

betized index to the three volumes is in press at the time of this writing. The remaining fourth volume, the scope of which unfortunately is to be somewhat reduced, will contain entries having to do with the social attributes of humans and with a priori concepts such as existence, size, form, space, time, causality, and so forth. The preparation of volume 4, which will be furnished with a separate alphabetic index, is in the hands of J. V. Bečka, Haller's friend.

For students, scholars, and the educated public interested in or fascinated by the labyrinth of the Czech lexicon, *ČSVS* offers a sumptuous feast. Single-unit entries (nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs) as well as complex lexical entries are developed in unprecedented detail: lesser known words or technical terms are defined; synonyms, antonyms, and related and contrasted words are listed exhaustively; significant epithets are noted for nouns; syntactic constructions containing entry words and the stylistic nuances they assume in different contexts are illustrated; Latin binomials are appended to plant and animal species names; and cross references are given. Moreover, *ČSVS* makes generous use of relevant grammatical labels (perfective, iterative, animate, indeclinable, and the like) and usage or status labels—temporal (archaic, obsolete), regional (dialectal, Bohemian, Moravian, Slovak), or stylistic (poetic, bookish, euphemistic, diminutive, hypocoristic, augmentative, pejorative, vulgar, humorous, figurative, technical, colloquial, and others).

Take, for example, the verb *jíti* in the sense of "moving on one's feet from one place to another": *ČSVS*'s coverage of this single lexeme occupies some twenty pages of the one hundred twenty-nine sizable double-column pages devoted to the general concept of movement of humans in one place or from one place to another. Then there are such delightful nests of lexical gems as the words for the varieties of apples (one hundred thirteen lines), the phases of the mountain cock's mating call (thirty-nine lines), and the movements and sounds made by animals of every sort. Birdcall words alone run into the hundreds.

Whether or not one is given to word watching with the unrestrained pleasure of this reviewer, the fact remains that none of the world's languages can boast a thesaurus so inclusive and detailed as that available to the barely ten million speakers of Czech.

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SCHLESISCHES SCHRIFTTUM DER ROMANTIK UND POPULARROMANTIK. By Arno Lubos. Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1978. 195 pp. DM 32, paper.

Arno Lubos, Germanist, literary historian, and keen observer of German intellectual affairs, has produced a detailed examination of literary activity in Silesia during the first half of the nineteenth century. It would be unfair to the author to regard his work as merely an excellent study of the major Silesian Romantic writers. His larger aim is to relate German literature to Silesian regionalism and to show this distinctive literary tradition, in turn, as the product of German-Slavic synthesis. In his zeal to present a comprehensive view of the totality of Silesian intellectual life during this period, he leans, perhaps too heavily, toward underscoring the unique character of Silesia, its rich literary tradition, and the peaceful coexistence of the German and Slavic populations in the province as seen in much of the regional literature. Through his detailed analysis of the cultural and literary milieu of this province, Lubos provides us with a scholarly, informative, and valuable work.

The author convinces us that Silesian regional literature was far more than just an appendage of the "Heidelberg Romantic movement." Indeed, he describes it as the logical outgrowth of the Silesian regional character, which was the product of Germans, Poles, Czechs, and Sorbs living together in the same geographic area. Fully con-

scious of their distinctive regionalism, these intellectuals engaged in a flurry of literary creativity, praising the provincial life and its folklore. Individual writers tended to identify with the province's cultural values and idealized the province in their writings, and, for the first time in Silesia's intellectual life, not national but regional customs and traditions helped mold its literature.

A strong emphasis is placed on examining the different non-German groups in Silesia (especially the Polish) and the considerable influence the German Romantic movement had on them. Here, too, literary activity was confined to extolling provincial folklore, folk songs, customs, and traditions. Like its German counterpart, the Slavic Silesian Romantic movement was cultural, not political, and thus failed to express the dissonance that characterized the ethnic as well as the linguistic cleavages of Silesia in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

On the whole, this is an excellent treatise on Romanticism in Silesia, and even the critical reader will be hard pressed to find sources the author neglected to consult.

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## LETTERS

### TO THE EDITOR:

The famous anecdote about how Nicholas I supposedly determined the route of the St. Petersburg-Moscow Railway, discussed by Richard Mowbray Haywood in his article, "The 'Ruler Legend': Tsar Nicholas I and the Route of the St. Petersburg-Moscow Railway, 1842-1843" (*Slavic Review*, December 1978), has at least one variant that Haywood neglects to mention. I first heard this variant in March 1979 from an educated friend in Leningrad who really seemed to believe it. He insisted that the quite abrupt curve near Lake Vereb'e, about two hundred kilometers from Leningrad, in the otherwise "dead-straight" track between Leningrad and Moscow, was where Nikolai's thumb had hung over the edge of the ruler as he arbitrarily laid out the route of the railroad.

I wrote to Professor Haywood about this version, and he replied that he had initially included a footnote on the thumb story, but later excised it, first, because of space limitations, and second, because "my wife requested me to cut it, fearing that otherwise there would be nothing left on the topic to discuss at cocktail parties with my colleagues in the field." Haywood's missing footnote asserts that the apocryphal thumb print was actually "a relocation of the original route of the railway near the Vereb'e Station, meant to avoid the heaviest gradients over the Valdai Hills in the direction of Moscow and to replace two of the longest and highest of the original wooden trestles, which were falling into disrepair, with shorter ones. The new line was built in the years 1878-1881 and made the total length of the railway 609 instead of 604 versts."

Thus are we taught to reject, as a useful rule of thumb, all such pretty stories as "the legend of the ruler's thumb."

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### FROM THE EDITOR:

As a result of a mistake on our part, we failed to comply with Professor Danylo Husar Struk's request that we use the form "L'viv" rather than "Lwów" in his article, "The Summing-up of Silence: The Poetry of Ihor Kalynets," which we published in the March 1979 issue. We offer this correction and our apology to Professor Struk and to others who may have been offended by this usage.