

Habilitation application – the author’s abstract

1. Name: **Aleksandra Pająk**

2. Academic/artistic degrees

2003 – doctoral degree in the field of the humanities (literary studies) awarded by The Council of the Philological Faculty, University of Opole, on the basis of the doctoral dissertation entitled *Jaroslav Durych and the Dispute about the Sense of the Czech History*, written under the supervision of prof. Jacek Baluch (reviewers: prof. Józef Zarek and prof. Władysław Hendzel)

1999 – MA degree in the field of Polish philology (Polish and Slavonic philology), The Institute of Polish Philology, The Philological Faculty, University of Opole

3. Data regarding professional career in academic units:

2003–2006: Univerzita Karlova v Praze (Charles University in Prague), Filozofická fakulta, Ústav slavistických a východoevropských studií – teacher of the Polish language as a foreign language

2004–2007: The State’s Higher Professional School in Nysa, The Institute of Neophilology – lecturer

2010–2012: Univerzita Pardubice (University of Pardubice), Filozofická fakulta, katedra literární kultury a slavistiky – assistant professor

2006–to date: University of Opole, The Philological Faculty, The Institute of Polish Philology (2006–2013), The Institute of Polish Philology and Culture Studies (2013–2015), The Institute of Slavonic Philology (since 2015) – assistant professor

1. Achievements established by article 15, paragraph 2, act 2 from 14 March 2003 about the academic degrees and titles, and the degrees and titles in the scope of arts:

Aleksandra Pająk, *In the Embrace of Clio. Literary Representations of the 19th Century in the Contemporary Czech Prose [W objęciach Klio. Literackie reprezentacje wieku XIX we współczesnej prozie czeskiej]*, University of Opole Publishing House, Opole 2017, 311 pp., ISBN 978-83-7395-751-0.

Publishing reviewers: **prof. Klaudia Koczur-Lejk, prof. Marcin Filipowicz**

c) the outline of the academic/artistic goal of the aforementioned monograph and its results, as well as its potential usage

The monograph *In the Embrace of Clio. Literary Representations of the 19th Century in the Contemporary Czech Prose* stems from the interest in the expanding phenomenon of experimenting with and demythologizing the Czech history as represented by the texts created at the turn of the 20th and 21st century. The book is a result of the several-year studies in the practices of displaying the past. As such, it can be read as a natural consequence of conference presentations and articles in which, analyzing given texts, I came to the basic academic problem, i.e. the mode of representing the by-gone in a literary text.

Following the development of the Czech historical novel, I noticed the paradox which became the initial impulse to the subsequent researches, and which can be named the phenomenon of renouncing the proper historical novel. The starting point was here the attempt to answer the following questions. Do the new approaches preoccupied with the aesthetic quality enable us to better understand the past in our contemporary times characterized by the general departure from the cognitive function traditionally associated with this realistic genre? Does literature follow the steps of the contemporary historiographical discourse focused on pluralistic approaches to history? And if yes, then to what extent does it do it? Faced with the reevaluations of that question the possibility of recounting one final version of history, I came to the conclusion that served as the key to the entire dissertation: if it is impossible to decide which historical representation is closest to the non-existent past it endeavors to represent (it substitutes but also makes present according to Frank Ankersmit's theory of representation in substitution), then the solution can be here the literary representation. It is not restricted by the rules of academic discourse; instead, it refers to palimpsestic modes of representing what is already in the realm of the past.

Since the texts dealing with history represent the quality of diversity, it was much desired to limit the undertaken issues according to the precise temporary criteria. Consequently, I concentrated on the 19th century, which is most significant for the creation of the national identity in the Czech culture. The myths, historical stereotypes and human models formed in this period are recognizable even today. Besides The Hussites, Jiří Rak considers his era, only conventionally encapsulated between 1801 and 1900, studied and described in the most thorough way due to its significance for the development of the Czech culture. It results in a feeling of comfort regarding the fact that little new can be discovered about this period. Yet, this also opens this century for literary experiments.

