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Displaying words and playing words by means of words : (enclaves of theatre in language and literature)

DISPLAYING WORDS AND PLAYING WORDS BY MEANS OF WORDS
(Enclaves of Theatre in Language and Literature)[1]
Ivo Osolsobě (Brno)

Two basic assumptions have been accepted almost generally
in all semiotics of literature and theatre: the (tacit) presump-
tion of the semiotic purity and homogeneity of language as the
one and only system upon which all literature is based, and the
(explicit) postulate of semiotic impurity and heterogeneity of
theatre conceived as a plurality and mixture of semiotic codes.
Strange as it may seem, both the postulates are totally false.

Literature, even if written in an absolutely pure and unilin-
gual "national idiom", is - semiotically - almost always "bilin-
gual", using two linguistically identical   but semiotically
completely different codes. One code, the proper linguistic code,
is used for the verbal description, which means that in this code,
and by this code, events both of the outer and of the inner world
of the story - including verbal events - are described, that is,
verbally represented. The other code, completely different from
the first one, although, in most cases, linguistically (or rather
enthnolinguistically) absolutely identical with it, is a code in
which, and by which, words (utterances, texts) do not denote the
world but simply exhibit themselves or play other words (utter-
ances, texts) presumbly uttered by the characters of the story.
Literature - but also ordinary-life story-telling - when de-
scribing interpersonal events and arriving at the topic of verbal
events, usually switches from the first code to the second one,
from the code of the symbols (in Peirce's sense) to the code of
the icons of symbols, switching thus from the properly lingual,
verbal code (the code of, say, LOGOS) to other codes, to the code

of display and to the code of play (or, let us say, MIMOS).

(The existence of a mixture of both the two codes called, say, semi-direct speech, style indirect libre, reported speech, etc., does not deny the importance of distinguishing both codes. On the contrary: they should be distinguished - with help of the linguistic analysis of the so-called crypto-quotations - even within the "mixed code".)

In contrast to literature, the semiotic system of the theatre is semiotically almost absolutely pure and homogeneous (pro-vided there exists something like pure and homogeneous codes). This is the domain of the almost exclusive validity of the second of the two codes and of the "principle of MIMOS", which could also be called the principle of token: token modelling since, according to this principle, tokens (or strings of tokens, or clusters of tokens) do not represent the World, but, primarily, other tokens (or strings or clusters of tokens) of the same type. As result of this, the theatrical representation of semiotically heterogeneous originals (viz. situations of human interaction) by equally heterogeneous models (viz. other situations of human interaction) is semiotically absolutely homogeneous. This applies, a fortiori, to the written drama (as far as its principal text is concerned).

The above conclusions with respect to the heterogeneity of language can be confirmed by the results obtained from a compari-son between language (including literature) and painting, in par-ticular between the depiction of paintings by pantings and the "depiction" of language by language (or, better, of discourse by discourse). Painting-depicting paintings utilize absolutely identi-cal pictorial means, whether depicting paintings or depicting non paintings. In contrast to it discourse, both written and spoken,

whenever recurring to the oratio recta (or to the technique of
quoting) applies a literary device which not only differs from
the devices used in its immediate context, but which is of a to-
tally nonlinguistic semiotic nature. To express it in visual art
terms, this device is nothing but a literary counterpart of colla-
ge or ready made, the heterogeneity of which - with respect to
the remaining text - can be overlooked only by an eye - and mind
- totally free from any semiotic considerations. The foreign-
body character of quotations, quotations and cryptoquotations was
recognized by logicians (e. g. by Reichenbach[2]) as well as by
linguists (e. g. by Wierzbicka[3]) decades ago; however, semiotics
of literature has, as yet, totally failed to recognize it. But
semiotics ignoring basic semiotic facts - this is a contradiction
in terms!

What consequences can be drawn as a result of recognition
of these facts? It does not seem to be reasonable - and it is
by no means the objective of this study - to raise any territo-
rial claim and to change the accepted borderline between theatre
and literature. As to the bone of contention, i. e. the dramatic
text, it seems better to have it shared by both theatre and li-
terature - even in a competitive way - than to leave it outside
the spheres of interest of each of them. The objective of this
study, its claim and aim is, in a sense, more modest and, at the
same time, more immoderate: not to demand revision of the border-
line of theatre with respect to other forms of art but to demand
its recognition as a principle of life and knowledge. We do not
place theatre on the same level as literature considering it
("only") an art, but on the same level as language. Theatre in
this general, semiotic sense (we can call it "the principle of
MIMOS", but the term does not seem sufficiently unambiguous) is

a semiotic principle independent from language and, phylogeneti-
cally, older than languages. In previous studies (e.g. in the
French study Cours de théâtristique générale [4]) I have tried to
prove the validity of this semiotic principle in various domains
of science and life, e.g. experimentation, play, trial and error,
humour - at first sight a very disconnected field, indeed! -
whereas in the present study I am trying to prove the existence
of enclaves of validity of this semiotic principle even within
the domain of language.

