*(My dearest ones. I received your letter dated 25 November – as well as the one where you have written about the Christmas presents.)*

#### Complicating action /Evaluation

*Es ist Schade, dass ich sie nicht sehen konnte, aber es werden doch einmal die Weihnachten kommen in den ich mich über die Geschenke unter Euch, meine Lieben, freuen werde. Anny K. danke ich für ihren lieben Brief, den ich vor einer Woche erhalten habe. Ich hoffe auch dass es nicht zum letztenmale war. Ich möchte gern auch etwas von Ihr erfahren.*

*(It is a pity that I could not see them but the Christmas will come when I can rejoice about the presents with you, my dearest ones. I also thank Anny K for her precious letter that I received a week ago. I hope it was not the last one from her. I would like to hear something from her too.)*

#### Resolution

*Man liest in den Briefen am liebsten das, was an dies Vergangene erinnert, oder was ihn nach Hause überträgt. Die Tröstung brauchen wir nicht mehr, dazu sind wir zu hart geworden. Der Gedanke mit den Parzellen ist nicht schlimm.*

*(The most enjoyable letters are those that contain something to remind you of the past or bring you back home. We need no comfort anymore, we have become too hard for that. The thought about the parcels is not bad.)*

#### Coda

*Herzlich küsst und grüsst Euch Euer Mirek.*

*(Cordally greets and kisses you your Mirek.)*

Mirek's letters are often loaded with information, as we have seen earlier in this chapter. Even in the sentences that I would interpret as orientation, for example this one about Christmas presents.

This letter also tells us that Anny did send letters to him, even though Mirek does not reply to him. It is possible though, that the breaks in the correspondence between Mirek and his parents are caused by him sending letters to Anny (or someone else) instead. On the other hand, there is no indication or any traces about a correspondence with anyone else in letters to parents.

## Abstract

21./XII.1941

(21 December 1941)

## Orientation

*Meine Teuersten! Euern lieben Brief von 15/XII habe ich erhalten und auch die Karte von A.K. – Richtet ihr aus meinen Dank dafür und auch meine Weihnachtsglückwünsche, ebenso wie dem E, falls Ihr ihm ---schreiben werdet.*

*(My dearest ones! I received your precious letter dated 15 December and also the card from A.K. Tell her thanks and merry Christmas for me, as well as E, in case you --- write to him.)*

## Complicating action/Evaluation/Result or resolution

*Ich stelle mir vor, wie schön das wäre, wenn ich zusammen mit Euch [bei] Onkel J. und Jiřa die Weihnachten zubringen könnte. Wie die Verhältnisse aber sind, muss ich, ebenso wie in den vergangenen Jahren mich damit befriedigen – nur mit Herzen bei euch weilen.*

*(I imagine how nice it would be if I could spend Christmas with you, [at] Uncle J[’s] and Jiřa[’s]. The circumstances being what they are, I must, like in previous years, be content with being with you only in my heart.)*

## Coda

*Ich wünsche Euch ein glücklicheres u fröhlicheres neues Jahr*

*Euer M.*

*(I wish you a happy and joyful new year*

*Yours M.)*

This letter was written before Christmas. Being the end of the year, yet another year in Sachsenhausen, it summarizes the past. Interestingly, when we explore the letter by using L&W, complicating action, evaluation and resolution are in the same package, expressed in two sentences.

## Abstract

*Den 6. December 42*

*(6 December 42)*

## Orientation

*Meine Teuersten! Eueren lieben Brief und auch das zweite Packet habe ich erhalten. Herzlichen Dank für Beides.*

*(My dearest ones! I received your precious letter and also the second package. Cordial thanks for both of them.)*

## Evaluation

*Beide Erzeugnisse meiner Mutter haben mir prima geschmeckt und das aus der Mühle war einfach eine Überraschung für mich. Von dem Verpacken gibt es keine Vorschriften. Ihr kennt Euch nicht wundern über die Briefe von den jungen Leuten, die nach Hause schreiben – wenn jemand so etwas durchgemacht hat, wie Slávka am Anfang, der wird nicht mehr jammern, den der kann nur in bessere Verhältnisse kommen.*

*(Both products of Mother's tasted excellent and the one from the mill was just a surprise for me. There are no rules about the package. You don't need to wonder the letters the young people send home – when one has gone through something like what Slávka did at the beginning, one will not complain anymore because the conditions can only become better.)*

## Result or Resolution

*Mir geht es jetzt in allen Hinsichten gut. Besonderes muss ich meinen Gesundheitszustand betonen. Jiřa könnte also in diesem Jahre zufrieden sein wenn sie von dem Nikolaus Kohle bekommen würde – sie hat immer die Wärme geliebt.*

*(I am doing well now in every respect. I must emphasise my state of health. Jiřa could also be happy this year if she receives coal from Nicholas. She has always loved the warm(th).)*

## Coda

*Es küsst Euch und Gesundheit wünscht Euer M.*

*(You kisses and wishes health your M.)*

Studying letters in isolation is rarely as fruitful as studying them as part of a larger context. My numerous contacts have been invaluable in my research process. This e-mail I received from Dr. Marek Ďurčanský (4th October 2015) as an answer to one of my many questions reveals the significance of asking around when looking for clarification.

*The sentence you are asking about sounds: "Jiřa könnte also in diesem Jahre zufrieden sein wenn sie von dem Nikolaus Köhle bekommen würde - sie hat Immer die Wärme geliebt." It is a small joke. In Bohemia St. Nicolas is bringing to children presents, but if the child was not good, the present instead of toys and sweets is coal (or raw potatoes). Jiřa is probably his younger relative*

*(sister?) who is going to get such "present" during St. Nicolas holiday. He jokes that the coal (in the war conditions?) will be a good present, especially when his relative likes warm.*

*I hope the explanation is understandable. If you have any more question to this or of some similar kind, you can let me know. If I am able to, I like to help.*

On 26 June 1942 Mirek celebrated his third Sachsenhausen-birthday. Here he also reveals to us that the acquaintances are sending mail seldom and he seems to have concern about being forgotten after those three camp years.

*Es [Sendung] hat mir eine grosse Freude gemacht, denn jetzt ist die Post von den Bekannten so selten. Man kann sich nicht wundern nach beinahe schon 3 Jahren. Der Posten von Slávka ist nicht so gut, wie der frühere, aber er hat doch seine Vorteile wie Ihr mir geschrieben habet. (den 7 Juni 1942)*

*(It [the postal delivery] delighted me so much because now any post from acquaintances arrives rarely. One cannot wonder after almost three years. Slávka's post is not so as good as the previous one, but at least it has its benefits, as you wrote me. (7 June 1942) )*

Fortunately this was to be his last birthday at the camp, even though he did not know it yet.

## 4.8 Nach jedem Winter kommt ein Frühling

According to Nikolaus Wachsmann, concentration camp prisoners ought to be seen not only subjects of SS terror, apathetic and lacking free will, but also actors.<sup>240</sup> The viewpoint of a prisoner who uses his very narrow freedom the best he can, is evident in my research concerning Mirek and some of his fellow inmates' letters and oral memories.

The story of concentration camps has not ended yet. Their commemoration is in the process of constant change, and blind spots will be revealed. New approaches, questions and sources will make us reevaluate things we thought we knew.<sup>241</sup>

In epistolary research, Paul Ricœur's observation *that the past interrogates and responds to us to the degree that we interrogate and respond to it* becomes apparent.<sup>242</sup> Having dialogue with the text brings up answers, which call for an interpretation. However, in order to formulate the interpretations, one needs to understand the context and the era where the letters were written.

Narrative does not just heal, it opens new rifts – first the irresolvable plurality of stories, and then the opposition between the organizing power of imagination and the will.<sup>243</sup>

*The KL system was a great transformer of values. Its history is a history of these mutations, which normalized extreme violence, torture and murder. And this history will continue to be written and*

---

<sup>240</sup> Wachsmann 2016, 18.

<sup>241</sup> *ibid*, 625.

<sup>242</sup> Kearnley 2002, 60.

<sup>243</sup> Wood 2002, 4–5.

*it will keep on living, and so will the memory of those who were its witnesses, its perpetrators and its victims.*<sup>244</sup>

This chapter about Mirek's letters is a tiny part of this continuum. Michael Toolan compares a text to "a forest containing many potential routes to sense making, "rather than a path, which would be 'like a pre-determined best route through a heterogeneous and chaotic environment'".<sup>245</sup> When writing about camp letters and searching for the narration embedded in them, I am surrounded by not only Mirek's letters, but also stories of eye witnesses, documents and historical research. This experience compares easily to walking in a forest - sometimes in a pathless forest.

I do not know if Mirek ever read the letters he wrote from Sachsenhausen afterwards. If he did, he might have been able to relate to Milan Šimečka. This is how he reflects on his prison letters afterwards:

*I'm sitting at home at my desk and reading what I actually wrote then and wondering why I wrote it and what to do with it. There is an enormous difference between the two situations: the one in which I wrote it and the one in which I'm reading it, and that difference perturbs me.*<sup>246</sup>

## 4.9 References

- Brauer, Juliane. *Musik im Konzentrationslager Sachsenhausen*. Berlin: Metropol Verlag, 2008.
- Bruner, Jerome. *Labov and Waletzky Thirty Years On*. In *Journal of Narrative and Life History*, Volume 7, Numbers 1–4. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, pp. 61–68, 1997.
- Demetz, Peter: *Prague in Danger: Years of German Occupation 1939–45: Memories and History, Terror and Resistance, Theater and Jazz, Film and Poetry, Politics and War*. Farrer, Straus and Giroux: New York, 2008.
- Douglas, Christina. *Kärlek per korrespondens. Två förlovade par under andra hälften av 1800-talet*. Carlsson Bokförlag. Stockholm, 2011.
- .Eiranen, Reetta. *Kirjeet ajan ja paikan tunteikkaina ylittäjinä*. In *Niin & näin*, vol. 2, 2016, 43–46.
- Havel, Václav: *Letters to Olga* [Translated by Paul Wilson]. Faber and Faber: London, 1991.
- Kearnley, Richard: *Between Tradition and Utopia: the Hermeneutical Problem of the Myth*, On Paul Ricoeur, edited by David Wood. Oxon: Routledge, pp. 55–73, 2002.
- Keravuori, Kirsi: *Arki kirjekoressa: Itseoppineet kirjeenkirjoittajat 1800-luvulla*. *Niin&näin* vol. 2, 2016. 48–52.
- Keravuori, Kirsi: *Saaristolaisia: Elämä, arki ja vanhemmuus laivuriperheen kirjeenvaihdoissa*. Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura. Helsinki. 2017.

---

<sup>244</sup> Wachsmann 2016, 646.

<sup>245</sup> Toolan 2016, 57.

<sup>246</sup> Šimečka 2002, 81.

- Klemperer, Victor: *The Language of the Third Reich, LTI – Lingua Tertii Imperii, A Philologist's Notebook*. trans. Martin Barty. Continuum. London & New York, 2006.
- Krook, Helga: *In Search of a Name. Memory Movements* [ from German by Ian Bild, in collaboration with Dana Johnson] *Liminalities: A Journal of Performance Studies* Vol. 14, No. 3 (2018), pp. 12-22. <http://liminalities.net/14-3/name.pdf>
- Krook, Helga: *Minnesrörelser. Elise Adrian, Linda Beel, Hilde Lindroth, Anja Nachaum, Greta Wiedrow*. Valand Academy, University of Gothenburg, Autor förlag. 2015.
- Kulmala, Johanna: *The whole history of suffering calls for narrative: the question of narrative structure in concentration camp letters*. In *Scriptum 2017, Volume 4, Number 2/2017*. University of Jyväskylä / Art and Culture Studies. Jyväskylä. pp. 17–49.
- Levi, Primo: *Hukkuneet ja pelastuneet* [translated into Finnish by Riikka Kankkunen]. Helsinki: Artemisia edizioni, 2009), 103-104
- Mastny, Vojtech: *The Czechs Under Nazi Rule, The Failure of National Resistance 1939-1942*. Columbia University Press. New York & London. 1971.
- Morsch, Günter & Ley, Astrid (ed.): *Das Konzentrationslager Sachsenhausen 1936–1945: Ereignisse und Entwicklungen*. Berlin: Metropol Verlag. 2010.
- Ricœur, Paul: *Time and Narrative*, vol. 3, 1990. Chicago & London. The University Press of Chicago. 1990.
- Ricœur, Paul. *Tulkinnan teoria. Diskurssi ja merkityksen lisä [Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning]*. Tutkijaliitto: Helsinki: 2000.
- Šimečka, Milan: *Letters from Prison*. Twisted Spoon Press. Prague 2002.
- Stanley, Liz. *The Epistolarum. On Theorizing Letters and Correspondences*. *Auto/Biography* 12:3, pp. 201-235, 2004.
- Swanström, André: *Hakaristin ritarit: suomalaiset SS-miehet, politiikka, uskonto ja sotarikokset*. Atena: Jyväskylä. 2018
- Tampke, Jürgen: *Czech-German Relations and the Politics of Central Europe From Bohemia to the EU*. Palgrave Macmillan: Houndmills, Basingstoke and New York. 2003.
- Thomas, William I. & Znaniecki, Florian: *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*. University of Illinois Press: Urbana and Chicago. 1996.
- Wachsmann, Nikolaus: *A History of the Nazi Concentration Camps*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. New York. 2016.
- Wood, David. *Introduction: Interpreting Narrative*. On Paul Ricœur, edited by David Wood. Oxon: Routledge, pp. 1-19, 2002.