The majority of scholars agree that the 19th century provided us with the coordinates according to which we move on the map of contemporariness and my goal was to determine these signs in the analyzed texts. Thus, being peculiar guidelines through the selected literary texts, the dissertation is to show the living quality of the legacy of the 19th century.

Chapter One begins with the reflection on the term “long 19th century.” My intention is not the thorough characteristics of this period that stretches from the 18th and finishes in the 20th century. It is more about emphasizing the phenomena that originate in it, and which later on serve as the ground for literary experiments and reassessments.

Then I define representation that is used in the processes of naming various generic attempts to capture the past in a literary form. The starting point here is, following Michał Paweł Markowski, the clash between the possibilities suggested by the German philosophers: Eric Auerbach and Wolfgang Iser. For the former, representation meant *mimesis*, whereas the latter understood it as a performative act. The term “historical representation” can be found in Ankersmit’s texts, too. I also quote Hayden White’s texts that enable me to see the parallels between the historiographical and literary discourses. I also use Ewa Domańska’s ideas to demonstrate the places where – according to both Ankersmit and White – literature meets history.

In the subsequent sections of Chapter One I return to the issue of the “end of the history” prophecies to juxtapose them with the visible interest of the Czech prose-writers in the past. It results in another question – why are the contemporary literary representations so distanced from the traditional model of the historical novel? John Barth’s notion of the literature of exhaustion and its subsequent replenishment serves here as the answer. Therefore, the contemporary Czech prose occupies the position of the state “instead of the end of the history,” to use Hanna Gosk’s concept. I describe this unequal fight of the Czech writers in the terms of a dance – the authors would like to liberate themselves from the past, but are constantly drawn by it like the dancers: sometimes they get closer to it, sometimes they drift away.

The analyzed literary texts are presented in a chronological order. Consequently, these guidelines of the 19th-century world open with Ladislav Fuks' postmodernist novel *Vévodkyně a kuchařka* (1983). I interpret this text as a nostalgic picture of the turn of the centuries, but I focus on the heroine: the eccentric duchess Sophie. This character makes a female counterpart of the protagonist of Fuks' debut novel – Mr. Theodor Munstock. They both methodically prepare themselves for the future, which – in the case of the former – is placed in the approaching 20th century. In my analysis I also pay attention to Fuks' novel's affinity with Adalbert Stifter's *Der Nachsommer*.

Fuks's glance at the distant past can be juxtaposed with Ankersmit's concept: the only way to understand what is irretrievably gone is via nostalgia, which constitutes the compositional mode of the Czech prose-writer. Using Marek Zaleski's idea, I inscribe Fuks in the procession of the 20th-century artists who practice "the rehabilitation of nostalgia" characterized by the mixture of bitter-sweet brooding of the by-gone with the simultaneous anxiety of the future.

The next two chapters are devoted to the analysis of various associations with the events of 1866 and the Austro-Prussian war as seen by Jan Žáček and Vladimír Körner. The military conflict that influenced the subsequent formation of the international relations in Europe and the events of the first half of the 20th century did not always constitute the focus of historians' interest. Thus, it is worth underlining its significance in both writers' output.

Although Žáček's *Nesklopím oči svých* was written earlier, it was first published in 1990 during the times when many previously forbidden books were finally released. Consequently, it was not noticed by critics and readers. The book presents a psychologically-motivated attempt to outline various possibilities stemming from Austria's defeat in the war of 1866. The author uses the technique of focalizing thanks to which the reader learns about the presented past not through a historical lecture, but rather a puzzle requiring their active participation. The text can find its place in the trend of anthropologizing history, known in historiography since the 1980s when Carlo Ginzburg published *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-century Miller*.

The Austro-Prussian War provides a linkage between the previous and next chapter that concentrates on Körner's shorter epic texts in which the author describes its consequences. It is evident from the writer's public utterances that he was constantly interested in this conflict. In the twin texts *Post bellum 1866 (Post bellum, Svíbský les)*, the novella *Život za podpis* or the micro-novel *Oklamáný – Der Betrogene* (all these works were published between the mid-1980s to 1994) the novelist displays the protagonists' trauma caused by the war experiences. Everyone is stigmatized with the past and continue their lives in the shade of the previous happenings.

