



JOSEF ŠVEJK

The Man of Many Turns

IT ALSO OCCURRED TO HIM THAT THE GENERATIONS OF MEN, THROUGHOUT RECORDED TIME, HAVE ALWAYS TOLD AND RETOLD **TWO STORIES**—THAT OF A LOST SHIP WHICH SEARCHES THE MEDITERRANEAN SEAS FOR A DEARLY LOVED ISLAND, AND THAT OF GOD WHO IS CRUCIFIED ON GOLGOTHA.

--JORGE LUIS BORGES,
"THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK"

ŠVEJK IN FIGURA CHRISTI

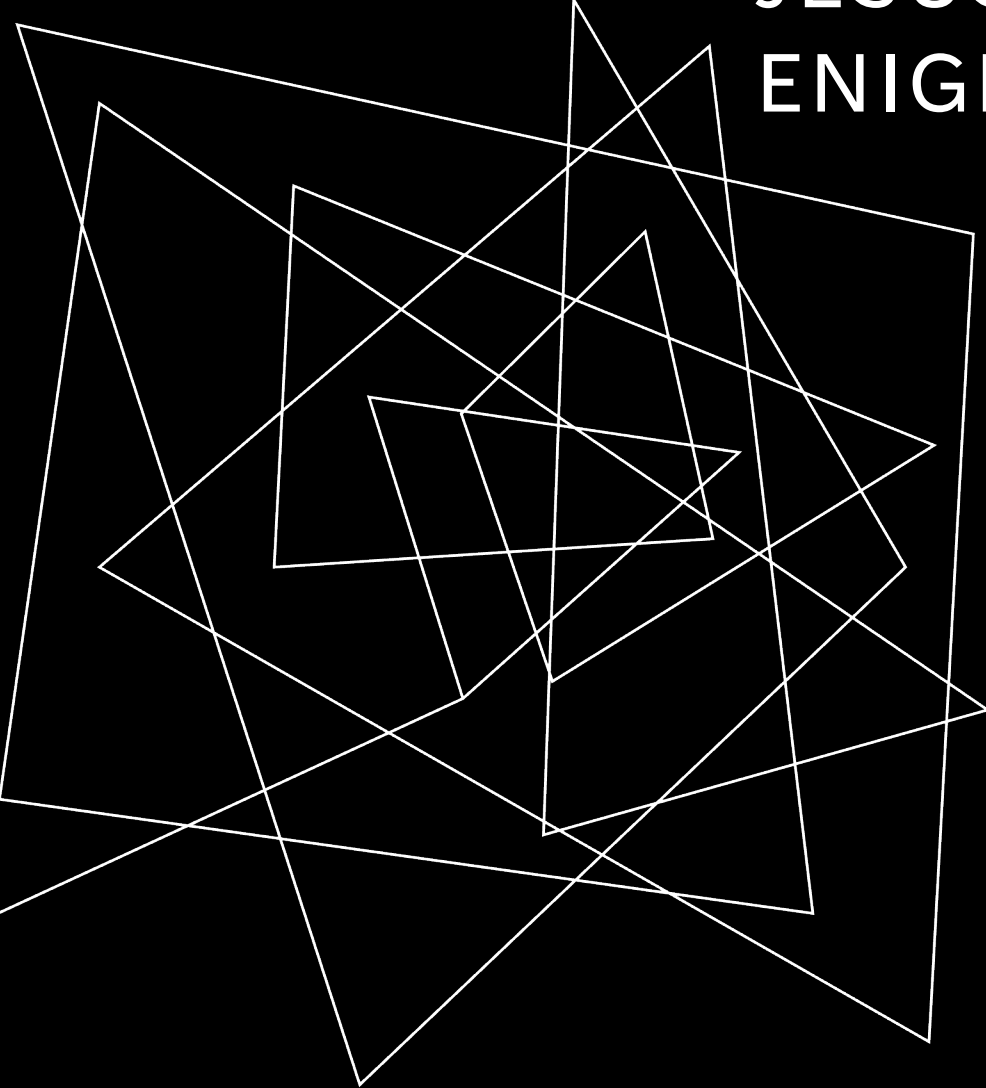
“Jesus Christ was innocent too,” said Švejk, “and all the same they crucified him” (part 1, ch. 2).