#### 4.9.1 Unpublished Sources

Personal communications with

Mrs. Alena Benešová 21.10.2011

Mrs. Věra Chrastná 25 February 2012.

Dr. Marek Ďurčanský, 6 March 2014.

Ing. Jaroslav Franc, 25 June 2015

Ing. Karel Hýbek, 20 November 2014 and 19 February 2015.

Mrs. Kvapilová and Mrs. Linková 18.10.2011.

Prof. David Novotný, 20 October 2016

Prof. Jan Šabršula April 8<sup>th</sup> 2014

Ing. Petr Šidlof 19 October 2012.

Prof. Vojmir Srdečný, 20 February 2013, 18 June 2013, 6 March 2014 and 11 June 2014.

Dr. Veronika Sušová-Salminen 26.11.2013

E-mail from Marek Ďurčanský 29 October 2018.

E-mail from Jana Folprechtová 1 March 2019.

E-mail from Jana Viktorínová (City of Prague Museum), 1 November 2018.

#### 4.9.2 Archival and online sources

Instructions about Correspondence to Prisoners. D 30 A/25. (Oranienburg: Sachsenhausen Museum and Archive).

Matrika Doktorů XI, č. 4901 – 5500, r. 1945 – 1946. (Prague: Charles University Archive)

Trial of Major War Criminals. 40 vols. Nuremberg: International Military Tribunal, 1945-1946.  
[http://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military\\_Law/pdf/NT\\_Vol-XXXIX.pdf](http://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military_Law/pdf/NT_Vol-XXXIX.pdf)

Article about Sachsenhausenlied at holocaust music web page

<http://holocaustmusic.ort.org/places/camps/central-europe/sachsenhausen/sachsenhausenlied/>

## 5 Two Maries and Pavel – Resolution

### 5.1 Introduction

*Promiňte, milostivá paní, že Vás obtěžuji těmito úvahami, ale vím, že máte pro tyto věci mimořádné pochopení. Je potřeba, aby se člověk někdy člověku blízkému, jako jste Vy pro mně, řekl nebo napsal o svých nejnvtřnějších myšlenkách a tužbách. Těším se na shledanou a na rozhovor s Vámi. (10. června 1946)*

*(Excuse me, madam, that I bother you with these considerations, but I know that you have an extraordinary understanding of these things. It is necessary that person can speak or write to a close person like you are for me about his inner thoughts and desires. I look forward to see you and chat with you. (10 June 1946))*

Mařenka, Mirek's mother, is the one to whom Pavel narrates his life, and as we see in the quote above, he considers Mařenka his friend. A few decades later, Pavel's wife Marie Pavlíková narrates his life after his death to Sylva Šimsová in London (2-6 February 1990)

This chapter contains far less analysis than the previous ones. One reason for that is the smaller amount of text, only 7 letters from Pavel to Mařenka have preserved. Another, maybe more remarkable reason is that I have discussed some of the same themes in chapter 2, when analysing Pavel's letters to Mirek, written in the 1930s. The same or very similar topics are still valid in this later correspondence between Pavel and Mařenka.

Just like the letters discussed thus far in the previous chapters, also many of these letters follow L&W. I will give examples later. This chapter is result and resolution of the master story, narrated by the letters because it reveals what happens to Mirek and Pavel after the war.

An extract from my notes:

*I am leafing through my research materials, the letter collection from Czechoslovakia. Today I have had a couple of letters from 1947 in programme. People have lived in a transition period, the following year everything would change. This shows to some extent in the themes of the letters. The country and its citizens are moving on with their lives and write about it. Nobody knows yet that in 1948 Czechoslovakia would choose socialism or drift into it.*

*By chance this correspondence ends beautifully with an invitation to a wedding and words: "When you have time, please write to me a bit."*

*Did Mařenka still reply to Pavel? And did Pavel send one more letter? We will never know. TV series, films and literature direct us to expect an ending. Th ending can be either good or bad, happy or miserable. We want well-planned ends, we have seen the typical ones very often.*

*The real life, instead, ends the stories with emptiness. It is not even a bad open ending. It is not an ending at all.*

*But today I decide that my research will have at least a satisfactory ending, if a good one is not possible. (9 December 2018)*

## 5.2 Silence between Pavel and Mirek

Kirsi Keravuori discusses the silence of letters and emphasises that silence reveals not only the areas that the writer does not want to discuss but also the areas that the writer cannot see or, does not consider relevant.<sup>247</sup>

The silence between Pavel and Mirek after the war years is difficult to interpret for us, today's readers. But it is possible that it was not an actual silence. Jiří Burget, one of the earliest scouts close to Pavel, has said that it is difficult to describe the years between 1936 and 1948. No correspondence or other documents are available. Everything was destroyed by Pavel or he persuaded his wife to do so. The reason for this was the political situation and Pavel's detention in 1952.<sup>248</sup>

Maybe the letters Mirek wrote disappeared in the same purge. That is at least one plausible explanation. Despite the lack of documents, it is still possible to learn some small pieces about Pavel's life.

This is how I have created a fictional scene about the theme of burning papers. The text is entirely my own creation but it is based on stories of people who knew that Pavel destroyed his personal papers by burning them.

*Pavel would never open her drawers. He would never enter the most private areas of another human, not even those of his own wife. Why did he, a priest and archivist, who spent most of his life in archives and libraries burn his life? A younger colleague of his in Strahov library had once asked that and he had answered:*

*"I see enough paper at work, I don't need it at home."*

*Some other time he had said:*

*"There are other ways of saving information than keeping papers at home."*

*Did Pavel hide a part of his life in the endless shelves of Strahov library? Maybe he wrote something else on a box and nobody would guess what it contains? One day someone would open it, with different expectations. A small hope lives in me that Mirek's letters to Pavel would be discovered one day.*

Pavel's letter from the summer of 1929 indicates that he used to burn papers even in his youth. However, this extract can be interpreted metaphorically, too.

*Zase jsem páčil. Doktor to vysvětluje tím, že mám zúžení srdce, které nedodává do závitů cerebrospinalního dostatek krve a tím, že mám řadu utkvělých myšlenek. Mezi jinými jsem spálil zlomky umírajícího, takže Ti posílám zbytečky abys posoudil, rozebral a mně poslal(!)*

*(I have burned again. The doctor explains that I have a narrower heart and it does not carry enough blood to medulla oblongata and that I have many fixed ideas. Among other things, I have*

---

<sup>247</sup> Keravuori 2017, 107.

<sup>248</sup> Burget 2009, 31.

*also burnt pieces/fragments of the dying one so I will send you the left overs so that you can judge and analyze and send to me(!).*<sup>249</sup>

One of the scouts whom Pavel guided in his Buštěhrad years, Vladimír Zikmund, gave me an interview on 23rd February 2016. For some reason Pavel had felt special affiliation with Vladimír, and he used to say to him: We are friends because we are both from a baker family<sup>250</sup>

Vladimír Zikmund also told me that even though Pavel was still a priest in Buštěhrad, he was changing his personal opinions about church because he had studied other sources. The reason for leaving Zeliv was that Pavel had studied the Bible in depth and did not like some of the teachings of the church which either did not, according to his understanding, belong to the original Christian faith or were against common sense.<sup>251</sup>

These are the small but relevant snippets of narration that I have been able to trace back about Pavel's life during the years which have left no letters or other documents behind.

### 5.3 Introduction to Mařenka and Pavel

*Neznám nic krásnějšího nad to, abychom mohli ideály evangelia plnit cele, úplně. V tom je smysl našeho života, úkol životní a zároveň štěstí. A na tom záleží i štěstí národa našeho a celého lidstva. My kteří máme světlo Páně jsouce zavázáni k tomu abychom skutky i slovy to širili.*

*Věřím, že i Tebe se dotklo světlo, které ozařuje každého člověka (Jan 1) a měrou neobyčejnou, jen je potřeba očisty niterné, očisty, která spálí vše co je zbytečné a brzdící. Přiblížilo se království Boží, připravujeme cestu Páně, čiňme pokání. Říše dobra musí zvítězit.*

*V Kristu Tě zdraví, Tvůj Pavel*

*Želiv 10. listopadu 1938*

*(I don't know anything more beautiful than for us to fulfill the ideals of the gospel wholly and completely. That is the meaning of our lives, the task of living as well as happiness. On this depends the happiness of our nation and all mankind. We who have the light of the Lord being obliged to spread it by deeds and words.*

*I believe that you were also touched by the light which illuminates every man (John 1), and by an extraordinary degree, you just need inner cleansing, the cleansing which burns everything that is unnecessary and hindering. The kingdom of God is approaching, we are preparing the way of the Lord, let us repent. Empire of the good must prevail.*

*Greetings in Christ, Yours Pavel)*

The letter above (or an extract from it) actually belongs to the pre-war correspondence between Pavel and Mirek, introduced in chapter 2, but I chose to place it here, in order to lead the reader back to Pavel's world. This is also the newest preserved letter from Pavel to Mirek.

---

<sup>249</sup> I have made two comments concerning the translations of this quotation as footnotes. See chapter 3.7.

<sup>250</sup> Personal communication with Vladimír Zikmund. 23 February 2016.

<sup>251</sup> *ibid.*

This chapter, as an entity is also one type of parallel text to Mirek's narration from Sachsenhausen, as we will see later. The letter extract above is like a prelude to what would soon happen in Czechoslovakia because it refers to the nation.

Quite recently, in October 1938, the Nazi occupation of the Sudetenland had begun. Of course, there was no way of knowing for Pavel and Mirek that in the very near future the whole of Czechoslovakia would be occupied (in March 1939) and the Second World War would break out.

In the same year, however, Pavel and his scouts made progress in their training. They built two cottages in the forests in the area of Zeliv, in 1938.

The cottages were used as premises for educational trainings, such as holding lectures and arranging book discussions, as well as traditional scouting. When Marie Pavlíková reminisced the days of the past with Sylva Šimsová, she said that now there is only forest, no cottages any more.<sup>252</sup>



**FIGURE 14** Marie Pavlíková walking in the forest where the cottages once were. (Courtesy of Zdenka Burgetová)

---

<sup>252</sup> Pavlíková 1990, 14–15.

## 5.4 Early war time

In chapter 4.7. I discuss Mirek's letter from Sachsenhausen, where he asks if his parents have answered Pavel's letter. That particular letter from Pavel has perished but Mirek's question reveals that the correspondence has been more active than what we can decipher from the remaining letters.

In the following letter from Pavel to Mařenka, L&W is clearly visible. Pavel approaches Mirek's mother during the difficult time, Mirek's imprisonment.