In the case of the *Post bellum 1866* cycle, I try to demonstrate how the technique of shifting the points of view parallels the historiography's impossibility to convey one cohesive and objective

picture of the past. I also emphasize the visible motif of tanatotourism – the phenomenon that has only relatively recently become the basis for theoretical reflection, but whose traces can be noticed in the times described by the writer. The linkage between the 19th and 20th century in the last text (when the author makes references to Auschwitz) proves Körner to be a historical philosopher, for whom the historical experience is identical with the experience of war.

Chapter Five concentrates on Vladimír Macura's four-piece *Ten, který bude* (1999). Its individual parts (*Informátor, Komandant, Guvernantka* and *Medikus*) are juxtaposed with the author's conclusions presented in his historic-literary works (*Znamení zrodu. České národní obrození jako kulturní typ, Český sen*). I try to determine the mutual elements of these two modes of speaking (i.e. literary and academic discourses), as well as the areas where they differ.

I underline Macura's specific strategy based on filling in the "empty spaces between documents," which enables him to use the multitude of genuine sources (correspondence, memoirs, etc.), as well as his fictional ideas. As a result, the semiotic approach to the world of national rebirth is enhanced with the microhistory of human relations that is not usually found in the academic work, but only such a collation constitutes a finite holistic entity. Questioning the previously told stories in the last part of the text and giving voice to the insane chronicler make it possible to view the whole four-piece work as historical metafiction in Linda Hutcheon's understanding of this term.

Macura frequently stated that contemporariness exerted a huge impact on his literary expedition to the 19th century, which also becomes my focus. According to the writer, Czech culture tends to suppress the 19th century and at the same time, faced with the (mostly external) dangers, it returns to this period. Ricoeur's "situation of insecurity" as the gauge of microhistory reflects the situations into which the Czech writer forces his protagonists, regardless of the fact whether they have their historical prototype or not. Historizing writing can be, then, treated as a linkage that makes it possible to search in the past for the analogies to the surrounding reality. It can also act as a remedy for the currently living human's complaints.

Vladimír Macura's entire literary output appears to me as a practical realization of Hayden White's ideas. The historian notes that presently there arises a question about neutralizing the academic discourse and a concern to return the thought about the past to the sphere of poetic and associatory thinking, because only this strategy may result in innovation.

In Chapter Six, I concentrate on Václav Vokolek's allegorical and grotesque *Cesta do pekel* (1999) which is a peculiar "pictorial" handbook to the mid-19th-century world, the period in which we can observe the clash between the romantic landscape, the Biedermeier still-life, and the ascending realistic painting. This text that successfully dodges generic classification is an example of the phenomenon of ekphrasis that frequently appears in the prose rooted in the past. The author

proposes contamination of the fictional world that is historically plausible (the construction of the Prague–Dresden railway) and implausible (infernal forces interference) as understood by Lubomír Doležel.

Apart from the aesthetic layer, Vokolek emphasizes the ethical dimension of his activity. He deliberately chooses grotesque as the basic category of the presented world to reinterpret the tradition of the congested and until then positively pictured “era of steam and electricity.” He follows Michał Głowiński who notes that grotesque may appeal to the dominating societal consciousness. For Vokolek, railways and trains are the metonymy of progress that dramatically invaded the landscape of the northern Czech Republic. Therefore, I connect this text to White’s concept of progressive history. It can – or even should – refer to the past so as to look for the ways to deal with the current cares there.

Many allusions to contemporariness enable us to treat Vokolek’s book as an important voice about the roots of a human’s modern condition, a being torn between the two contrasting elements of world-view: the pursuit of modernity and the need to intensify his/her connection with nature.