What is to be done to carry on this program as a semiotic
program? The FIRST TASK would be a purely theoretical one: to
deepen, or, better, to work out the theory of the principle it-
self. The SECOND very important field seems to be the history of
the problem, that is previous reflections of this kind within
the framework of the developing views on literature and language.
Finally, the THIRD task is to find, describe, and, if possible,
classify the different domains of theatre within language and
literature themselves.

The principle itself and the PURE THEORY of it are, of course,
fully independent; of any literary or linguistic considera-
tions. This must be stressed beforehand because the term token:
token icons (or token: token models) may evoke direct linguistic
associations. No doubt, it is derived from a common linguistic
term (or, rather, from a semiotic term mostly used in linguistics).
In spite of this, the theory of token: token models has, as to
its origin, nothing to do with linguistics or with semiotics but,
rather, with a (nonexisting) theory of plural entities. Philoso-
phy since Aristotle through gnosticists up to Leibnitz or even
Strawson has considered plural entities only as a background
against which particular and individual entities can be individ-
uated; that is to say, it has not considered them at all (which
has been the only way to cope with something with which we can-
not cope in any reasonable sense). Fortunately, there exists one
kind of plural entity with which we can cope quite easily becau-
se we produce it. This is the case of production series (or se-
ries of products) as the artificial, human counterpart of the so-
called natural kinds which can be - perhaps - considered pro-
duction series of nature, and this is also the case (at least
in a certain degree) of linguistic tokens. Each token of a cer-
tain type (let us extend the term token for any series product)
can be cognitively in three principal ways: (1) as an original
(if, for some reason, we are interested exactly in this parti-

cular token only; (2) as a sample (if we are interested in the whole series rather than in the sample token itself); and (3) as a model of some (or any) other member of the same series. Such token: token models are supposed to be even the best models if we can trust Arthuro Rosenblueth and Norbert Wiener claiming that "the best (..) model of a cat is (..) another (..) cat". Even though the quoted authors use this example only half-seriously, token: token models exist and deserve a theory developed in more technical and less amateurish fashion than has been done by the present author[6].

Such a theory should take into consideration all ontological modalities of series, reals, past, future, potential, series that are stable, and series that are improving or deteriorating, and all possible variants of tokens (tokens that are normal, paradigmatic tokens, and tokens that are foils, misfits, or even fakes). This would have some interesting corollaries, e. g. that there can be no (normal) token: token models of unfeasible originals. The range of application of such a theory would be extremely wide, including not only such fields as theory of the so-called ostension[7], theory of communication, and museology, but also theory of scientific experimentation (a series of experiments), theory of speech recognition, theory of animal and children's play, — and also theory of quotation as well as of direct speech.

To survey the second field, i. e. the HISTORY OF THE PROBLEM, we must begin with Plato[8], the first theoretician of the "theatre in literature". Unfortunately the straight forward moralizing and naive social reformatory ideas prevent the modern reader from taking his arguments seriously. Be that as it may, it was, perhaps, thanks to this motivation that Plato's observational capacity in a degree that made him draw a clear distinction between words describing facts (both real and fictitious facts) and words playing other words (also real or fictitious), i. e., in Plato's original terms, between diegesis and mimesis. Diomedes[9], the late Roman grammarian, took over Plato's trichotomy of poetry but, alas, rephrased it in his own terms. With Plato it is the way of representation (that is the word itself, whether it denotes, or mimes, or switches from one to the other) that distinguishes and classifies literary genres, with Diomedes it is the "person of the speaker": whether the poet, the character of the story, or both. This seemingly slight shift, which may seem to have some pedagogical advantages, results, in fact, in a terrible confusion if we take it in a literary sense (which is usually the case). There can be only one speaking person: the poet, the author. He is only one who is really speaking and who can really speak. But he can choose between two different manners of verbal represen-tation: he can describe, or he can play. When Curtius[10] neglects this difference and interprets Plato in Diomedes' terms, it is quite pardonable, the more so because he has no semiotic ambitions. But if the same happens to Kristeva,[11] who pretends to be a semio-tician, it is a serious mistake, because it was exactly here where there was the opportunity to prove it. Unless she is not respon-sible for what she has written because it is not she - that "per-son who is speaking" - but Curtius (in the statements signed by Kristeva) and Diomedes (through the statements signed by Curtius).