Abstract

*Želiv 27. září 1940*

*(Zeliv 27 September 1940)*

Orientation

*Milostivá paní,*

*Poněvadž nemám delší čas zprávy od Vás zase si dovoluji psátí.*

*(Dear Madam,*

*Since I haven't heard from you for some time, I have presumed to write.)*

Complicating action

*Při smrti p. W mě zatanulo na mysli štěstí, které jsme před dvanácti léty prožívali v domku pí. V v Chotěboři. Pí. W prožívala radostné chvíle lásky. Já a Mírek chvíle nadšení pro život, práci, oběti a lásky ke všemu živému, k celému vesmíru a s námi pracoval též Dr. S, též chlapci L. A dnes jak to mění pí. W v bezútěšném bolu, chlapci Liškovi bez rodičů a v těžkém postavení, Mírek v pracovním táboře, Dr. S vstupuje do manželství a já- ustarán a utlučen nesu tíži vědecké a ostatní práce sám a sám.*

*(The death of Mr. W reminded me of the happiness that we had twelve years ago in the house of Mrs. V in Chotěboř. Mrs. W experienced the joyful moments of love. I and Mírek experienced moments of enthusiasm for life, work, sacrifice and love for all living things and for the whole universe, also Dr. S worked with us and also the boys of L family. And today, it is totally different, Mrs.W is in bleak sorrow, the Liška boys without parents in a difficult situation, Mírek in a labor camp, Dr. S enters the married life, and here I am worried and beaten, I carry the weight of scientific and other work by myself. )*

Evaluation

*Tolik jsem se těšil na spolupráci s Mírkem tolik jsme si rozuměli. Tak krátké bylo štěstí. Jen mladistvý idealismus a jeho hlavní náplň leží tíživě na mě a každým dnem se nesou vzpomínky k Vám a k Mírkovi a jistě k Bohu, aby Mírek statečně prošel utrpením a obtížemi.*

*(I was so looking forward to working with Mírek, we understood each other well. So short was the happiness. Only youthful idealism and its fulfillment is haunting me, and every day I carry*

*memories to you and Mirek and surely to God that Mírek bravely goes through suffering and difficulties.)*

Result or resolution

*Pracuji abychom jednou mohli společně zasednout k práci a s Vámi je radostně sdělovat jako kdysi s našimi výsledky.*

*(I work so that once we both can sit down together and share it with you joyfully as before we shared our results with you.)*

Coda

*Uctivě zdravím p. řídícího.*

*Srdečně Vás zdraví,*

*Pavel Křivský*

*(I send my respects to Mr. Headmaster.*

*Heartily greetings,*

*Pavel Křivský )*

Mr. Headmaster is Mařenka's husband and Mirek's father Josef. The results are most likely a reference to memories from youth and childhood, such as planting wild plants in mother's garden. Pavel wants Mařenka to know that he still cherishes these memories.<sup>253</sup>

5 weeks earlier Mařenka and Josef have received this letter from their son:

*Den 22. September 1940*

*Meine Teuersten! Auch ich bin jetzt völlig zufrieden mit dem Empfang der Briefe. Vor einer Woche erhielt ich einen von Dana und gestern konnte ich mich freuen über einem Briefe von Euch. Das Geld braucht Ihr nicht so oft zu schicken. Eine Hälfte genügt mir. Dana will nicht begreifen dass ich Ihr nicht schreiben kann, auch wenn ich wollte. Mir geht es ganz gut. Gott sei dank bin ich immer gesund und was den Aufenthalt hier betrifft – man gewöhnt sich so, dass man sich nur schwer ein anderes Leben noch vorstellen kann. Auch hier hat das Leben seine fröhliche Seiten neben den unangenehmen und so sieht es hier aus wie überall dort, wo viele junge Leute zusammen sind. Ich freue mich auf neue Berichten von Euch. Es küsst Euch Euer M.*

*(22 September 1940*

*My dearest ones! I have also been totally happy with the letters I have received. A week ago I received one from Dana and yesterday I had the chance to enjoy a letter from you. You do not need to send money so often. Half [of what you send] is enough. Dana will not understand that I cannot write to her, even though I would like to. I am doing quite well. Thank God I am always healthy and when it comes to staying here – one gets used to it so that one can hardly imagine*

---

<sup>253</sup> See chapter 3.1.1

*another kind of life anymore. Also here life has its happy sides along with the unpleasant ones and it seems here like in any place where plenty of young people are gathered together. I am looking forward to news from you. Kisses you your M.*

Bohemia-Moravia made significant contributions to the German war effort. Their mines, factories and railways serviced German requirements and the population was obliged to work at German war production, partly even as forced labour.<sup>254</sup> The correspondence between Mařenka and Pavel, as well as Mirek's letters from Sachsenhausen, are a small window to the private life of people living in these circumstances.

## 5.5 After the war

The letters Pavel wrote to Mařenka during the years right after the war reflect people's strong intentions to return to normal life, graduate, work and find a life-partner.

Abstract

*Praha 13. října 1945*

Orientation

*Milostivá paní,*

*Děkuji Vám srdečně za milý dopis. Kdykoliv čtu Vaše řádky, vždy si vzpomínám na krásné a velmi milé doby let studentských v Chotěboři a na všechny události, ke kterým se často vracím a z nichž stále myšlenkově těžím.*

*(Dear Mrs.,*

*Thank you kindly for the nice letter. Whenever I read your lines, I always remember the beautiful and very nice time of my student years in Chotěboř and all the events that I often go back to and from which I still benefit intellectually.)*

Here we see how the old Europe is still living on in Pavel's memory, the war is in the past and Pavel, as well as his friends Mařenka and Mirek are in front of the new Europe, which would be less mobile and open and more insular than the Europe of the 1910s where Mařenka had lived her young adult life and where Pavel and Mirek were born.<sup>255</sup>

Complicating action

*Právě v posledních dnech jsem přemýšlel o Mírkovi a říkal jsem si, že ho zase musím zavolat telefonem, abychom se sešli. Po dlouhé době jsme se sešli v srpnu a to jen na krátko, poněvadž i on i já jsem pospíchali. Mluvili jsem jen všeobecně a spíše jsme se dotýkali nynějších problémů a tu jsem zjistili, že se nějak v ohledu náboženském rozcházejí. Slíbili jsme si, že se sejdem a že si o jednotlivých otázkách pohovoříme.*

*(Just in recent days I've been thinking about Mirek and I thought that I must call him again by phone so that we meet. After a long time, we met in August and then only for a short time,*

---

<sup>254</sup> Judt 2010, 14.

<sup>255</sup> See Judt 2010, 236.

*because he and I both rushed. We just talked in general and we mainly just touched on current problems, and there I discovered that somehow we differ in religious matters. We promised each other that we would meet and talk about individual issues.)*

These words reflect the busy life of the young people who are ready to return to their normal rhythm after the long war years.

#### Evaluation

*Bylo by opravdu Mírka škoda, kdyby měl utonout v průměrném životě. Stavěli jsme si už v mládí velmi vysoké cíle a snažili jsme se sledovat cíle všelidské chtěli jsme býti lékaři těl a duší a chtěli jsme přinést lidstvu dary co nejlepší a nejkrásnější. Kolikrát jsem o tom hovořovali jdouce do Kacíř. Víím, že Mírek má mimořádné schopnosti, aby toto všechno uskutečnil. A také život ho nechal projít utrpeními, takže opravdu má předpoklady mnoho vytvořit.*

*(It would be a real pity for Mirek if he were to be drowned in the average life. Already in our youth, we set ourselves very high goals and we tried to pursue goals common to all humankind so we wanted to be doctors for bodies and souls and wanted to bring the best and the most beautiful gifts to the mankind. How many times we talked about it while walking to Kacíře. I know that Mírek has a unique capacity to do all this. And life let him pass through suffering, so he really has the prerequisites to create a lot.)*

#### Result or resolution

*Ovšem hlavním předpokladem je, aby si jasně a dobře rozřešil otázku vztahu k ženě a myslím, že právě jemu je bráněno od žen, aby tyto všechny otázky mohl si rozřešit a aby mohl dále pokračovat. Sám ze své zkušenosti víím, jak je důležité, aby člověk měl i stále velké myšlenky před očima i aby měl dostatek vnitřního klidu a oproštění od všech věcí vnějších. A právě nynější společnost se stará, aby lidé neměli dostatek vnitřního klidu. Muž zneklidňuje ženu a obráceně žena zneklidňuje muže a tak uniká mnoho hodnot kladných z lidského života. Prosím Vás nehněvejte se, že se tak rozepisuji a o těchto problémech. Jsou to myšlenky, které mně stále provázejí a o jich pravdivosti se tak často přesvědčuji.*

*(But the main requirement is that he solves, clearly and well, the question of the relationship to women, and I think that women prevent him from resolving these questions so that he could continue further. I myself from my experience know how important it is both that one always keeps one's sight on great ideas, and has enough inner peace and liberation from all things external. And nowadays society makes sure that people do not have enough inner peace. Man disturbs woman and vice versa woman agitates man and therefore many positive values escape from human life. I beg you not to be angry that I write about these issues. These are ideas that always accompany me, and so often I find they are true.)*

*Velice bych přál Mírkovi, aby prošel šťastně všemi obtížemi a aby hodně z našich myšlenek a plánů uskutečnil. I když tolikrát jsme zklamáváni lidmi nesmíme ztrácet víru možnost pokroku v lidstvo. I když tolikrát se nám nedaří uskutečnit to co jsme chtěli uskutečnit přece nesmíme ztrácet onen vnitřní oheň a vnitřní přesvědčení, že alespoň něco musíme uskutečnit a předat dálším.*

*(I would very much like Mirek to go happily through all difficulties and so that he can implement many of our thoughts and plans. Even if we are disappointed by people many times, we must not lose faith in the progress of humanity. Although many times we fail to accomplish what we wanted to accomplish, we must not lose that internal fire and inner conviction that we need to accomplish at least something and pass it on to others.)*

Coda

*Pavel Křivský*

*Velice rád bych se s Vámi sešel a pohovořil si, poněvadž rozhovor s Vámi je mně vždy milý. Budu celý příští týden v Praze a tak se můžeme setkat kdykoliv se Vám to bude hodit, a kdekoliv se Vám to bude hodit. Odpoledne by ste mohla býti u mně v Břevnově. Až přijedete do Prahy buď zatelefonuje na č. 403-56 nebo mně napište kde bychom se sešli a v kolik hodin.*

*Pozdravuje p. Řídícího, jak se mu vede? Je zdrav- už jsem ho tak dlouho neviděl a také bych si s ním někdy rád pohovořil.*

*Srdečně Vás i p. řídícího zdraví zcela oddaný*

*Pavel Křivský*

*(I would love to meet you and would like to chat with you because conversation with you is always nice to me. I'll be all next week in Prague, so we can meet whenever it's convenient to you, and wherever it's convenient to you. In the afternoon you could come to Břevnov. When you come to Prague either call telephone number 403-56, or write to me where we meet and at what time.*

*Greetings to Mr. Headmaster, how is he? Is he healthy, I have not seen him for so long and sometimes, I would really like to talk to him, too.*

*Cordial greeting to You and Mr. Headmaster, totally devoted*

*Pavel Křivský)*

Coda is the particularly interesting part in this letter. It is essential for the social relations because it includes suggesting a meeting. Also L&W recognises the significance of the coda:

*The Coda is a functional device for returning the verbal perspective to the present moment. This is accomplished by a variety of means, so that the codas cannot be identified by such simple tag lines as "And they lived happily ever after."<sup>256</sup>*

Mařenka is part of Pavel's life also during the turning point where he both completes his dissertation and leaves the Roman Catholic church.<sup>257</sup> It is worth noting that none of the people I have interviewed about Pavel ever mentions Mařenka or Mirek. The reason remains unknown.

*Velmi často vzpomínám na naše poslední setkání. Velice jsem se osvěžil v milém a přátelském ovzduší, které mně přivolalo krásné chvíle našeho mládí a našich ideálů v Chotěboři. Bylo to pro*

---

<sup>256</sup> Labov & Waletzky 1967, 39–40.

<sup>257</sup> See Kopřiva 2009.

*mně neobyčejně povzbuzující když jsem našel u Vás pochopení pro svou novou cestu životem.  
(Buštěhrad, 21.listopadu 1945)*

*(Very often I remember our last meeting. I was very refreshed in a warm and friendly atmosphere, which recalled beautiful moments of our youth and our ideals in Chotěboř. It was extremely encouraging to me when I found in you an understanding for my new way of life.  
(Buštěhrad, 21 November 1945))*

At this point Mirek is still in touch with Pavel.

*S Mírkem jsem hovořil dosti dlouho a on sám začal o svých starostech s mužnou otevřeností a poctivostí. Překvapuje mně s jakou nesmírnou dávkou citu uvažuje o všem a jak všechno je právě citovou stránkou. Přece mně však imponuje jeho poctivost, která mu velí, aby neustupoval tam, kde je poután citem.*

*(I spoke with Mirek for long enough and he began to talk about his worries with manly openness and honesty. I am surprised that he thinks with such an enormous dose of emotion about everything and that everything is just an emotional side. Surely, he impressed me with his honesty, which commands him not to retreat where he is drowned by feelings.)*

But Pavel is sensing that Mirek is taking distance from him, his thoughts and influence and moving on to live his own life.

*Jistě by tato dívka pozvedla Mírka k myšlenkovému pohybu a tvoření. Zdá že Mírek ve svém myšlenkovém vývoji poněkud ustrnul a že se nesnaží jítí dál, nýbrž že mu stačí některé myšlenky, které získal ve svých studijních letech u svých přátel, kteří vyšli z okruhu myšlení křesťanského.*

*(Surely this girl would elevate Mírek to intellectual movement and production/creation. It seems that Mírek's mental development stagnates somewhat, and that he does not try to go further on, that only some ideas suffice him, those are the ideas that he gained in his years of study with his friends, who came from the circle of Christian thought.)*

## 5.6 Leaving the church, entering the archives

What we do know for sure is that Pavel visited the Vatican and spent some time there in 1937, as I have discussed in chapter 3.1.2. I have been calling the archives and even the vicarage of Premonstratensian order, talked to an exceedingly polite and helpful priest who was willing to help. He even wrote down Pavel's name, just in case it appears in the archives during his studies.

Unfortunately, the inquiries in the archives and museums of the Vatican have not been successful thus far. The friendly Premonstratensian priest told me that many documents have perished in the Vatican for various reasons, one of them being ignorance of their value and importance for researchers.