The last chapter sets together two books: *Poslední tečka za Rukopisy* (1998) by Miloš Urban and *Prsten od vévodkyně* (2011) by František Novotný. The similarities between the two allowed me to perceive, apart from numerous intertextual references, a common trait – a typical for the period after 1989 phenomenon of deheroisation of grand historical personages exemplified by Božena Němcová. In my analysis I make use of the (*das*) *Nachleben* category by Aba Warburg. Setting together the image of *Babička*’s author in both books I present how contemporary historical prose may enter an inspiring dialogue with popular literature.

One may inquire whether at the beginning of the 21st century the possibilities of once so potent genre of a historical novel have been used up and whether this type of literary works is to attract new readers. I come to the conclusion that historical narrations, reaching for the icons of Czech culture, have gained a meaningful number of recipients, and private, or even intimate stories of great historical personages are the means to enliven the interest in educationally boring history of one’s nation. This kind of experiment, a hybrid of the past and engrossing inquisitive action, may be considered an attempt to bring historical writing back to life.

The completion of the monograph allowed me to move beyond the prose defined in the title. The object of a brief reflection was the short book *Dopisy*, in which there is an artificially created dialogue between the deceased Karel Havlíček Borovský and the contemporary writer Michal Šanda. The authentic epistolography of the 19th century hero of the Czech national rebirth served as a catalyst for an intriguing dispute on, among others, the condition of literature and contemporary

culture. The work is another example of humorous “rewriting” of the Czech history, of making it closer to a modern recipient.

All works analyzed in the dissertation prove that the picture of the 19th century is strongly rooted in consciousness and enable artists to use it in numerous ways. The traditional historical novel gives way to postmodern games and the reader must be constantly focused not only on gaining information of “how it really happened,” but, more importantly, on reacting in places where the author suggests a historical game, e.g. a parody or deheroization. I attempted to present mechanisms enabling prose drawing from the past distances from classical true/false dichotomy, replacing it with the unconventional, according to Ankersmit, method of privatizing history and recognizing in it both hope and disaster, happiness and suffering.

4. Additional academic achievements (including artistic ones)

a) Academic activity

From the beginning of my academic career, dominated by the Bohemistics, it is possible to divide my research interests into a number of spheres. The first one is the oeuvre of the Czech poet Jan Zahradníček (1905–1960), on whom I concentrated in my MA thesis (reviewed by the supervisor, prof. Jacek Baluch, and prof. Julian Kornhauser). During the preparations, I had a chance to get acquainted with the considerable amount of the 20th-century Czech poetry. It was also connected to my academic debut in the prestigious journal “Česká literatura” (*Zahradníček a Polsko*, trans. M. Havránková, “Česká literatura” 2000/5), in which I presented the results of my research focused on Polish inclinations of this one of the greatest Czech poets. Afterwards, there followed further articles on his poetry: *Jan Zahradníček’s Prison Poetry (Poezja więzienna Jana Zahradníčka) [“Dům Strach” and “Čtyři léta”]*, “Bohemistyka” 2005/1; *Jan Zahradníček’s “Korouhve” and „Svatý Václav” and Ivan Slavík’s “Lux sanctorum” in the Context of Paul Claudel’s Czech Inspirations (“Korouhve” i “Svatý Václav” Jana Zahradníčka oraz “Lux sanctorum” Ivana Slavíka w kontekście czeskich inspiracji Paula Claudela)*, in: *Język i literatura czeska w europejskim kontekście kulturowym*, eds. M. Balowski and J. Svoboda, Racibórz 2008; *Dům v díle Jana Zahradníčka [na příkladu sbírky “Dům Strach”]*, in: *Topos dům v české a polské literatuře. Sborník z mezinárodní vědecké konference*, Opava 2009; *Jan Zahradníček’s Polish Pursuits and Inspirations (Polskie poszukiwania i inspiracje Jana Zahradníčka)*, in: *Proměny polonistiky. Tradice a výzvy polonistických studií*, eds. M. Benešová, R. Rusin Dybalska, L.

Zakopalová a kol., Praha 2014 – in this article I expand the problematic aspects signaled in my first published text.