The glorious times of Roman rule over Jerusalem were coming back. The prisoners were led out, brought before the Pontius Pilates of 1914 down on the ground floor (part 1, ch. 3).

And so, mounting the staircase to the 3rd Department for questioning, Švejk carried up his cross up on the hill of Golgotha, sublimely unconscious of his martyrdom (part 1, ch. 2).

VIA DOLORES: The passions of Švejk and his stations of the cross: 1)the police headquarters; 2)the regional criminal court; 3)the lunatic asylum; 4)the police station at Salmova St.

JESUS' "NOSTALGY" AND THE ENIGMA OF HIS IDENTITY.



“In a little while you won’t see me anymore. But a little while after that, you will see me again.”

---John 16:16

Quoted by Švejkar but in a reverse order (part 3, ch. 3)

* * *

⁶ Who, being **in very nature God, did** not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;

⁷ rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

⁸ And being found **in appearance as a man**, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!

---Paul, Philippians 2:6-8

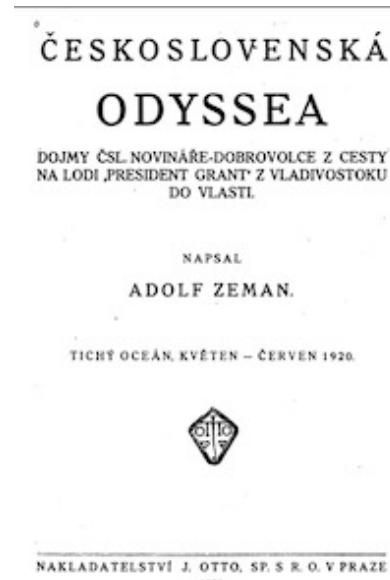
SEARCHING FOR A DEARLY LOVED ISLAND

”Švejk’s **odyssey began anew** under the honorable escort of two soldiers with fixed bayonets who had to conduct him to the chaplain” (part 1, ch. 10).

MOJE VÁLEČNÁ ODYSSEA VZPOMÍNKY LEGIONÁŘE VLADIMÍRA VAŇKA

Obálku podle návrhu Marianny Andrášové vytvořil Lukáš Tuma.
Fotografie Archiv města Brna, Národní archiv, Pražské vodárny a kanalizace,
sbírka ČsOL, VÚA-VHU Praha, Zemský archiv v Opavě.
Edice paměti Československé obce legionářské, svazek 7.

The popularity of this narrative in describing the return of the Czechoslovak legions from Russia.



ŠVEJK'S ODYSSEY BEGAN ANEW...

Švejk's Ithaca = the pub "At the Chalice" (the proleptic connotations of its address: Na bojišti 12). His domicile is obfuscated: "at the corner of Na bojišti and Kateřinská Street where I live..." (part 2, ch. 1); the streets run parallel to each other.

TWO ODYSSEYS:

The small ones: part 1, chapters 1- 6 (The Chalice → the police headquarters → the regional criminal court → the lunatic asylum → the police station at Salmova St. → The Chalice ("breaking through the vicious circle"). part 2, chapter 2 (the Budejovice anabasis). part 4, ch. 1 (Švejk in the transport of Russian POWs).

The big one: The entire book: When Švejk said goodbye to Vodička [...] he said: "When the war's over come and see me. "You'll find me from 6 o'clock onwards in The Chalice at Na bojišti" (part 2, ch. 4).

THE FIGURE OF ODYSSEUS

In world literature the first draft dodger who feigned madness (yoking a horse and an ox to his plow and sowing salt or plowing a beach):



A somewhat slippery character: a man of many turns, adaptable to circumstances [*polytropos*], clever [*polymētis*], resourceful [*polymēchanos*], or smooth talking [*ēdulogoi*]. Not exactly a conventional Homeric hero in the mold of Achilles whose qualities were forcefulness [*bie*] or courage [*thumos*]. The first hero remembered without a heroic death

Horkheimer & Adorno → the ambiguity of Odysseus' character: "*verschlagen werden und verschlagen sein*" ("cast up and cunning"). He is forsaken but determined to survive. On his "path of flight," he must be flexible and opportunistic to accommodate himself to the most different situations.