I will, however, keep contacting the archives of the Vatican. Maybe one day, if not I, then someone else will find archival documents about Pavel's stay in Rome.

## Abstract

*Buštěhrad 21.1.1946*

Orientation/Complicating action/News

*Milostivá paní,*

*Děkuji srdečně za milý dopis i za starost o můj byt v Praze. Byl bych velice rád kdybych už i v tomto ohledu měl po starosti, poněvadž to budu brzy potřebovati. Těším se až Mirek zase na nějaký čas bude v Praze na vojně, že si najdeme příležitost k rozhovorům, Má jistě v nynějším povolání mnoho práce a při jeho svědomitosti a při tom, že má tolik na starosti, jistě je to na něho hodně. Mirek byl vždycky svědomitý a práce ho těšila, vím jak se těšil na své poslání lékařské a jistě jeho povolání ho přivede, až přejdou začáteční starosti a obtíže k přemýšlení, zejména když od lékařských kapacit začíná se projevovati značný zájem o filosofii a etiku. Bělohrádek ve své rektorské přednášce zdůraznil potřebu hledat nové, vědecké směry v etice a ve svém projevu v Londýně jasně ukázal na popudy filosofické a etické jak v medicíně tak ve všem světovém dění. Nadmíru zajímavá kniha Herčíkova a Úlehlova ukazují, že dnešní vědci ze všech oborů docházejí k tomu, že je potřeba pokusiti se o nové etické formulace a že je třeba hledati nová východiska pro stavbu názoru na život a na svět.*

*(Dear Mrs.*

*Thank you kindly for the nice letter and your concern for my apartment in Prague. I would be very happy if I did not have to worry about it because I'll need it soon. I look forward to Mirek's presence in Prague again for his military service, and that we can have an opportunity to meet, Certainly he has a lot of work in his current profession and given his conscientiousness and the fact that he is in charge of so much, he must be very busy. Mirek was always conscientious and he enjoyed work, I know how he looked forward to his medical mission and certainly his profession will help him to think, after the initial worries and problems, especially when the medical capacities are beginning to show considerable interest in philosophy and ethics. Bělohrádek in his Chancellor's lecture stressed the need to seek new, scientific directions in ethics and in his speech in London, he clearly showed the philosophical and ethical impulses both in medicine and in all world affairs. The extremely interesting books by Herčík and Úlehla show that today's scientists of all disciplines attend to the need to try new ethical formulations and the need to seek new bases for formulating the view of life and the world.)*

Pavel's writing style and also the topic of the letter combine here the orientation and complicating action, as well as news. He is living a hectic life with several changes. He is moving to Prague and soon he is to work in the archive of the ministry of internal affairs.<sup>258</sup>

Evaluation

*Je to velice potěšitelné, že zejména v medicíně kde panoval tuhý materialismus často spojený s požitkářstvím, začíná se svítati a jsem přesvědčen, že taková přemýšlivá hlava jako je Mirek jistě najde si cestu když ne hned, ale za nějakou dobu jistě, k tomu, aby začal zase uvažovati tam kde kdysi přestal a že novými popudy získá zase novou chuť do úvah, které kdysi patřily k podstatě jeho života. Vzpomínám si, že kdysi mně psal, že přemýšlení o vážných věcech je pro něho*

---

<sup>258</sup> Kopřiva 2009, 10.

nezbytností a velice se vinil, že není v této práci tak vytrvalý jak by bylo potřeba, ale to všechno přemohl a bylo vždycky pro mně požitek čísti jeho dopisy, poněvadž vždycky se snažil o poctivé formulace jak ve svém etickém životě tak i ve sféře názorové. Je to zajímavé jak se každý člověk jinak rozvíjí a jak se cesty života různě kříží a motají. Je však dobré když je lidem dáno, aby na cestách svého života, který často prochází mnoha omyly a bludy, měli přátelský kruh duší. Které by jim rozuměly, které by dovedly jemně a taktně pomáhati a nechtěli prosazovati svou vůli a své názory. Pozoruji, že i mezi přáteli je málo ohleduplnosti, že sobectví, které je v každém člověku, se snaží bezohledně uplatňovati své myšlenky, své názory, bez ohledu na strukturu druhého.

*(It's very gratifying, particularly in medicine where there was stiff materialism often associated with self-indulgence, it is starting to dawn on and I am convinced that such a thoughtful head as Mirek will certainly find its way if not now, but in some time sure to start to think again where it had stopped and new impulses give it a new lease on reflection that once belonged to the essence of his life. I remember that he once wrote to me that reflecting about serious matters is a necessity for him and he blamed himself a lot that he was not so persistent in this work as needed, but he overcame it all and it was always a pleasure for me to read his letters, as he always pushed for honest formulations both in his ethical life and in the sphere of opinion. It's interesting how each person develops differently, and how different ways of life cross and wind up. However, it is good when it is given to people, on the ways of their life which often goes through many errors and heresies, to have a cicle of friendly souls. Souls that understand them, that are able to help them gently and tactfully and that do not want to assert their will and their views. I see that even among friends is too little consideration, that the selfishness that is in every person is ruthlessly trying to pursue its thoughts and its opinions, regardless of the structure of another.)*

Miniature narration

Častokrát k nám přijde člověk, který potřebuje jenom klidné slovo a my ho svými osobními věcmi trápíme a místo pomoci ho necháváme bez pomoci a často na pokraji záhuby. A kolikrát to člověk udělá a má při tom dobrý úmysl. Vzpomínám si, že jsem se ujal, když jsem přišel do Buštěhradu jednoho nemanželského chlapce, který vyrůstal ve stísněných poměrech a kterého až dosud vydržuji na studiích. Chtěl jsem ho vyvésti z bláta a kalu a proto jsem mu vštěpoval různé zásady, poučoval jsem ho a viděl jsem, že mu stále něco schází. Trápilo mě to a chtěl jsem mu opravdu pomoci a tu jsem poznal, že to dělám špatně. Ve snaze abych mu pomohl nevíšim jsem si toho co se dalo v jeho nitru, ve snaze přivést ho vysoko jsem zapomínal na strukturu jeho nitra a nevěnoval jsem tomu dosti pozornosti. A tak jsem se naučil docela jinak dívat na lidi. Potřebují všichni pomoci, není člověka, který by měl ve všem jasno, kterého by nic netížilo, ale je potřeba, abychom přihlíželi k nitřům těm, kterým chceme pomoci a ne zůstávali na povrchu a vycházeti ze svého já, ze svých tužeb. Musíme vycházeti ze struktury druhého, z jeho tužeb, z jeho představ a pojmů, chceme-li mu pomoci.

*(Often, a person comes to us, who needs just a quiet word and we torture him with our own personal things, and instead of helping him, leave him without assistance, and often on the verge of destruction. And how many times a man will do that with the best of intentions. I remember that when I came to Buštěhrad I took care of an out of wedlock boy who grew up in cramped conditions and whom I support in his studies to this day. I wanted him thrown off the mud and sludge, and so I imparted different principles, educated him but I still saw something missing. It*

*bothered me and I wanted to really help him and then I realized that I was doing wrong. In an effort to help him I ignored what was happening inside him, trying to bring him on high, I forgot the structure of his interior and I did not pay it enough attention. And so I learned to look quite different at people. They all need help, there is no one who would be clear in their mind about everything, who wouldn't be troubled by anything, but we need to look at the internal structure of those who we want to help, and not remain on the surface, proceeding from our self, from our desires. We must go forth (OR: proceed) from the structure of another, from his desires, his ideas and concepts, if we want to help him.)*

Pavel returns back in time and refers to some of the events in the past. This creates a miniature narration in the middle of the main narration of the letter. After that the main narration continues.

#### Resolution

*A tak bych přál Mírkovi, aby měl kruh takových ušlechtilých přátel, kteří by mu dovedli tímto způsobem pomáhati a přál bych to všem lidem. Byl by ten náš život docela radostnější. Právě se nás několik zabývá myšlenkou tyto zásady provést prakticky a hledati spolupracovníky, kteří by dovedli postavit novou etiku a nová pomáhání bližnímu, novou láskou k bližnímu.*

*(And I would like Mirek to have such a noble circle of friends who could help him in this way and I'd wish that to all people. Our life would be a lot more joyful. Just now, a few of us are dealing with the idea of realizing these principles in practice and seeking collaborators who'd be able to build a new ethic and helping new neighbor, a new charity.)*

#### Coda

*Velice bych si s Vám o těchto všech věcech pohovořil a těším se až se zase setkáme. Račte vyříditi pozdrav panu řídícímu.*

*Srdečně Vás zdraví zcela oddaný*

*Pavel Křivský*

*(I would very much to discuss all these matters with you and look forward to meeting again. Kindly send a greeting to Mr. principal.*

*Yours cordially,*

*Pavel Křivský)*

Mařenka was obviously an important person for Pavel and he felt close to her, even though he had grown up and lived through several phases in his own life, by the time he was writing this letter. A few weeks after writing this letter (12 February 1946), Pavel would withdraw from the church.<sup>259</sup> But as I mentioned before, Vladimír Zikmund has told me that Pavel's mind was not in church any more, even as early as during the war years.<sup>260</sup>

---

<sup>259</sup> Kopřiva 2009, 10.

<sup>260</sup> Personal communication with Vladimír Zikmund. 23 February 2016.

Pavel would leave Buštěhrad behind, the village where Vladimír Zikmund made friends with him and where some of the most frightening incidents of Pavel's life had happened, as I have mentioned earlier, Mr Zikmund was a valuable source concerning this phase of Pavel's life, and he told me that he was in high school when the destruction of Lidice took place. He still remembered the empty desks of the boys from Lidice in his class, he had friends from that neighbouring village of Buštěhrad and he used to visit there.<sup>261</sup>

As I have pointed out before, Pavel noticed injustices in the relations between the monastery and the surrounding village.<sup>262</sup> Maybe this tension played a remarkable role in the process where Pavel distanced himself from the church.

In the summer of the same year, Pavel writes with a tone of self-reflection and he also reflects the war which has ended the previous year. As the quotes below show, the letter looks at the present day and future, it combines the questions of Pavel's private life with the contemporary situation in his home country, and he also encompasses different stages of time.

He still bears Mirek and Mirek's future in his mind, even though his own life has gone through a remarkable change. The next three quotes are from Pavel's letter to Mařenka, dated 10 June 1946.

*Přál bych Mírkovi, aby si zase znovu uvědomil všechno to krásné po čem jako středoškolský student toužil. Přál bych mu ono nadšení pro dobrou věc, pro sebe poznání, sebereformu, pro lidstvo, které v sobě měl. Víím, že ideály v něm byly hodně hluboko vkořeněny, že je žil a že je chtěl žít po celý život. Velmi často přemýšlím o tom jak to zařídit, aby zase znovu ožily tak jako kdysi a aby se zase staly náplní jeho života. Opravdový člověk nemůže bez nich býti živ a nežije celý život jestliže nemá život k nim zaměřen.*

*(I wish Mirek to once again realize all the beautiful things he yearned for as a high school student. I wish him that enthusiasm for a good cause, for self-knowledge, for humanity, which he had within himself. I know that the ideals in him were very deep-rooted, that he lived according to them and that he wanted to live according to them for a lifetime. I very often think about how to arrange it, to make them once again come alive as they once did, and make them become the focus of his life again. A real man cannot be without them and does not live a full life if his life is not focused on them.)*

Also the change in his own life is a topic to write to Mařenka.

*V archivní službě pozoruji jak v našem národě je málo pevných lidí. V nouzi a v obtížích se to projevuje. Mohu zblízka vidět do záležitostí bývalého protektorátu a je mně z toho smutno, právě tak jako z dneška. Bylo by potřeba na všech stranách hodně mravných, ideálních, opravdových lidí, kteří by dovedli obětavě pracovat pro náš národ, pro stát a pro lidstvo vůbec. Politiků máme dost, ale málo myslitelů a málo vychovatelů národa. Budeme muset všichni kdo to dobře myslíme nasadit všechny síly pro uvědomovací práci a budeme muset všichni hledat možnosti a prostředky jak tuto práci dobře zařídit.*

---

<sup>261</sup> Personal communication with Vladimír Zikmund. 23 February 2016.

<sup>262</sup> Pavlíková, Marie 2009, 21. and Personal communication with Vladimír Zikmund. 23 February 2016.

*(In my archive service, I observe how, in our nation, there are few solid people. It shows itself in emergency and in difficulty. I see up close into the affairs of the former Protectorate, it makes me sad just like today. It would take a lot of moral, ideal, genuine people everywhere, selflessly laboring for our nation, for the state and for mankind in general. We have enough politicians, but few thinkers and few educators of the nation. We – everyone who means well – will have to deploy all forces for awareness-raising work and we will all have to look for ways and means to do this work well.)*

And he confides to Mařenka about his willingness to marry one day, and that wish was to become true after a few years.