To some extent, Ivan Slavík and Ivan Diviš are the two authors who are ideologically close to Jan Zahradníček, which explains why I included them in the next articles dealing with both poetry and prose of personal account: *Já v denících Arnošta Jenče Ivana Slavíka*, in: *Ty, já a oni v jazyce a literatuře*, Ústí nad Labem 2009; *Ivan Diviš's Emigration Perspective (Emigracyjna perspektywa Ivana Diviša)*, in: *Od banity do nomady*, eds. J. Czaplíńska and S. Giergiel, Opole 2010.

Another interesting experience was the encounter with Jaromír Šavřda's output, since I was working with the text of a never published manuscript that I obtained from the widow of one of the Libri Prohibiti's worker: *Růženec otce Popieluszka Jaromíra Šavřdy a polski kult maryjny*, in: *Dialog kultur III*, Ústí nad Orlicí 2005.

Occasionally, I endeavor to popularize Polish poetry abroad, as in the case of my articles announced in the prestigious "Slavia" journal, published by The Czech Academy of Sciences: *The Motif of Time in Mieczysław Jastrun's Poetry (Motyw czasu w poezji Mieczysława Jastruna)*, "Slavia" 2004/3; *Skamander Elements in Jerzy Liebert's Poetry (Elementy skamandryckie w poezji Jerzego Lieberta)*, "Slavia" 2006/3.

Another area of my academic interests covers the argument about the sense of Czech history, the key issue for the Czech national identity. To a great degree, the 20th-century Czech literature functions as a result of this dispute, although it remains almost completely unknown in Poland. Following its trajectory, learning its main participants' texts, and the subsequent considerations in essays significantly enhanced my previous research. The next step was an attempt to use the historical-philosophical reflections in the context of Jaroslav Durych's literary activities (1886–1962). In Poland, only a small group of Bohemists is familiar with his oeuvre.

The result of the several years of studies was the doctoral dissertation and the monograph based on it, *Jaroslav Durych and the Dispute on the Sense of Czech History (Jaroslav Durych oraz spór o sens czeskich dziejów)* (Opole 2006). In the book, I analyzed Durych's historical prose as well as his lesser known and controversial journalistic writing. Some of these considerations were also presented in the form of conference papers as well as journal articles and book chapters, e.g.: *Jaroslav Durych in the Argument about the Sense of Czech History (Jaroslav Durych w sporze o sens czeskich dziejów)*, in: *Język i literatura czeska w interakcji / Český jazyk a literatura v interakci*, eds. M. Balowski, J. Svoboda, Racibórz 2006; *Rudolf Voříšek's Lesser Known Views on the Argument about the Sense of Czech History [in the Context of Jaroslav Durych's Journalistic Writing] (Rudolfa Voříška málo znany głos w sporze o sens czeskich dziejów [w kontekście publicystyki Jaroslava Durycha])*, in: *Procesy autoidentyfikacji na obszarze kultur środkowoeuropejskich po roku 1918*, ed. J. Goszczyńska,

Warszawa 2008; *Miloš Marten's Voice in the Argument about the Sense of Czech History* (*Głos Miloša Martena w sporze o sens czeskich dziejów*), "Bohemistyka" 2009/2; *Durychovy hry s prostorem*, in: *Prostor v jazyce a v literatuře*, eds. J. Koten, P. Mitter, Ústí nad Labem 2007; *The Problem of Identity in Jaroslav Durych's Journalistic Writing in the Context of the Argument about the Sense of Czech History* (*Problematyka tożsamości w publicystyce Jaroslava Durycha w kontekście sporu o sens czeskich dziejów*), in: *Literatura i/a tożsamość w XX wieku*, eds. A. Gleń, I. Jokiel, M. Szladowski, Opole 2007; *Historia sacra v románu "Služebníci neužiteční" Jaroslava Durycha*, in: *Minulost, přítomnost a budoucnost v jazyce a literatuře*, ed. Z. Menšíková, Ústí nad Labem 2011).