the issue left open by Plato and to start a dialogue over twenty-three centuries. Bakhtin draws almost the same distinction as Plato, moreover almost in the same terms. Nevertheless - and this

is one additional reason for a genuine dialogue with Plato - his
motivation is totally different from that of his partner, and
as for their evaluations of the same phenomena, they are exactly
opposite. What Plato wished to banish from the ideal state (and
what, in fact, always has been banished from the "real culture"
to its "vulgar" periphery and to the underground of literature) -
the spontaneous vulgar culture of carnival - is promoted by Bakh-
tin to the very core of literature in the vernacular and consi-
dered a fons vitae of all fiction writing. Needless to say, Bakh-
tin's concept of carnival is identical with Plato's concept of
miming and with our principle of theatre. What else could carni-
val be, if not an improvised piece play, and role played by each
for the other, and, at the same time, by all for all and by eve-
rybody for everybody?

Little wonder that the person who entered after so many cen-
turies the dialogue with the dialectician Plato was, himself,
a theorist of dialogue, that is, to use his own term, of the "dia-
logic speech". The same can be said about Mukařovský. Surprising-
ly, his studies about dialogue have nothing to do with our pro-
blem; their proper concern is dialogue in life. Nevertheless,
when writing about Karel Čapek [12] he clearly distinguishes short
stories describing events from short stories retelling somebody
else's description of events. The same distinction is obvious
even for Karel Čapek himself who, in his theoretical essays
(Marsyas or At the Periphery of Literature), classifies (jokes)
as micro-comedies rather than as micro-stories. [13]

As for the last requirement of our semiotic program, viz.
the TYPOLOGY OF THEATRE IN LITERATURE, the best approach to this
problem seems to be via quotations. People produce verbal tokens
in two huge sub-series, spoken and written, and each of the two
sub-series can contain quotations from itself as from the other
series. Thus we can have written quotations from written texts
(usually described in terms of display rather than play, or, in
other words, in terms of showing rather than in terms of token:
token modelling), and spoken quotations from the written texts
(even here the spoken utterance functions as a token: type sample
of the written sentence rather than as a token: token model).
On the other hand, we can also have written quotations of spoken
utterances (e. g. protocols), and, finally, spoken quotations
of spoken utterances (here the token: token principle seems to
fit almost perfectly).

The first thing we can do with these four basic cases is to
extend them from one-sentence quotation to entire-text quotations.
The first possibility (written:written) will then include not
only such variants as collections of quotations, but also such
as, say, editions of letters, collections of articles originally
printed in periodicals, readers, anthologies, etc. If such editions
are realised as facsimiles, the impression of an exhibition only
can be stressed. The second variant (spoken from written) can
perhaps be extended from reading (that is quoting) short passages
of written texts within spoken lectures to word-by-word reading
of written papers, that is, from citation to re-citation. A lectu-
rer reading word by word his own text, or a poet reciting his own
poem, is it not in fact something like extended auto-quotation?
The third possibility (written from spoken) can be, naturally,
extended to include all protocols and proceedings, provided they
are written in direct speech. As for the fourth case (spoken:spo-

ken) this variant will tend not so much to the quantitative exten-
sion (i. e. towards longer utterances), but, first of all, to -
wards an expansion crossing the boundaries of purely linguistic
quotation and aiming, via paralinguistics and kinetics, at the
status of a (marginal) microtheatre.

As yet we have considered only the modality of real texts,
spoken or written. Our next step aims at the inclusion of quoting
from fictitious texts. It is interesting that the element of fic-
tionality (quoting from fictitious originals) reinforces the thea-
trical character of the resulting product whether spoken or writ-
ten. The written:written variant includes such cases of theatre
in literature as novels pretending to be collections of letters
(e. g. Werther or Les liaisons dangereuses), of "posthumous pa-
pers", of clippings 'the Salamander War by Karel Čapek), or even
novels pretending (or, rather, playing) Festschrifts (Life and
Work of Composer Foltýn, by the same author). Finally, the "writ-
ten-from-spoken" variant is theatre, genuine theatre, whether on
stage or in life.

As for other modal variants, let us mention quoting from pos-
sible uses of the same word in a different context, which is -
within a serious text - usually signalized by an excessive use
of quotation marks indicating our distancing from a "real" use
of the inappropriate expression in this context. (Cf. the quota-
tion marks at the expression "real" in the preceding sentence.)