*V poslední době také přemýšlím o tom, že bych se měl také oženit. Ale vidím, že je to neobyčejně těžké. Chci vědecky pracovat, chci pracovat v etickém hnutí, které se začíná organisovati u nás a doufejme, že po celém světě. To všechno znamená že bych musel mít ženu, která by mělo pro tyto věci porozumění a která sama by v tomto ohledu pracovala. Myslím, že by se našla málokterá žena, která by dovedla takové práce spojit a dobře je dělati. Jak jsem se od Vás poučil ženy chtějí mít muže jen pro sebe, což je chyba. Četl jsem v jedné práci Shawově, že žena má být pro muže hybnou pákou, aby své úkoly dobře a harmonicky vyplnil. Myslím, že se o tom málo uvažuje. Kromě toho myslím, že je důležité, aby manželství vznikalo nejen na vášni a na citovém vzplanutí, ale aby bylo výslednicí celého člověka muže i ženy, aby bylo harmonickým činem. Rád bych uskutečnil a položil správné základy pro rodinu, ale myslím, že to asi nepůjde a že budu muset jít sám životem.*

*(Recently, I've been thinking that I should also get married. But I see that it is extremely difficult. I want to work scientifically, I want to work in an ethical movement that is beginning to organize here and hopefully around the world. All this means that I'd have to have a woman who would have an understanding for these things, and who would work in this regard herself. I think I would find hardly any woman who could combine such tasks and do them well. As I learned from you women want a man only for themselves, which is a mistake. I read in one work of Shaw's that a woman should be driving the man to do fulfil his tasks well and harmoniously. I think this is considered too little. In addition, I think it is important that marriage is based not only on passion and emotional outburst, but that it is the result of the whole person, both man and woman, that it is a harmonious act. I would like to carry out and lay the right foundations for the family, but I think that it probably will not work and that I'll have to go alone in life.)*

The following short note from Pavel to Mařenka describe the speed of changes which happened during the first few years after the war. I have heard several personal accounts, e.g. from Karel Hýbek, about young people graduating quickly after the war and moving on with their lives.<sup>263</sup> Exactly the same happened in Mirek's life, he received his degree and soon he also married, which we learn from Pavel.

4. září 1947

*Milostivá paní,*

*Byl jsem na dovolené a tak jsem opožděně četl oznámení Mírkovy svatby. Vzpomínám na něho i na Vás. Přeji mu, aby jeho společný život byl uchráněn všeho zlého. Je to člověk, který pro svou*

---

<sup>263</sup> Personal communication with Karel Hýbek, 20 November 2014.

*dobrotu srdce si zaslouhuje, aby jeho žena mělo pro něho pochopení. Jejich spolupráce bude jistě krásná, budou-li si dobře rozumět. Přál jsem jim to i s ohledem na Vás. Jistě jste prošla cestou velkých starostí a jistě jejich společné štěstí bude nejlepší odměnou za všechny ty překonané bolesti a strasti. Důležitá kapitola Mírkova i Vašeho života je uzavřena. Mírkovi se otevírá nový oddíl života, společného života, nového tvoření, starostí, bolestí, radosti a krásné pohody. A Vám se otevírá také nový oddíl života, kde s radostí budete pozorovat jeho úspěchy, jeho rodinu, jeho snahy, námahy a výsledky. Kéž oba oddíly jsou psané dobře a ke prospěchu Vašemu i ostatních.*

*Až budete míti trochu času napište prosím.*

*Srdečně Vás i p. řídícího zdraví,*

*zcela oddaný*

*Pavel Křivský*

*(4. september 1947*

*Dear Madam,*

*I was on vacation and I belatedly read the announcement of Mirek's wedding. I am thinking of him and of you. I wish him that his marriage life was spared of all evil. He is a man who, for his goodness of heart, deserves a wife that has understanding for him. Their cooperation will surely be beautiful if they understand each other. I wished them well also with regard to you. Surely you have followed the path of great worries and certainly their happiness together will be the best reward for overcoming all the pain and suffering. An important chapter of your and Mirek's life is closed. To Mirek a new chapter of life is opening, common life, a new creation, worry, pain, joy and beautiful well-being. And you are also opening a new part/chapter of life where you'll be happy to see his accomplishments, his family, his effort, exertion and accomplishments. I wish both chapters are well written and to the benefit of your and others.*

*When you have a little bit of time, please write.*

*Entirely devoted,*

*Pavel Křivský)*

Soon after that short and informational letter, Pavel writes again. The complicating action is Pavel's struggles concerning marriage. He doubts that it would ever happen, but as we know, it did happen.

Abstract

*Praha 29. prosince 1947*

*(Prague 29. December 1947)*

Orientation

*Milostivá paní řídící,*

*děkuji Vám srdečně za milý dopis, který jsem dlouho očekával. Velmi často na Vás vzpomínám i na Mírka a jeho nový způsob života. Dostal jsem od něho v říjnu velmi pěkný dopis, z kterého*

vyzařovala spokojenost a radostná pohoda. Měl jsem z něho velikou radost a přál bych si abych mohl také tak jednou psát o svém manželství-to však asi nebude.

*(Dear Madam,*

*Thank you very much for your kind letter, which I have long expected. Very often I think of you and Mirek and his new way of life. In October, I got a very nice letter from him, radiating contentment and joyful peace. I was very happy about it, and I wish I could write like that about my marriage one day -but it will probably not happen.)*

Resolution

*Mám radost z celého Vašeho dopisu a představuji si Vás živě jak prožíváte milou pohodu vnitřní a vnější. Přeji Vám, aby tato pohoda nebyla nikým a ničím rušena. Byla vykoupena mnohými starostmi. Vzpomínám na Vaše utrpení, když Mirek byl v koncentračním táboře, když se rozhodoval o manželství. Všechno přešlo, všechno přebolelo a konečně se ukázalo to, že dobrý člověk- a tím Mirek bezesporu je-k vítězství vede svou pravdu. I on i Vy si zasluhujete, aby osud byl k Vám milostivý.*

*(Your whole letter makes me happy and I imagine vividly how you are experiencing a nice quiet internal and external contentment. I wish you the peace was not disturbed by anyone or anything. It was bought by many worries. I remember your suffering when Mirek was in the concentration camp, when deciding about marriage. Everything passed, everything overcame and finally it came out that a good man - and Mirek indisputably is one - leads his truth to victory. He and you deserve that fate is merciful to you.)*

Evaluation

*Mirkovi bych jedině přál onu palčivou žízeň, onu hledající žízeň po pravdě a po vnitřním životě. Stále musím vzpomínati na ono období jeho studentského života v Chotěboři, kdy vynakládal tolik péče o pěstění vnitřního života a kdy tolik rostl nad své okolí. Bylo to velmi slibné vykročení do života a bylo by škoda, kdyby tato stránka jeho povahy zakrněla. Myslím, že také ještě přijde k uplatnění a domnívám se, že zase Vy byste mohla v tomto ohledu mnoho vykonat. Vzpomínám si živě jak jeho dopisy byly oslavou toho jak Vy mu rozumíte ve vnitřních věcech a tak snad nyní, po přejití všech nepokojů, by se mohla ono krásné spojení obnovit.*

*(To Mirek I only wish that burning thirst, the searching thirst for truth and inner life. I still have to remember the period of his student life in Chotěboř, when he exerted so much care about cultivating the inner life and when he grew so much over his surroundings. It was a very promising step into life and it would be a pity if this aspect of his nature atrophied. I think it'll come to good use again, too, and I think that you could do much in this regard. I remember vividly how his letters were a celebration of how you understand his internal matters and so perhaps now, after overcoming all unrest, that beautiful connection could be restored.)*

*Ptáte se na mou práci. Snažím se poznané myšlenky roznášet a působit tím směrem, aby lidé měli více jeden druhého pochopení, aby jeden s druhým spolupracoval. Práce se mně dobře daří a zejména práce vědecká.*

*(You ask about my work. I'm trying to pass the known thoughts and act that way, so that people*

*have more understanding of one another, to cooperate with one another. My work, especially scientific work, is going well.)*

#### Complicating action

*Jsem spokojen a mohu říci, že jsem šťasten až na to, že bych rád také žil v manželství, ale nemohu se rozhodnout pro něj. Nalézt ženu, která by měla pochopení pro celou moji práci, která je tak mnohostranná a rozmanitá, je opravdu těžký úkol a myslím, že bych kladl na ženu příliš velké požadavky v ohledu filosofickém i etickém. Potřeboval bych spolupracovníci a ne ženu v konvenčním slova smyslu. Zdá se, že jsem příliš rozumářský. Zatím však mám tolik práce, že ani nemám na to čas myslet.*

*(I am satisfied and I can say that I am happy except for the fact that I would like also to live in marriage, but I cannot decide for it . Find the woman who should understand measurement for all my work that is so multifaceted and diverse, it is really a difficult task, and I think I would put on the woman too great demands in respect to philosophical and ethical needs. I need a female co-worker and not in the conventional sense. It seems that I'm too much a thinker. But so far I have been so busy that I do not even have time to think.)*

#### Coda

*Těším se, že se spolu v Praze sejdeme, bude nejlepší když přijedete za mnou do kanceláře v Praze III. Karmelitská 2. Jsem Tam pravidelně od 7 hodin do 7 hodin večer.*

*Pozdravuje pana řídícího a rodinu Mírkovu.*

*Srdečně Vás zdraví zcela oddaný,*

*Pavel Křivský*

*(I am looking forward to meeting in Prague, it's best if you come see me in my office in Prague III. Karmelitská 2. There I am regularly from 7 am to 7 pm.*

*Greetings to Mr. Principal and the family of Mirek.*

*Cordally greets your, your devoted.*

*Pavel Křivský)*

We learn from this letter that not only Mařenka but also Mirek did write to Pavel during these early post-war years too, Pavel mentions Mirek's letter. This letter could be the resolution of the whole Sachsenhausen story, everything has returned to normal and life carries on to a seemingly brighter future. Mirek has a family of his own and Pavel would be pursuing marriage with Marie Pavlíková in the years to come. Marie also became the kind of co-worker to Pavel that he had hoped and wished for.

## 5.7 Return to Lake Kacíře

We know that Pavel would be arrested, as a scout leader he was considered politically dubious and he was sentenced to prison for treasonous anti-state activities. He was accused of transporting people from the People's Republic of Czechoslovakia to the Federal Republic of Germany.<sup>264</sup>

According to the scouts whom I have interviewed, there were no grounds to believe Pavel would have been involved in this type of activity. I have not found any archival documents to prove him guilty, either. Initially he was sentenced for life but he was released in the general amnesty of 1965. Pavel's rehabilitation took place in 1990, about eight months after his death.<sup>265</sup>

The story of Pavel's incarceration is remarkable and worth telling, too. However, the material I am studying covers parts of Pavel's life between the years of 1929 and 1947, so I am not discussing the topic any further.

In my mind I leave Pavel and Mirek to Lake Kacíř, which was significant to them and their friendship.

*Kéž bys mě pochopil a chápal mě jako kdysi v Kacířích! Věř mě, že v mnohém musíme děkovati Kacířům, tam jsem začal přednášet tobě a tam jsem začal velice rychle růst neboť chtěl-li jsem Tobě přednášet musel jsem se neustále vzdělávati. (V Želivě 11. května 1933)*

*(I wish you knew me and understood me as once in Kacíře! Believe me, that in many ways we must thank Kacíře, where I began to lecture you, and there I began to grow very quickly because if I wanted to lecture to you, so I had to constantly educate myself.)*

## 5.8 References

Jiří Burget: Výchovná a obrodná činnost Pavla Křivského mezi mladými lidmi v letech 1936 – 1948. In Kopřiva, Vladimír (ed.). *Pavel Křivský: rádce, učitel, a průvodce životem*. Praha. Kruh. 2009. 29–59.

Judt, Tony. *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945*. Vintage Books. London. 2010.

Keravuori, Kirsi. *Saaristolaisia: Elämä, arki ja vanhemmuus laivuriperheen kirjeenvaihdossa*. SKS. Helsinki. 2017.

Kopřiva, Vladimír (ed.). *Pavel Křivský: rádce, učitel, a průvodce životem*. Praha. Kruh. 2009.

Labov & Waletzky 1967, 39-40. Narrative Analysis: Oral Versions of Personal Experience. In Helm, June (ed.). *Essays on the Verbal and Visual Arts*. Seattle and London. American Ethnological Society. 12–44.

---

<sup>264</sup> Operativní podsvazek. Křivský, Pavel. Available in the archive of the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes in Prague, Czech Republic

<sup>265</sup> Kopřiva 2009, 11.

Pavlíková , Marie: “Pavel Křivský a Kruh (Hovoří v Londýně se Sylvou Šimsovou 2. – 6. 2. 1990)“. In Kopřiva, Vladimír (ed.). *Pavel Křivský: rádce, učitel, a průvodce životem*. Praha. Kruh. 2009. 12– 28.