The monograph *Jaroslav Durych and the Dispute on the Sense of Czech History* is divided into two parts. In the first one, I reconstruct the history of the discourse which dominated the Czech thought for long years, and which is virtually unknown in Poland. Its major participants were Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk and Josef Pekař, and its main wave fell on the period from the 1890s to the 1930s. According to Masaryk, the true sense of Czech history is enclosed in free thought and reformation humanism, which are contrasted with the forced process of return to Catholicism. Following Palacký, he viewed the Hussites as the fight of the Czech nation for emancipation of the human reason against the medieval Church authority. However, by linking the Hussites with the time of the national revival, he made a historical shortcut, eliminating – among others – the achievements of the Czech Baroque.

The core Pekař's polemics was the critique of Masaryk's religious interpretation of the Czech question and the negation of the thesis placing the Hussites as the peak point of Czech history. According to the historian, such a viewpoint was deeply rooted in the medieval mode of interpreting the world and had little to do with the modern humanism. The national revival stemmed from the Baroque, the epoch that was inequitably belittled. Its rehabilitation is connected to the methodological shift in Czech history. What is more, there were also Pekař's texts that served as an impulse to its reassessment. The chapter entitled *Resurgence of the Czech Baroque* takes the position of a linkage with the second part of the monograph, in which I analyze Durych's journalistic writing and selected novels. The starting point here was Jan Patočka's thesis that the writer's Catholicism provides the answer to the question about the sense of Czech existence at the beginning of the 20th century.

Durych's vast and diverse journalistic writing enabled me to understand the interwar period: the time of heated debates, shaping the nation's identity in the situation of newly regained independence that was instantly threatened by the approaching cataclysm of the World War II. His conscious position of an outsider derived from negating the officially accepted and sacralized tradition leading from Hus to Masaryk. His popularity also suffered from the apotheosis of

martyrdom, the cleansing power of the White Mountain defeat, harsh reactions to belittling the achievements of the Baroque, and the defense of the Catholic church.

Out of Durych's prose writings I analyzed these texts that with their themes and artistic form harked back to the 17th century. These included: *The Descent of the Idol (Bloudění)*, *Rekviem, Masopust. Historický román o lidech hledajících milostné štěstí*, and the four-piece *Služebníci neužiteční*. Employing the expressionistic method, Durych undertook polemics with Alois Jirásek's previous tradition of historical writing. Concerned with honest presentation of history (though it was not the key issue), he endeavored to capture the zeitgeist and provide his protagonists with the qualities of the epoch when mysticism adjoined eroticism, when deliberations on death intersected lush sensualism, when asceticism frequently coexisted with hedonism, when complex symbolism interbred with the naturalistic display of details.

Both Zahradníček and Durych represented the current known in Czech nomenclature as "Catholic literature." They were also both translated into Polish. However, Jan Žáček, another author belonging to this category, still remains unrecognized, and this is his prose that constitutes the next academic area of my research: *Polish Echoes in Jan Žáček's "Nesklopím očí svých"* (*Polskie echa w powieści Jana Žáčka "Nesklopím očí svých"*), in: *Svět kreslený slovem*, eds. M. Balowski, M. Hádková, Ústí nad Labem 2011; *Reflexe české minulosti v historické próze 2. poloviny 20. století [na příkladu vybraných děl Jana Žáčka]*, in: *Rozumíme si navzájem? Možnosti reflexe minulosti v současnosti v české a polské literatuře, jazyce a kultuře 20. století*, ed. L. Martinek, Opava–Opole 2011; *Proměny v tvorbě Jana Žáčka po roce 1989*, in: *Literatura jako výzva a apel*, ed. O. Mainx, Opava 2014; *Hagiographical Themes in the Czech Historical Prose [after 1989] (Tematyka hagiograficzna w czeskiej prozie historycznej [po przełomie roku 1989])*, in: *Obraz świętości – świętość w obrazie*, eds. I. Lis-Wielgosz, W. Józwiak, P. Dziadul, Poznań 2014). It is because of the author's relatively small recognition in the Czech historical–literary discourse that I devote to him the chapter of my habilitation thesis.