ODYSSEUS, AS THE PROTOTYPE OF THE BOURGEOIS INDIVIDUAL


Odysseus was trapped in the cave of the Cyclops Polyphemus who ate two of his men and was about to eat Odysseus himself. Odysseus got Polyphemus drunk, told him that his name is “Nobody” and after that blinded the sleeping one-eyed giant. The injured Polyphemus called his neighbors to help him to catch the villain. But they gave up on the pursuit after he replied to their question: “Who blinded you?” “Nobody.”

The formula for Odysseus's cunning is that the detached, instrumental mind by submissively embracing the enemy, makes him vulnerable and outsmarts him. “Cunning is like an exchange, in which everything is done correctly, and the contract is fulfilled yet the other party is cheated... this irrationality of reason has been precipitated in cunning, as the adaptation of bourgeois reason to any unreason which confronts it as a stronger power.”

The simpleminded Polyphemus is unaware of the duality of a proper name → an index pointing to a unique individual but also a lexical item charged with meaning. It can potentially refer to both: nobody and Odysseus himself ... He saves himself by making himself disappear.



CUNNING AS A NARRATIVE DEVICE



Cyclops episode--> an **arbitrary narrative** that puzzles the audience, requiring but **not supplying motivation**.

When asked about his identity Odysseus provides the **fictional name "Nobody."** Why did he use that name and not any other pseudonym? He could not have known what awaits him in the future. Furthermore, the name of tricked **Polyphemus** also contributes to this game. One of its meanings is "**much speaking**." And other Cyclops call him so when he cannot articulate cogently his grievance.

It is not Odysseus' cunning but **the poet's who needs this sobriquet for the climax of his story**. The merge of the poet with his hero is done so surreptitiously that the reader might overlook this subterfuge. "Odysseus' manipulation of Polyphemus is rudimentary compared to the poet's manipulation of his audience... **It is cunning at its best: a story about cunning achieved through cunning.**"



A PIOUS ODYSSEUS

The episode on the island of Thrinakia, where Helios' cows graze. Any harm to a single animal was sure to bring down deadly punishment by gods allied with Helios. Odysseus, forewarned by Kirke, forbids his crew to touch the animals. But when he goes away to pray and ask the gods for help, hungry crewmen kill the cattle. But to hedge, they sacrifice some of them to the gods.

THE RATIONAL CHOICE OF ODYSSEUS' COMRADES:

Dominant strategy

Strategies	The gods fail to cooperate: Crime goes unpunished	The gods cooperate: Crime is punished
Violate the sacred cows	Feast scot-free ^d	Die (quickly) at sea
Respect the sacred cows	Slow death by starvation	Slow death by starvation

For six days, Odysseus's company feasts on the herd of Helios. On the seventh day, the wind changes. After they set sail, Zeus obliges Helios, and the ship is destroyed by lightning during a storm. All men die, but **only pious Odysseus is spared** and escapes by swimming to the island of Calypso.

Darrel Dobbs, "Reckless Rationalism and Heroic Reverence in Homer's *Odyssey*," *American Political Science Review* 81:2.

THE CONTRADICTIONARY CHARACTER OF DON QUIXOTE



Not mentioned in the text but sometimes compared to Švejk.

Is he a madman/fool or a sage? Some of his bizarre behavior indicates that he is deranged (e.g., his fight with the windmills). There are many psychiatric diagnoses of him: "monomania," "chronic paranoia or partial systematic delirium of the expansive type, the megalomaniacal form and the philanthropic variety;" "traumatic experience of aging," symptom of "quixotism."

The opposite view by many prominent thinkers: Carl Schmitt, "Don Quixote is a thoroughly good and noble person ... Despite all its ridiculousness." Miguel de Unamuno: Quixote was a hero of the highest order, a saint, and a savior. He embodies the paradox of idealism. To change the world, one must be able to re-imagine it: to see it for what it might be rather than for what it is.

HOW DON QUIXOTE IS MADE

Cervantes initially conceived Don Quixote **as a simpleton** (“no brain”), dressed bizarrely, and acting in a delusional manner. But as the novel progresses the knight turns into **a sage, a fountainhead of bookish wisdom** dealing with more and more refined subjects.

According to Shklovsky, Don Quixote’s characteristics are **unimportant** because this figure is just a **poetic device**. He is a **copula concatenating heterogeneous materials** (various dictionaries, reference books, quotations from famous thinkers, Cervantes’ own which Don Quixote ventriloquizes. The plot is constantly interrupted by many inserted stories connected only because they are told by Don Quixote or because they involve him in one way or another.