### 5.8.1 Unpublished Sources

Operativní podsvazek. Křivský, Pavel. Available in the archive of the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes in Prague, the Czech Republic.

Personal communication with Karel Hýbek, 20 November 2014.

Personal communication with Vladimír Zikmund. 23 February 2016.

## 6 Zdenka and Mařenka – Resolution & Looking Back

### 6.1 Introduction

Nina Sääskilähti, who has studied diaries of Finnish women between the years of 1927 and 1989, writes as follows:

*The diary shows the way we always are at the edge of our time, outside of ourselves and our own time, in a state of imbalance. Such a moment of imbalance can be affixed in a diary, but it is only via retrospection and the entity of a life story, or at least across some temporal distance, we can see ourselves wavering at the edges of our own times.*

What makes Zdenka's four letters to Mařenka exceptional is that they are the only entity in this collection where a woman writes to another woman. All other letters are from a man to another man, woman or his family.

This small pile of letters (5 altogether), along with Pavel's letters (discussed in chapter 5) formulate the result and resolution of the whole correspondence (in the model of L&W). They give us a small glimpse of the future of these people and where the early 20<sup>th</sup> century has taken them, to the edge of the post-war Europe. Only František remains a mystery, there are no references to him in these letters from the later decades.

Some of these letters are undated, which makes it impossible to know the exact time when they were written.

Zdenka is also difficult to detect because she has left no traces to archives. Professor Don Sparling from Brno has kindly explored the archives for me, but he did not find Zdenka, either. The address book of the city of Brno registered only the heads of the household (usually the oldest male member of the family) and university students but not housewives.<sup>266</sup>

Hence, Professor Sparling only found Zdenka's husband and daughter (also Zdenka) who studied at the university, but not Zdenka herself, who was Mařenka's friend.<sup>267</sup>

Professor Sparling suggested that I should go and visit the address where Zdenka lived in Brno, which I had tried already. Unfortunately, the current owners of the house knew nothing about the previous inhabitants or the history of the house in general.

These letters do not follow L&W, the narrations are more fragmentary and they do not formulate bigger entities. In a way, the texts reflect a time when the broken world is trying to mend itself again. Maybe also the fact that some of these letters are missing a page or two symbolises the brokenness of the world.

*Nic mě Mařenko nedlužíte- byla jsem ráda že jsem to tak sehnala u toho obchodníka v Brně bych byla zelené kávy dostala dost po 200K myslela jsem že ta známa pí. Doktorka Vaše by ji třeba chtěla, ale věřte, že jsem tehdy únavou ani ten lístek nesvedla- čímž to u mne podtlak stále musím užít aby se zvedl. (24.6.1947)*

---

<sup>266</sup> Personal communication with Don Sparling 12 June 2019.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid.

*(Mařenka, you do not owe me anything-I was glad that I got it that way; at the shop in Brno, I could have gotten enough of green coffee for 200K I thought that your friend Mrs. Doctor might have wanted it, but trust me, I was so tired, it was even difficult to lift a leaf for me –I still have low blood pressure and I have to take pills to increase it. (24 June 1947))*

## 6.2 Zdenka and Labov's Logic of Narrative Analysis

L&W cannot be adapted to Zdenka's letters, but Logic of Narrative Analysis (LONA), which I used in chapter 2, in order to analyse Pavel's letters, is to some extent a useful tool in this context. LONA is introduced in chapter 1.2.

Some of the letters, or parts of them, were written by Zdenka's daughter and namesake, such as this one below. It was written on the last page of mother's letter.

*10.12.1946*

*Milostivá paní,*

*Zajela jsem si koncem října do Prahy asi na 10-dní, jako odměnu za dny práce před státnicí a tak jsem doufala, že se tam s Vámi nějakou šťastnou náhodou setkám. Litovala jsem totiž velmi, že jsem o prázdninách nebyla doma a nezastihla Vás tak u nás. Mamka dosud vzpomíná na noční besedy“. Těší se, že si to vynahradíte příští rok a hodlá si Vás v Brně hezky dlouho podržet.*

*Dovoluji si Vám, milostivá paní, přát příjemné vánoce a prosím, abyste laskavě vyřídila můj pozdrav paní doktorce K!*

*Ruku líbá,*

*Zdenka Č*

*(10 December 1946*

*Dear Mrs.,*

*I went to Prague at the end of October for about 10 days, as a reward for days of work before the state exams and so I was hoping by luck to meet you. I regretted the fact that I was not at home during holidays and I was not able to meet you in our place. Mom still remembers the night meetings. She is looking forward that you two will make it up next year and plans to keep you in Brno for a long time.*

*Let me, dear madam, wish you a nice Christmas and I ask you to kindly convey my greeting to Dr. K!*

*Kissing your hand,*

*Zdenka Červenková)*

The themes of the letters from Zdenka and her daughter are often mundane, such as describing the tiresome short days of December and chores that are traditionally considered women's duties. Here the narrative element is Zdenka's orientation to time, place and people (LONA 4).

*U nás též se pořád šije, opravuje, je delší móda tak pláště prodlužují i šaty Zdeně (já vždy dlouze chodila) a teď krátký den, že málo se ve dne udělá, musím i večer a punčoch se hromadí, nevím*

*kdy na ně budu mít čas- to je také metla pro ženy, vidíte? Dříve se mohly často kupovat nové – teď je to vše. (10.12.1946)*

*(We are still sewing, fixing, the fashion is longer coats, so I am extending coats and dresses for Zdena (I always wore long) and now we have a short day so that little can be done in the daytime, I have to do/work in the evenings as well and the stockings accumulate, I do not know when I'll have time for them – it is such a scourge for women, right? Previously new ones could often be bought - now it's all. (10 December 1946))*

The complicating action is finding suitable clothes and that is followed by a chain of events. This type of narration comes close to LONA 5.

### 6.3 Back to normal after the war

In his book *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945*, Tony Judt writes:

*Photographs and documentary films of the time show pitiful streams of helpless civilians trekking through a blasted landscape of broken cities and barren fields. Orphaned children wander forlornly past groups of worn out women picking over heaps of masonry. Shaven-headed deportees and concentration camp inmates stare listlessly at the camera, starving and diseased. Even the trams, propelled uncertainly along damaged tracks by intermittently available electric current, appear shell-shocked.* <sup>268</sup>

While this family correspondence has been documenting some of the events in Lorencovi family history, Czechoslovakia has been established and she has faced her first struggles as a nation.

This small number of letters between Zdenka and Mařenka reveal something about the time when the country is returning back to the state of peace, after the Second World War. It is also worth noting that the next totalitarian regime has not stepped in yet, that would happen in 1948. In that sense, letters from Zdenka take us to the borderline and transition period of two realities, to the relatively peaceful and certainly hopeful moment between the two totalitarian regimes.

The last dated letter is from 26 June 1947 but since some of the letters are undated, one cannot tell for sure if the (preserved) letters are from the same time frame. Most likely, however, these two letters are also from the late 1940s, and they definitely are from the post-war years.

*Od K se dozvídám, že se vypravujete do lázní a tož honem spěchám, aby Vás dopis zastihnul ještě doma.*

*Omlouvám se Vám také, že nebylo mě možno dříve napsat, to jsem zase užila práce a ještě nejsem úplně hotova- po velkém jarním čistění! Malovali jsme obývací pokoj, kuchyni, koupelnu a menší příslušenství – v jídelně i předsíni s hopy, všechno bylo rozházené v celém bytě plno věcí nádobí na chodbě a v tom nejhorším nepořádku se rozstonala maminka na zápal plic!*

*(I heard from K that you are going to the spa so I am rushing quickly to write so that the letter will reach you still at home.*

---

<sup>268</sup> Judt 2010, 13.

*I also apologize to you, that it was not possible for to write earlier, I again had a lot of work and I am still not completely ready after the big spring-cleaning! we painted the living room, kitchen, bathroom and small adjunct room-storage in the dining room and hallway, all was a total mess, things every where in the apartment, dishes in the hallway and in the worst mess my mother got pneumonia!)*

The everyday life with its struggles in post-war Czechoslovakia is strongly present. The availability of various products is improving, but many other problems still remain, such as finding suitable accommodation.

The narrative structure is similar to the one I mentioned above (LONA5). The complicating action is not being able to write earlier, and the chain of events follow from there.

*Ted' je příjemné prohlížet výklady dost pěkného zboží i boty slušné lze vidět vůbec je radosti porovnávat značné zlepšení! --- Psala jsem minule Mařenko o neteři našich dam T, co se vrátila z Perzie- její manžel je ve Škodovce v Praze, měli slíbený byt a těšili se, že na Vánoce již budou pohromadě- ale prý se všeho sešlo a mají chuť jet zase do světa, do Brazílie má výhodnou nabídku, že by se za dva roky vrátili, to už bude bytů dost.*

*(Now it's nice enough to view shop displays, nice stuff and decent shoes can be seen, all in all, it's a delight to compare (and see) a significant improvement! "--- Mařenka, last time I wrote about our niece of T who returned from Persia-her husband works with the Škoda company in Prague, was promised an apartment and they were looking forward to spending Christmas together, but apparently it did not work out-so now they want to go back to the world , Brazil has a special deal for them, and in two years they'll return, there'll be enough flats by then.)*

Shortages make networks significant.

*Četli jsme v novinách, že v Praze z obchodu zmizela káva, tož Vám je trošku posílám, na svátky silnou! (10.12.1946)*

*(We read in the newspaper that Prague has a shortage of coffee, so here I am sending you a bit, strong coffee for the holidays! (10 December 1946))*

On the other hand, the war years are over now and people have more opportunities to study and read, develop themselves and immerse themselves into literature of their choice. Also Czechoslovakia's first president Masaryk is a suitable topic of discussion, after the liberation from the Nazi regime.

*Co pak teď čítáte, které knihy tak nejvíc Vás zaujaly? Já dočítám Jar. Stránského Hovory, měli jsme ho za války velmi rádi a čeká nás Benešovo Demokracie, U K také tuto knihu mají teď ji dnes a zítra čtou, a velkým obdivem, jak správně je vše vystihnuto. Šest let v exilu jistě znáte- zde skoro každý známý si ji koupil i Pavla Svatého, to jsem již v létě četla. Zdenina známa mě nabídla Villette od Bronteové, (Masaryk si cenil Bronteovou) po- letech jsem si ji zase rada přečetla a to je duševní pohoda.*

*(What do you read now, which books interest you the most? I am reading Talks of Jaroslav Stránský<sup>269</sup>, we liked him a lot during the war and now we're waiting again for Beneš Democracy, At K, they also now have this book, they read it today and tomorrow with great admiration how well it renders everything. Six years in exile, surely you know here almost everybody bought it and Pavel Svatý (Prokop Drtina)<sup>270</sup>, I have read in the summer. Zdenka's friend offered me Villette by Bronte, (Masaryk appreciated Bronte) after-years I read it again and it is a mental comfort.)*

Zdenka also hears from her acquaintances about life in Romania during those years.

*Hodně nás válka na zdraví i všem poznamenala, ale je prý to u nás jako v ráji, vše ku koupí, obchody plné, boty pěkné atd- byla u nás návštěva včera, dcera našich známých---provdaná za inženýra v Sofii--- , její děti, studentka 12letá a druhá 6ti letá, koukaly, když jim babička vaří kakao, bonbony je prý tam hrozné sucho, úroda ovoce za 20 miliard zničená jarním mrazem, půda rozpučená, neúroda, nešťastná země a o Rumunsku to též čtete.*

*(The war has left its marks on our health and everything, but apparently it is like paradise here, all is available to buy, shops full, nice shoes etc. - we had visitors yesterday, the daughter of our friends who's married to an engineer in Sofia---, her children, a 12-year old student and one 6-year-old, were watching with eyes wide open when their grandmother boiled cocoa, (and gave them) candy, apparently there is a severe drought there, a 20-billion fruit harvest has been destroyed by spring frost, fissured soil, crop failure – unhappy country, and you can also read that about Romania.)*

When Zdenka compares her situation to paradise, despite the difficulties of living through the post-war years, she creates a narration that resembles LONA 5, except that there is no complicating action. She begins by praising the opportunities to buy things and that leads to telling the news about other people, using a technique which resembles the stream of consciousness.

These letters also contain comments about life outside home, travelling, the process of reconstructing the country after the war.