The scope of my interests also covered national identity as well as myths, and historical and contemporary stereotypes. I dealt with it in the following articles: *Morawski genius loci*, in: *"Swoje" i "cudze." Kategorie przestrzeni w literaturach i kulturach słowiańskich. Tom 1. Słowiańszczyzna Zachodnia*, Poznań 2005; *The Czechs are Catholics [Breaking the Stereotype] (Czesi są narodem katolickim [próba przewyciężenia stereotypu])*, in: *Stereotype in interkultureller Wahrnehmung / Stereotypy w postrzeganiu interkulturowym / Stereotypy z interkulturního hlediska*, Nysa 2005 (available also in German translation). Additionally, some of my foreign lectures realized in the Erasmus programme were devoted to this issue.

My academic output also includes the reviews that I publish in the opinion-forming journals, such as “Česká literatura,” “Bohemistyka” and “Studia Slavica.” From the position of an editor I would also like to emphasize this category as I observe the fading need of such discussions. The reviewed texts usually parallel my interests. It is worth noting that I provided a number of publishing reviews in Czech journals (e.g. “Tahy,” “Historie-Otázky-Problémy”), as well as books (e.g. Nakladatelství Karolinum).

To sum up, my academic output is comprised of two monographs, forty articles (including one co-written; thirty-nine of them published after the doctorate) in journals and collective volumes (including seventeen Czech ones), thirteen reviews in Polish and Czech journals (twelve after doctorate): *Práce z dějin slavistiky XIX. Kolokvium k 80. výročí polonistiky na Univerzitě Karlově v Praze*, Praha 2005 (co-written with R. Dybalska); *Zmierzch Herdera. Filologiczne podstawy slawistyki*, Opole 2010 (co-written with J. Baluch).

I participated in thirty-two academic conferences (one before the doctorate), half of them being organized abroad by the Czech academic institutions (Prague, Ústí nad Labem, Hradec Králové, Opava), or research centers (Ústav pro českou literaturu Akademie věd České republiky, Slovanský ústav Akademie věd České republiky). Most recently, I have partaken in the symposiums *Proměny polonistiky. Tradice a výzvy polonistických studií* (Prague 2013) and *V. Kongres světové literárněvědné bohemistiky* (Prague 2015), as well as the conference *Román Západních Slovanů: teoretické, historické a interpretační kontexty* (Prague 2016).

I held the position of a thematic editor in the “Studia Slavica” journal, and since 2016 I have been the secretary to the “Studia et Documenta Slavica” journal (published by The Institute of Slavonic Philology, University of Opole), as well as its website administrator.

b) Didactic activities, popularization and grants

Educating students constitutes a significant element of the university career. So far I have been working in in four academic centers – two in Poland (UO, PZSZ in Nysa) and two in the Czech Republic (UK v Praze, UPa). It is valuable to confront experiences that I have managed to gather due to different approaches to didactics and work organization. In the case of a Bohemist, it is also extremely important to initiate contacts with the Czech academics society.

What is worth emphasizing, in all the four institutions I have supervised and reviewed diploma papers. So far I have successfully supervised four MA theses (UK) and over forty BA theses (PWSZ in Nysa, Opole); I have reviewed over forty BA and MA theses (UO, UPa, UK v Praze). Nowadays, I supervise subsequent diploma papers, and I am an additional supervisor of two doctoral

dissertations devoted to Czech literature in The Philological Faculty, University of Opole (Aleksandra Paluch, MA, and Anna Gnot, MA).

High grades in students' and authorities' evaluations (part of an employee's assessment), the University of Opole rector's award obtained in 2017, as well as references from previous workplaces make my efforts within the didactic process appreciated. Apart from the courses in the history of Czech literature and culture, I have classes dealing with the practical Czech language, during which I can restore to the expertise I gained while adapting the popular coursebook and workbook of the Czech language (H. Remediosová, E. Čechová, *Chcemy mówić po czesku 1. Komunikacyjny kurs współczesnego języka czeskiego*, Liberec 2005, 2009) for Polish students. Additionally, I prepared backup materials for the specialist course of the Czech language for the students of priest theology (The Theological Faculty, University of Opole, Opole 1999).

