



Hašek's Hybrids

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the
evolutions
of
modernist
epic



Václav PARIS



JAROSLAV HAŠEK

SVĚT ZVÍŘÍ

ILUSTROVAL ZDENĚK

My first work was the discovery of the terrible gobbler, known to natives of the Blessed isles as "ajaroro," an animal that lives in the sea from 10 in the morning to four in the afternoon. The rest of the day it then spends on the blessed isles swallowing children.

Prvním mým dílem bylo objevení se hltouna strašlivého, zvaného domorodci na ostrovech Blažených „ajaroro“, zvířete žijícího v moři od desáté hodiny ranní do čtyř hodin odpůldne. Zbytek dne tráví pak na ostrovech Blažených polykáním dětí.

LYRA PRAGENSIS I

'AND so they've killed our Ferdinand,' said the charwoman to Mr Švejk, who had left military service years before, after having been finally certified by an army medical board as an imbecile, and now lived by selling dogs - ugly, mongrel monstrosities whose pedigrees he forged.



„Tak nám zabili Ferdinanda,” řekla posluhovačka panu Švejkovi, který opustiv před léty vojenskou službu, když byl definitivně prohlášen vojenskou lékařskou komisí za blba, živil se prodejem psů, ošklivých nečistokrevných oblud, kterým padělal rodokmeny.



Podíval se na sebe v zrcadle a co viděl?
Chlupatou potvoru ostnosrstou, s krátkýma
nohama jako jezevčík, nečistokrevného
baseta, jakéhosi podivného ošklivého
míšence.

He looked at himself in the mirror and
what did he see? A shaggy beast with spiky
fur, with short legs like a dachshund, of a
mongrel basset hound, of some peculiar,
horrible mixture.

Looking at Max Švejk thought philosophically: 'After all, by and large every soldier's stolen from his home too.'

Dívaje se na Maxe, pomyslil si Švejk filozoficky: „Když se to vezme kolem a kolem, je vlastně každěj voják taky ukradenej ze svýho domova.”



If Sergeant-Major Sondernummer uses the expression "pack of swine" he always quickly adds the word "Czech", in case the Germans should be offended and think it was meant for them. Then all the N.C.O.s of the 11th company roll their eyes like a miserable dog that has been greedy enough to swallow a sponge dipped in oil and can't get it out of its throat.

Jestli šikovatel Sondernummer mluví cosi o saubandě, přidá vždy k tomu rychle die tschechische, aby se Němci neurazili a nevztahovali to na sebe. Přitom všechny šarže u 11. kompanie koulí očima jako ubohý pes, který z hltavosti spolkne houbu namočenou v oleji a nemůže ji dostat z krku.



I don't know whether those gentlemen who examined the police archives after the overthrow of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy succeeded in deciphering the items of the secret funds of the State Police, where it was written: B... forty crowns, F...fifty crowns, L...eighty crowns etc., but they certainly were deceived if they thought that B, F, L were the initials of any gentlemen who for forty, fifty, eighty etc. crowns sold the Czech nation to the black and yellow eagle.

'B' stands for St Bernard, 'F' for fox-terrier and 'L' for Leonberger. All these dogs Bretschneider took from Švejk to police headquarters. They were ghastly mongrels, which had no connection whatsoever with any thoroughbred race which Švejk pretended them to be, when he sold them to Bretschneider. The St Bernard was a mixture of mongrel poodle and a common street cur; the fox-terrier had the ears of a dachshund and was the size of a butcher's dog with bandy legs as though it had suffered from rickets. The head of the Leonberger recalled the hairy muzzle of a stable pinscher. It had a stubbed tail, was the height of a dachshund and had bare hindquarters like the famous naked American dogs.

Later detective Kalous came to buy a dog and returned with a wildly staring monster which was reminiscent of a spotted hyena with the mane of a collie, and in the accounts of the secret fund came a new item: M ... ninety crowns. That monster was passing itself off as a mastiff ... But not even Kalous succeeded in getting any information out of Švejk. He fared the same as Bretschneider. Švejk diverted the deftest political conversations to the curing of distemper in puppies and the most cunningly prepared traps always ended in Bretschneider bringing back from Švejk another unbelievable mongrel monster. And that was the end of the famous detective Bretschneider. When he had seven monsters of this kind in his flat, he shut himself up with them in the back room and starved them so long that they finally gobbled him up. He was so honourable that he saved the state the expense of a funeral. In his personal file at police headquarters there were recorded under the column 'Advancement in service' the following poignant words: 'Devoured by his own dogs.'

When Švejk learnt later about this tragic event he said: 'It gives me a headache to think how they are going to put all his pieces together when the day of the last judgement comes.'

„[T]o byste, pane obrlajtnant, teprve koukal na podvody s těmi rodokmeny, jaký se dělají ve velkých psincích. Psů, kerej by vo sobě moh říct: ‚Já jsem čistokrevná potvora,‘ je vopravdu málo. Bud’ se mu zapoměla máma s nějakou vobludou, nebo jeho babička, nebo měl těch tatíneků víc a vod každýho něco zdědil. Po tom uši, vod toho vocas, vod jinýho zas chlupy na držce, vod třetího čumák, vod čtvrtýho pajdavý nohy a vod pátýho velikost, a když měl takovejch tátů dvanáct, tak si můžete, pane obrlajtnant, pomyslit, jak takovej pes vypadá . . . “

(“You should see, sir, the fiddles which go on with these pedigrees in the big kennels. There are really very few dogs existing which could say of themselves: ‘I’m a thoroughbred.’ Either its mamma forgot herself with some frightful monstrosity, or its granny did, or else it had several papas and inherited a bit from each. From one its ears, from another its tail, from another again the tufts on its snout, from a third its muzzle, from a fourth its hobbling legs and from a fifth its size. And if it had had twelve such papas, you can imagine, sir, what such a dog looks like...”)