*Budu Vám hledět vyhovět i v dietě a těším se, že se po okolí podíváme a vše vypovíme. Dokud je maminka jsem ráda doma a stačí mě takové 4 dny v N. Měště- však jsme se dříve natoulali dost. Vzpomínala jsem na Vás v tyto dny, kdy vítali jsme pana presidenta (loni jsme spolu čekali) bylo Brno nadšené a hlava na hlavě! Dost se opravilo domu a zvelebuje se město, parky- bylo to spustošené- Morava byla velmi zničena.(26.6.1947)*

*(I'll take your diet into consideration and I am looking forward to be looking around the area and talking about everything. As long as my mother is alive, I'm happy at home, and it is enough to spend such 4 days in N. Město- we previously wandered around N. Město enough, didn't we? I thought of you these days when we welcomed Mr. President (last year we were waiting together) Brno was enthusiastic, and so many people head to head! Quite a few of the houses were reconstructed and the city is beautified, parks – it/everything was devastated, Moravia was largely destroyed. (26 June 1947))*

---

<sup>269</sup> The whole title is Hovory k domovu (1945). A book edition of his popular wartime talks broadcast by Czech BBC.

<sup>270</sup> Pavel Svatý was the wartime pen name (when broadcasting for Czech BBC) of Prokop Drtina.

The lines above were written in the summer of 1947, which was one of the hottest and driest in Europe since records began. Before that, the winter had been the most brutal since 1880, and the meltwaters had caused floods. The harvest would suffer, in some areas of the continent for the 3<sup>rd</sup> year running.<sup>271</sup>

The war years have limited travelling and interaction in general, and now it is time to arrange meetings.

*Těším se Mařenko na Vás, určitě do Brna přijedte aspoň na dva týdny, budeme spolu chodit ven, poznáte pěkné okolí a sama píšete, že musíme si vážit i zachytit pěkných chviliek na podzim života! Až budete v N. Městě, přijela bych také a pak si Vás přivezu sem, velmi se na Vás těšíme!*

*(I look forward to seeing you, Mařenka, definitely come to Brno for at least two weeks, we'll go out together, you'll explore a nice neighbourhood, you yourself write that you need to appreciate and capture nice moments in the autumn of life! When you are in N. Město, I'd come there too, and then I'll bring you here, looking forward to seeing you a lot!)*

## 6.4 Mirek and Fišer

Naturally, the news about other people have a significant role also in the correspondence between Mařenka and Zdenka. As we can see, the victims of concentration camps are a current topic at the time.

*Pí. Řed S má přepnuté nervy i srdce musí úplně z práce se vyřadit, ani vařit nesmí- sehnali posluhovačku, která jim bude denně chodit i vařit- bude je stát 120 K měs. A stravu- velké zatížení pro pensistu, byt, elektřinu, otep- nařikala paní, že si pro sebe nemohou koupit nic z oblečení.*

*Měla celou válku plno starostí i úzkostí, zeť 5 ½ r. V koncentráku, velmi ho podporovali balíky- dcera profesorka v odboji a pak té práce i s vnoučátky- starší lidé v našem věku dost odcházejí- mrtvice, srdce...*

*Pan Mirek bude mít pacientů, dobře si to zvolil přece jen ta strašná doba, velmi národ oslabila.*

*(Mrs. Director S has had a sudden nervous breakdown and a heart condition, she cannot work anymore, she cannot even cook, they found a cleaning lady who will come daily and also cook and it will cost 120 K per month. And food, with heavy burden on pensioners, apartment, electricity, heating - Mrs. lamented that they cannot buy any clothes for themselves.*

*During the war, she had lots of worries and anxiety, son in law was for 5 ½ years in the concentration camp, they sent him lots of packages to support him- the daughter is a professor and was in resistance movement, and then so much work with the grandchildren-older people in our age rather go fast -stroke, heart ...*

*Mr. Mirek will have many patients, he chose a good occupation, the terrible time period has much weakened the nation.)*

*Někdy je to jako v románě, zrovna u našeho známého Fišera v Kuřimi-(byla u nás návštěvou jeho sestry B) celý život šel sám, bez porozumění a prý se sblížil v Kuřimi s nějakou, vzdělanou skoro*

---

<sup>271</sup> Judt 2010, 86-87.

*prý osvícenou učitelkou, která ve válce se osvědčila jako vzácná duše (jako po legionáři, po něm gestapo dávalo pozor) a.t.d.- půjdou prý jako přátelé děti, když pozorovaly co je, prosily, aby se neženil maminka by pozbyla nárok na pensi a tak se rozhodli po toto řešení – dle slov paní Boženy neměl život lehký...*

*(Sometimes it's like in the novel, just like for our acquaintance Fišer in Kuřim-(his sister B visited us) whole life he was alone, without understanding, and it is said that he became close with someone in Kuřim, and educated and, they say, almost an enlightened teacher who, in the war, proved to be a rare soul (Gestapo was watching him, because he used to be a legionary) etc.-they will stay as friends, because when children found out they were begging [him] not to marry, because mother would lose her the right to pension, so they made this decision. – according to B he had no easy life...)*

Mařenka's son, Mirek and his profession are also mentioned in the quote above. Medical doctors must have had plenty of work during those years. Judt mentions a report from the Czechoslovak authorities in January 1946, according to which half of the 700,000 needy children in the country had tuberculosis. The situation was very similar all over Europe right after the war, children were suffering from various sicknesses and otherwise healthy children died from deprivation, e.g. lack of milk.<sup>272</sup>

Understandably, sickness and health are topics constantly present in Zdenka's letters. It is one of the universal subjects for people to discuss and it has been touched upon (one way or another) in all other chapters of this doctoral thesis as well.

What is also interesting, concerning the whole narration, is that in this final chapter we can return to the first one, to the time of František and Mařenka, the early 20th century. Mařenka had another penfriend too, not only František (and possibly several others too who we do not know of). This penfriend was Fišer and now Zdenka sheds light to what has happened to him after all these years in the middle of the various turns of European history.

*Někdy je to jako v románě, zrovna u našeho známého Fišera v Kuřimi-(byla u nás návštěvou jeho sestry B) celý život šel sám, bez porozumění a prý se sblížil v Kuřimi s nějakou, vzdělanou skoro prý osvícenou učitelkou, která ve válce se osvědčila jako vzácná duše (jako po legionáři, po něm gestapo dávalo pozor) a.t.d.- půjdou prý jako přátelé děti, když pozorovaly co je, prosily, aby se neženil maminka by pozbyla nárok na pensi a tak se rozhodli po toto řešení – dle slov paní Boženy neměl život lehký...*

*(Sometimes it's like in the novel, just like for our acquaintance Fišer in Kuřim-(his sister B visited us) whole life he was alone, without understanding companionship and it is said that acquainted someone in Kuřim, educated and nearly supposedly true enlightened teacher who in the war proved to be a rare soul (Gestapo was watching him like legionaries) etc.-they will stay as friends, because when children found out they were begging [him] not to marry, because mother would lose her right to pension, so they made this decision. – according to B he had no easy life...)*

In the quote above, Zdenka possibly gives us a key to the question why these letters were cached in the basement of a townhouse in Prague. The Czech legionaries, the heroes of the 1<sup>st</sup> Republic

---

<sup>272</sup> Judt 2010, 22.

are mentioned. They were considered politically unreliable both by the Nazi regime and the Communist regime later.

The director of Charles University Archive, Dr. Marek Durčanský elaborates this topic in his email from January 2020:

*As far as the legionaries are concerned, they were considered suspicious --- because in the interwar period they were one of the pillars of the Czechoslovak Republic (at least in the political propaganda). Mostly such suspicions were right. Former legionaries created the first net of resistance (Obrana národa). Even the first prime minister of the Protectorate general Alois Eliáš was former legionar officer – he was executed by the Nazis in 1942. A few of them were accused of collaboration (the worst example is the protectorate minister Alois Moravec), but that was rather exceptional.<sup>273</sup>*

It is also worth noting that even though this last patch of letters do not follow L&W pattern, Zdenka still compares life to one type of literary narration, a novel. Hence, the narrative element can be detected also in the final chapter of the grand story.

Fišer had written to Mařenka about various topics, such as his life as a teacher, including worries and concerns.

*Jaké jsou vědomosti mých žáků, poznáte, když Vám řeknu, že jednoho musím učit ze slabikáře a že dva nedovedou počítati do 10 na prstech ve 3. Tř.! Již zde nejsem sám, mám nového „přítele.“ Je to uč. II. Odb. na měšť. Šk. P. Pejchl. Je mu již sice 43. roků, ale spřátelili jsme se. Je zde také první rok. Každého dne chodíme na procházku od ½ 5 do 7 hod. Studujeme spolu chemii. Jak to bude dlouho trvat nevím. Mluvíme spolu docela o rozumných věcech a on se mi dosti svěřuje se vším. (Bystřice nad Pernštejnem, 30.9.1906)*

*(How is the knowledge of my students you can figure out yourself when I tell you that I have to teach one student from a spelling book and two of them cannot even count to 10 using their fingers in 3rd grade. Now, I am not here alone and I have a new „friend“. It is a teacher from II. Professional city school, P. Pejchl. He is already 43 but we have become friends. This is also his 1st year. Every day we take a walk from half past 4 5 until 7pm. We study chemistry together. I do not know how long this will last. We speak about quite reasonable things and he is confiding in me quite a lot (Bystřice nad Pernštejnem, 30 September 1906))*

Fišer also writes about the brighter sides of his life to Mařenka, and happy moments spent with other people.

*Se Ž jsem mluvil; je v obchodě, píše, má 40K měs. Je z ní velice hezké děvče. Na výlete nebylo nic zvláštního. Hodně jsem se nachodili po cukrovaře; bylo tam mnoho děvčat. (Bysřice nad Pernštejnem 12.11.1906)*

*(I spoke with Zofie; she works in the store, she writes, makes 40 CZK per month. She's grown up to be a very pretty girl. On the trip, nothing extraordinary happened. We walked a lot around Sugar factory; many girls were there. (Bysřice nad Pernštejnem 12 November 1906))*

---

<sup>273</sup> Email from Marek Durčanský, 8 January 2020.

## 6.5 Husbands

Zdenka mentions Mařenka's husband, Josef and we find out that travelling alone is possible for her.

*Pan manžel je uznalý a soběstačný, popřeje Vám delšího oddechu – nějak si to již zařídíte a rozhodně přijďte.*

*(Mr. husband is understanding and self-contained, he will like you to take a longer rest- try to arrange it somehow and just come.)*

This was one of those questions František discussed approximately 40 years earlier in his letters to Mařenka:

*Udělejte, si někdy výlet do Pardubic a já bych tam Vás překvapil. Mám sice v neděli být v kanceláři; ale to bych nějak už snad zařídil; beztoho to bude asi až na druhý měsíc. Někak se umluvte se slečnou F. když by jste nemohla jeti sama a mohla by jste mi napsati.*

*(Why don't you make a trip sometime to Pardubice, and I would surprise you there. On Sunday, I should be in the office but I cannot manage to leave, otherwise we meet next month. Please speak to Mrs. F. If you cannot come alone you could write to me.)*

We learn about Zdenka's loss and what her marriage was like.

*Vždycky jsem se toho obávala až zůstanu sama, jak mě vždy zdůrazňoval manžel, že odejde on dřív co starší, ale že to je tak zlé jsem nemyslela. Teď už je jedno, kdy večer přijdu (naši už mají své zájmy nikdo už nečeká a nemám komu vyprávět co nového ve světě a jiné novinky). Už jsme večer si s mužem povídali, probírali zašlé mládí, různé ty politické proměny a.t.d., oba jsem dost četli a tak stále bylo co řešit, vzpomínat na všechny co nás předešli.*

*(I was always afraid of being left alone, as my husband always stressed that he'd leave earlier, as the older one, but I did not imagine that it would be so bad. Now it does not matter when I come home in the evening (kids already have their interests and nobody expects me and I do not have anybody to tell what's new in the world and other news). We, my husband and I, talked in the evening, discussing faded youth, the various political changes etc., we both read a lot so we had always something to discuss, remembering all who went before us.)*

One more time Zdenka reveals a bit about Josef. Also the Sokol girls Mrs. Kvapilová and Mrs. Linková have told me that Josef Lorenc still participated in the farming work of the village of Mochov u Prahy, after moving to Prague.<sup>274</sup>

*Jaké pak Vy máte naděje s pí. Doktorkou K na byt? Snad, když máte známosti a musíte připomínat často se Vám podaří dostat vhodný pro Vás všechny byt bude to i pro Vás příjemná změna žít ve městě, teď je vše již ku koupi a pohodlněji se žije, jen pánu choti se asi zasteskne po venkově, když ho má tak rád!*

*(Do you have a chance to get an apartment with Mrs. Dr. K? Perhaps, when you have connections and you have to remind them often, you will manage to get a suitable apartment for all of you, it*

---

<sup>274</sup> Personal communication with Mrs. Kvapilová and Mrs. Linková 18 October 2011.

*will be a nice change for you, too, to live in the city, all is available now to buy and one can live more comfortably, only Mr. husband will probably miss the country, since he likes it so much!)*

It turns out that Zdenka and Mirek are the only people in this correspondence who write at least something about Josef, Mařenka's husband and Mirek's father. Furthermore, Mirek's possibilities to write from Sachsenhausen are limited, as I have discussed in chapter 4.