Newly created majors constitute another significant university enterprise. I actively participated in the preparation of the programmes, syllabuses and subsequent modifications of daily and extramural majors, as well as postgraduate studies in The Philological Faculty, University of Opole (such as Slavonic Philology, Czech Philology, Foreign Languages in Services, Applied Translation Studies, The Czech Language in Public Service, The Czech Language in Management). My recent task has been to coordinate the procedures preparing the first inter-faculty studies in University of Opole that are to combine language skills (Czech, Polish for foreigners) with the knowledge of laws and the elements of entrepreneurship.

I am also a member of The Programme Council of The Institute of Slavonic Philology, University of Opole, which is responsible – among others – for study programmes. Additionally, I was a member of the two following councils: for certifications and for the didactics quality in The Philological Faculty, University of Opole.

Frequently I am entrusted with pioneering and challenging tasks. One of these, which proved highly successful, was the Academy of Young Polyglot, launched in 2016 by The Philological Faculty, University of Opole, whose goal is to refer to the progressing idea of "children universities." The pilot project that I coordinated included sixty children aged 9–12 who participated in eight Saturday meetings (between March and June 2017). Each meeting was devoted to one of the lectured foreign languages of The Philological Faculty. The whole venture comprised professionally prepared classes (I dealt with the Czech language), the official website and the Facebook profile, as well as its promotion in the local media (newspaper articles and broadcasts on Radio Opole and Radio DOXA). The project proved successful as currently the second edition of Academy of Young Polyglot is held, which helps to build a positive image and recognizable brand in the local community.

Grants constitute another important element of my academic career. Between 2009–2010 I was a member of the team in *Česko-polské kulturně vzdělávací partnerství* project realized within The Operational Programme of Transboundary Czech–Polish Cooperation 2007–2013 (CZ.3.22/2.3.00/08.00029), which was implemented by Palacký University in Olomouc and University of Opole. My tasks included translating materials for the website and participation in conferences; the latter resulted in the article publication: *Karel Hynek Mácha a historia*, “Bohemistyka” 2010/4.

Later on, I was invited to take part in the *Rozumíme si navzájem* grant, produced in cooperation with Silesian University in Opava between 2010–2011. The project was supported by The Polish–Czech Forum, and its major result was the monograph *Rozumíme si navzájem? Možnosti reflexe minulosti v současnosti v české a polské literatuře, jazyce a kultuře 20. století*, ed. L. Martinek, Opava–Opole 2011, in which I authored the chapter on Žáček’s prose.

Furthermore, between 2014–2015 I was an expert consultant of *The Czech–Polish–Russian Thematic Dictionary of the Borderland (Tematyczny czesko-polsko-rosyjski słownik pogranicza)*, eds. W. Chlebda, I. Dobrotová, Opole 2015. The work was published as part of the international research project “Universities in Favor of Borderland,” financed by the grant obtained from The Operational Programme of Transboundary Czech–Polish Cooperation 2007–2013 (CZ.3.22/2.3.00/12.03352).

International fellowships realized within the Erasmus and Erasmus+ programmes serve to broaden skills and to develop cooperation between University of Opole and Czech universities. I had visiting lectures in Czech universities (Silesian University in Opava, University of Hradec Králové, University of Pardubice) six times (2009, 2011, 2013 – twice, 2014, 2016). There I had the opportunity to gain new didactic experiences working with the Czech BA, MA, and post-graduate students. A vital part of such trips is making contact with Czech scholars and upgrading linguistic skills.

Occasionally I translate texts from Czech to Polish, and from Polish to Czech. They include literary texts (mainly poetry), as well as academic and practical ones.

Aleksandra Pajal