Like other models (and in contrast to language), token: to-
ken models (including quotations) have no built-in information
concerning their modality (that is, no information whether they
represent originals existing, potential, past, future, etc.).
Moreover - and in contrast to other models - token: token models
have no built-in information whether they are meant (offered) by
their senders as original or as models. In addition to all this,
quotations - as verbal token: token models - occur in verbal con-
texts. Consequently, both easy confusion, and easy prevention
from confusion by explicit metacommunication are equally possible:
this is why the domain of token: token models of (possible) utte
ances or texts occuring within normal utterances or texts is a
world of easy deception, mystification, and at the same time of
(relatively) easy recognition of deception and thus the domain
of joke, fun and play.

The principle of theatre in literature and of token: token

models in general can be, perhaps, used as an explanatory princi-

ple of fiction in general. Fictionality, in contrast to other onto-

logical modalities, is never signalized by mechanisms built into

language: on the contrary, language signalizes it, deceptively, as

a normal reality. Obviously, the substance of fictionality has

nothing to do with illocution (from in-loquor), that is with

speech-acts, but very much to do with illusion (from in-ludo),

that is "play-acts", particularly with "play-acts with speech-acts",
i. e. with illusion in the (and of the) illocution.[14]

Finally let us pay regard to a different concept of theatre,[15]
i. e. to that form of theatre that can be found in amusement
parks, Disneyland attractions, carousels, swings, etc. This is
a type of, say, theatre where the consumer, confronted with a
mechanical device, has to be involved in an active participation,
becoming thus (most usually) the one-person public of his own
experiencing. It may seem totally out of place, but identical
structures of token: token modelling can be found in Disneyland's
Space Trip (the picture of Earth diminishes at the bottom "win-
dow" of the "space ship" whereas the whole auditorium, staring
at it, plays the role of the cosmic voyageurs), in baroque churches
with through-the open-ceiling-views-of-the-open-heavens trom-
pe l'oeil painting (the entire church, including the visitor's
gaze, plays the role another church: of a church where the vault
has just opened and a miracle is happening so that we can see the
canopy of heaven open), in some cultic behaviour (kneeling and
kissing a lying cross; the holy communion; praying of "mechanical"
prayers, i. e., prayers with pre-established (order of) "speech
events" and "narrated events"), and in the so-called "inner mono-
logue" or "stream of consciousness" of post-Joycean prose. We
might ask whether also "private" reading of fiction should not
be placed in this category, because, perhaps, even the printed
tokens play (and evoke) the "inner tokens" of the "inner monolo-
gue" of the reader's mind.

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2 Cf. e. g. PELC, Jerzy: Logika i jazyk. Studia z semiotyki logicznej. Warszawa 1967.

3 Cf. WIERZBICKA, Anna: Descriptions or Quotations. In: Greimas, A. J. et al. /eds./: Sign, Language, Culture. See also my review of this study entitled Fifty Keys to Semiotics, in: Semiotica VII, 1973, pp 226–281, especially its final section "Linguistic Non-Linguistics as a Key to Semiotics (The Problem of Quotation)".

4 Études littéraires XIII, No 3, décembre 1980, pp. 413–435.

5 Surprisingly, an interesting theory of modern production series can be found in the medieval realists, provided we consider universalia in re production series produced /and conceived ante rem/ by God.

6 This applies, unfortunately, both to my book Divadlo, které mluví, zpívá a tančí - Teorie jedné komunikační formy, Praha 1974, where this theory was exposed for the first time, and to my last study dealing with this problem, Two Extremes of Iconicity, in: Bouissac, Paul, Michael Herzfeld and Roland Posner, (eds.): Iconicity - Festschrift for Thomas A. Sebeok, Tübingen: Stauffenburg, 1986, pp. 95–117.

7 Cf. my article Ostension in the Encyclopedic Dictionary of Semiotics, Sebeok, T. A. (general editor), Berlin-Den Haag-New York: Mouton, 1986.

8 The Republic, Book III, 392-398.

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tus of Fictional Discourse).

15 An attempt at a description of Disneyworld in terms of thea-
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is examined in the last chapter of my book Mnoho povyku pro
sémiotiku (in press).

DIVADELNOST JAKO KLASIFIKAČNÍ KRITERIUM SÉMIOTICKÉ A GENOLOGICKÉ

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Divadelnost v nadpise tohoto shrnutí je spíš poutač než termín a měla by být v uvozovkách. Terminologicky přesnější by bylo mluvit o "token":"token" modelech (či modelech v měřítku 1:1 a v materiálu originálu), to jest modelech, kde model i originál jsou prvky téže hromadné entity (třídy, přirozeného druhu), a kde tedy jeden prvek (jedno jedinečné token) je modelem jiného "token" (jiného jedinečného token) téže hromadné entity (téhož typu). Ovšem vzhledem k tomu, že nám jde převážně jen o literaturu, případně o její materiál, řeč, jazyk, vystačíme docela dobře s termínem kvazicitát a kvazicitátovost.