An inquiry to Státní okresní archive Chrudim leads to an email. This extract covers all the essential information I managed to find about Mirek's father whose voice is not heard in the correspondence.

*I have received your question about Josef Lorenc from Běstvina village. I am able to answer upon extant military evidence from 1899-1903 only. Identification with the person, who you are interested in, is still open due insufficient source information. Person called Josef Jan Lorenc was born on May 11, 1883 in Heřmaň village near Chotěboř (he had right of domicile in Běstvina). His father Josef was born on August 31, 1852 in Běstvina (house number 35) as a son of farmer Jan and Kateřina née Semerád. Josef (born 1852) was skilled butcher and married Anna née Kozel. --- Josef Jan Lorenc (born 1883) studied at grammar school in Kutná Hora in 1903. According to our papers I cannot document his teaching at primary school in Běstvina before World War II.<sup>275</sup>*



**FIGURE 15** Telegram to Josef Lorenc from World War 1

<sup>275</sup> Email from Director of Státní okresní archive Chrudim Ivo Šulc 16 October 2012.

## 6.6 Closing Words

*Come and visit Brno and we will discuss it all then.*

*We welcome you and greetings to your husband.*

These two sentences from Zdenka's pen summarise this last main chapter of my thesis. It is, as I stated above, the resolution of the story. The biggest struggles so far are over and it is time to find time to reflect on the past years, arrange meetings and keep in touch with old friends.

In a sense these sentences summarise the whole correspondence and maybe even a great deal of human interaction because deep down we want to be connected and exchange ideas with each other.

## 6.7 References

Judt, Tony. *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945*. Vintage Books. London. 2010.

Keravuori, Kirsi. *Saaristolaisia: Elämä, arki ja vanhemmuus laivuriperheen kirjeenvaihdossa*. SKS. Helsinki. 2017.

Labov, William: *The Language of Life and Death*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press. 2013.

Sääskilahti, Nina. *Ajan partaalla: Omaelämäkerrallinen aika, päiväkirja ja muistin kulttuuri*. Jyväskylä: Nykykulttuurin tutkimuskeskuksen julkaisuja 105, Jyväskylän yliopisto, 2011.

### 6.7.1 Unpublished sources

Personal communication with Mrs. Kvapilová and Mrs. Linková 18 October 2011.

Personal communication with Don Sparling 12 June 2019.

Email from Director of Charles University Archive Marek Durčanský, 8 January 2020.

Email from Director of Státní okresní archive Chrudim Ivo Šulc 16 October 2012.

## 7 Coda: Summer 1968

The last letter found in the pile of this family correspondence was from the 2<sup>nd</sup> of June 1968. It is a lonely letter, about twenty years have passed between it and the last letter from Zdenka. European nations have had plenty of time to get used to the Cold War and divided continent already.

We know, what would soon happen in Czechoslovakia, but Mirek could not have guessed any of it, when he wrote to his mother, Mařenka:

*Teď mi ještě napadá s tím Tvým cestováním. My určitě pojedem před dovolenou do Nového Města, protože do Jugoslavie chceme přes Rakousko a to by byla zajižďka. Mohl bych Tě tedy přivést z Města sem a potom do Smržovky. Se zavazadly by se to dalo zařídit třeba tak, že by sis potřebné vzala už do Města, a nebo bys něco mohla do S poslat z Prahy - nebo jen připravit a nechat poslat později. Rozmyslí si, jak by se Ti to hodilo a napiš mi o tom. Pozdravuj od nás Jiřu Věru s rodinou a Pí H. Líbá Tě Tvůj Mirek s rodinou*

*(Now I have an idea about your traveling. We'll certainly go to Nové Město before we go on holiday because to Yugoslavia we want to go via Austria and it would be a detour via Nové Město. So I could bring you from Město here and then to Smržovka. With luggage it could be arranged so that you would take the necessary things to Město, or you could send something to S from Prague or just prepare and have it sent later. Think about what would suit you and let me know"). Say hello from us to Jiřa, Věra with family and Mrs H. Kisses Your Mirek and family)*

Dipl. Ing. Michael Lorenz told me in his email (4 February 2020) that the family did carry out this travel plan. They went to Italy and Yugoslavia via Austria. On their journey back home they had to sleep in a tent at a football stadium for a couple of nights because the occupation had happened (21 August 1968) and the Austrian–Czechoslovak border was closed. Mirek had been offered a job in Austria but he had politely declined it, he wanted to return home.

This one event, revealed by one letter, is the coda of this epic story from the 20<sup>th</sup> century Czechoslovakia. I want to thank Mr. Lorenz one more time, for kindly allowing me to use his family correspondence in my research and writing this story for the sake of the people who once lived – as well as the people of the present and the future.

## 8 Conclusion

*Time is unreachable, but momentarily it becomes tangible in situations, words, encounters and deeds. (Nina Sääsilahti)*

### 8.1 Velvet Revolution and the Finnish Forests

It was an ordinary morning in November 1989. One week earlier I had woken up on the morning of my 15th birthday and turned the tv on to see people climbing on the Berlin Wall. Now I saw news from Prague, people and heard about writer and dissident Václav Havel for the first time. During that same, intense year when the world where I was to live my adulthood started to take its form, both Mirek and Pavel passed away.

In that moment, seeing people ringing their keyrings on Wenceslas Square, I could never have guessed that life would take me to different parts of the Czech Republic – as well as other European countries – to do epistolary research.

I have compared the process to a walk in a forest. That metaphor suits my Finnish heritage and respects my ancestors. Both my Grandfathers were the Finnish veterans of the Second World War. One of them was a messenger. After his death I heard that even when he was missing, nobody was truly concerned, they knew he would find his way in the forest. He was fortunate enough to survive at the frontline, unwounded.

Even though I have not inherited Grandfather's ability to orientate in a forest, I have tried to keep up a similar trust that I will find the right path navigating in the middle of these letter piles. Interestingly, I have also discovered a story emerging from the letters that follows L&W quite closely, although evaluation and complicating action appear chronologically in different order.

There have been days, weeks and months when the path has been visible and easy to walk forward. On the darker moments I have had to trust my skills and carry on, hoping, not knowing, that the path continues behind that hill. I have also climbed or walked around several obstacles en route. Without the people who believed in me all along, I would not have been able to keep faith in finding the way, eventually.

### 8.2 František - Orientation

Many of the early 20th century letters from František to Mařenka follow L&W, even though not in its purest form. Sometimes the narrative elements change places or one of them is missing. This could be explained by the text type, where e.g. the evaluation of the situation comes naturally at the beginning and complicating action (finding an opportunity to meet, for instance) later. Communicating in writing is not always easy, that leads to misunderstandings and even arguments, which in turn become complicating actions in the letter narrations.

Some of František's letters contain different kinds of miniature narrations between the classical L&W narrative structure. Those miniature narrations bring essential new information about the life of the writer.

A good example of these miniature narrations is about František's old teacher, Magister Líčka. Studying the background of that story revealed to me how much easier it is to find information about men who lived in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century than women. One can even state that without all these men, we would know very little about Mařenka. None of her letters have been found so far and she has left very few traces about herself in the archives. whose letters have not been preserved.

Orientations in typical narrations that fit into L&W are often very short and summarised, but František's letters prove that they can also be abundant.

Coda can be abundant too, and this applies also to Pavel. Mirek's codas are minimalistic because his opportunities to communicate are limited.

### 8.3 Mirek – Complicating Action

My original assumption was that Mirek's letters from Sachsenhausen would not provide a very interesting source of narrations, but I was wrong. As a rule, his letters follow closely to L&W and using the classical narrative model as a mould where to place the letter has turned out to be a very fruitful method to analyse them.

L&W reveals the complicating actions of the camp life (even though in a veiled form), the most essential of which are: separation from home, family and friends, communication problems because writing is limited and letters and packages getting lost in mail.

Evaluation parts of his letters often discuss something related to home. Sometimes he mentions the packages he has received or the current situation at home.

Mirek's Sachsenhausen letters do not reveal any actual events at the camp, though, but it has been possible for me to have a dialogue between them, the historical research and eyewitness testimonies. That helps in contextualising the letters, for the reader to understand the circumstances where they were written.

Sachsenhausen letters are also an interesting material to study writing in limited condition. Inmates were not only writing under censorship, but also the space for writing was limited to a certain number of lines.

I have also compared the rules for writing and known facts about the camp censorship to the actual contents of Mirek's letters. For some reason his letters were not censored as heavily as one would assume, based on the other sources. For example, Mirek uses abbreviations fearlessly, even though they are explicitly forbidden, and even a doubt about conveying hidden messages has led to executions at camps.

Greeting friends and relatives are an important part of Mirek's letters, as well as brief sentences about his memories, mainly about family life.

## 8.4 Pavel's Letters to Mirek - Evaluation

Pavel's letters to Mirek partly follow L&W but LONA is a better tool for analysing these narrations. One can state that Pavel's letters do have narrative elements but since Pavel has chosen to use and even play with different writing styles, from preaching to poetry, one singular letter rarely formulates a coherent narration.

However, this small collection of Pavel's letters do formulate a narration, a single story about his and Mirek's life. Archival and other literary sources as well as interviewing Pavel's scouts have had a significant role in making his life story more complete.

Pavel's letters to Mařenka from the same era (early and mid-1930s), in turn, do follow L&W more closely. One reason may be that he usually has a clear purpose to write to Mirek's mother, for asking permission for Mirek to visit him in the monastery. Pavel writes more freely and less coherently, jumping from one topic to another.

A typical characteristic of this whole correspondence appears to be that those letters which follow most closely L&W are the ones with an explicit intention. Mirek's Sachsenhausen letters are probably the most evident example of that.

Just like František, Pavel writes emotional and poetic orientations and codas. Another similarity between the two writers is that their letters occasionally have miniature narrations embedded in the narration which otherwise follows L&W. These stories are short and sometimes even incomplete, but they are still essential to understanding Pavel and his friendship with Mirek.

## 8.5 Pavel's letters to Mařenka – Result or Resolution

Pavel's letters to Mařenka during the war, and right after it, follow L&W the same way as his letters to Mařenka from the earlier times (as discussed above and in chapter X). This small pile of letters take us to the transition period where Pavel and Mirek are entering the adulthood, after the strenuous war years. Pavel writes about his hopes and dreams (career-wise and also concerning his wish to marry) and he refers to Mirek's new life, marriage and working life.

One more thing worth noting is that Pavel tells us about Mařenka, just like František earlier. Her willingness to hear the young Pavel, be his friend and support him are apparent, especially in the post-war letters he sends her.

## 8.6 Zdenka – Result or Resolution

Zdenka is the only female writer in this correspondence. Even though Mařenka appears to be the central figure of the story, her life story is narrated by others, and except for Zdenka, those others are men. Just like Pavel, Zdenka also writes about resettling to normal daily life after the war years. She describes her family life and their hopes and plans. Together, Zdenka and Mařenka also make travelling plans and look at the future that seems brighter than in many years.

## 8.7 Returning to Finland

It is sad but still relatively easy to leave these people, whose lives have become part of mine, to the place where they are pursuing a better future. We all know that Czechoslovakia and the whole of Europe would go through several unfortunate incidents within the upcoming decades, but they are not part of this story.

The journey is over and I am standing at the edge of the forest, not empty-handed but holding this narrative research and a collection of stories. It is time to let them fly to the world and allow the readers to formulate their views on them.

I am returning to my Grandfather, the one who returned home from the frontline unwounded. The words he wrote during the Second World War to his brother about not quitting have crossed my mind often when writing this thesis. And in my thoughts I am sending my very best to him, somewhere above the clouds.

*Ulukomailta 27.9.41*

*Morjens Veli*

*Pistän taas muutaman sanan tulemaan täältä sotapolulta. Muuta ei kyllä ole vereksempää kuin se, että nyt ollaan taas lepäämässä linjojen takana, joten saa nukkua rauhassa ja olla vapaasti. --*

-

*Siitä ei kyllä ole tietoa kauanko tämä lepo kestää, mutta on se hyvä, kun saa vähänkin lepuuttaa hermojaan, mutta olis vielä parempi, jos loppuis tämä ruljanssi kokonaan, sillä eihän tämä niin mukavaa ole, mutta eihän sitä toimita keskenkään jättää.*

*Lopetan taas tällä kertaa  
Siis kuulemiin ja terveiset kaikille  
Ropi*

*(From Abroad*

*27 September 1941*

*Hello, Brother!*

*I am dropping a few lines again from my war journey. I have nothing new to tell except that I am resting behind the lines again, so I can sleep in peace and be more freely. ---  
That I don't know how long this resting time lasts but it is good to rest your nerves at least a little bit. But it would be even better if this rough going ended because this is not so nice, but we cannot quit, either.*

---

*I am finishing this letter now.  
Let's be in touch and greetings to all,  
Ropi)*