Don Quixote’s **identity shifts** according to the requirements of a given segment.

THE FORTUNES AS AN EPISODIC NOVEL

- Parts are more important than the whole.
- The focus is on Jš, who brings such fragments together.
- Heterogeneous episodes take place in many different and unusual locations.
- Jš is always on the move, but the trajectory is not purposeful. The arbitrary decisions by the authorities collide with the capriciousness of the main protagonist's actions. Pedetic motion.
- The plot is liberally interspersed with mini-stories narrated by Jš that are rarely apropos for the given context.
- The identity of Jš is in flux, and his characteristics can be contradictory depending on the function he serves in the given moment. He must be a versatile man of many turns.

THE FORTUNES OF THE GOOD SOLDIER AS A PALIMPSEST

The novel was not created in a single continuous act. An **accretion of several previous versions** conceiving the main protagonist **in different ways**.

Three cycles.

- 1) A sequence of stories *The Good Soldier Švejk before the War* (1911). The hero is conceived as an absurd enthusiast overzealously following orders, leading to absurd situations. Equanimity of Švejk facing many punishments.
- 2) *The Good Soldier Švejk in Captivity* (Kiev, 1917). Švejk → a mouthpiece of anti-Austrian and anti-German propaganda. A coherent short novel. To some degree, this is the backbone of *The Fortunes* ending with the hero going AWOL and joining the Czech legion in Russia.
- 3) The Bugulma cycle whose autobiographic protagonist—Comrade Gašek—Švejk turned upside-down transformed from a victim of power into a representative of power. His conflicts with the regiment commander Ierokhimov, the representative of revolutionary violence.

ŠVEJK AND SEX

- When a long time ago [...] I went around with a girl called Karla Veklová, but she didn't like me very much, I'm afraid. One Sunday evening when I took her to the lake, we sat on the dam and when the sun was setting, I asked whether she loved me. Humbly report, sir, the air was balmy, all the birds were singing, and she replied with a horrible laugh; "I love you about as much as a shive in my ass, because you are such an idiot" (part 3, ch. 4).
- "Švejk!" Could be heard from the bedroom, "Švejk!"
Švejk opened the door and saw a young lady in an alluring position on the pillows
"Come in!"
Švejk walked towards the bed. With a peculiar smile she measured up his stocky figure and stocky thighs.
Pulling aside the delicate material which veiled and concealed everything she said severely: "Take off your boots and trousers! Come on...!" (part 1, ch. 14).

ŠVEJK'S BUDĚJOVICE ANABASIS

- Xenophon, the warrior of ancient times, traveled through the whole of Asia Minor and got to God knows where without any maps at all [...] Marching forward all the time is what is called anabasis [...] And all roads lead to České Budějovice. Švejk was fully convinced of this when instead of the Budějovice region he saw Milevsko (part 2, ch. 2).
- “I’ve only recently been transferred to Prague,” said Švejk. “I don’t come from here [...] You aren’t from Prague either, are you?”
“I’m from Vodňany.”
“Then we are not far away from each other,” answered Švejk, I’m from Protivín.
This knowledge of the topography of South Bohemia, which Švejk acquired once during maneuvers there [...] (part 1, ch. 6).
- “Years ago, in our [*u nás*] Budějovice a cattle dealer called Břetislav Ludvík [...] You know years ago, there was a gamekeeper in Zliv near Hluboká. He had a very ugly name—Pind’our [...] (part 1, ch. 1).

ŠVEJK AND THE HABSBURGS

- “And so, they killed our Ferdinand,” said the charwoman to Mr. Švejk [...] “Which Ferdinand, Mrs. Miller?” he asked [...] “I know two Ferdinands. One is a messenger at Průša’s, the chemist, and once by mistake he drank a bottle of hair oil there. And the other is Ferdinand Kokoška who collects dog manure.” (part 1, ch. 1)
- “But the old gentleman [Franz Josef I] really doesn’t deserve it. Just think. His son Rudolf—lost in tender years in the full flower of his manhood. His wife Elizabeth—stabbed with a file. And then Jan Orth—also lost. His brother, the Emperor of Mexico—put against a wall somewhere and shot in a fortress somewhere. And now again in his old age, they’ve shot his uncle” (part 1, ch. 1).

LOONEY TUNES



That's all