Na první pohled nemůže být nic vzájemně cizejšího než citát (tato doména učenosti) a divadlo (toto hájenství Dionýza). Ve skutečnosti však to, co se i v tom nejsuchopárnějším projevu odehrává mezi slovy "cituji" a "konec citátu", je něco velmi blízkého ne-li přímo divadlu, tedy aspon výstavní síni. Logikové, například Reichenbach, či filozofové jazyka, jako třeba Searle ve svých Speech Acts, dávno zjistili, že citáty jsou vlastně cizí tělesa v jinak homogenním proudu psaného či mluveného jazykového textu, a že tedy svou podstatou nepatří do kategorie jazyka, ale do kategorie předmětů (i když - v tomto případě - náhodou předmětů, vytvořených ze slov). Cituji-li, jako bych do své promluvy včlenil reálný předmět: jako bych - byt malířem - vlepil do svého plátna reálnou hrací kartu, jídelní lístek, železniční jízdenku či jinou "ready made" věc: jen dík tomu, že v tomto případě "plátno" je jazykové, verbální, a vlepená věc rovněž jazyková (at už jde o jazyk mluvený či jazyk psaný), ujde tato reálná věc, toto cizí těleso naší pozornosti. To, co ujde pozornosti nás lidí, neujde pozornosti strojů: ke stejnému závěru jako filozofové jazyka a logici došli totiž i matematičtí lingvisté: citáty jim hatily všechny jazykové analýzy a počítače je vyplivovaly jako "nestravitelné", tj. neanalyzovatelné, což vedlo vzápětí k objevu kryptocitátů (skrytých citátů) popisovaných v práci A. Wierzbické.

To k čemu došla moderní logika a lingvistika, věděl už dávno starý Plato, který v Politei přísně rozlišil básnictví lyricko-epické na straně jedné a dramatické na straně druhé, přičemž rozlišovacím kritériem byl právě způsob napodobení (tedy,jak bychom dnes asi řekli, způsob modelování). Platonovo rozdělení poezie na lyricko-epickou, dramatickou a smíšenou bylo ovšem vzápětí zastíněno rozdělením Aristotelovým, dělícím poezii na lyrickou, epickou a dramatickou, rozdělením, s nímž pracujeme dodnes. Aristotelovo dělení je z praktických a historických důvodů vhodnější, ovšem logicky důslednější a principiálnější je původní dělení Platonovo. V historii poetiky se několikrát kříší, bohužel nikoli ve své autentické podobě. Diomedes je sice přejímá, zároveň je však interpretuje (a ve skutečnosti komolí) po svém: od něho pochází zná-

ná formulace "mluví autor", "mluví postava" atd. Je to formulace
pedagogicky sice (a zdánlivě) výhodná, ve skutečnosti však matou-
cí a zcela odlišná od jasného kritéria Platonova. Ve skutečnosti
totiž v celém díle nemluví, ani nemůže mluvit nikdo jiný než
autor, básník. Může však mluvit a popisovat počínaní svých postav,
včetně jejich počínání slovního, může však také mluvit a svými
slovy jejich slovní verbální počínaní hrát. A právě takovou hrou,
v níž vlastní slovo autora hraje cizí slovo hrdiny, jsou ony kva-
zicitáty promluv fiktivních postav, kterým říkáme přímá řeč. Jsou
to enklávy divadla, ryze divadelního způsobu modelování, čisté
divadelní semiózy uprostřed svrchovaného území jazyka a literatury.

Mluvili jsme o kryptocitátech. Řekli jsme kvazicitáty, ale
stejně dobře bychom mohli mluvit docela prostě o citátech a pro-
hlásit, že přímá řeč a citáty jsou jedno a totéž, jak koneckonců
naznačují i uvozovky. Takto vyostřená formulace může ovšem vzbu-
dit námitky. Jsme zvyklí chápat citáty diachronicky, historicky:
napřed tu byl jakýsi text ("prototext") a teprve po něm a s odvo-
láním na něj může vzniknout jeho citace, citát. Ve skutečnosti
však povahu citátu, ba přímo fotografického faksimile mají i vý-
střižky ze sbírky fiktivního pana Povondry z Čapkovy Války s mlo-
ky, přestože žádný prototext, ba ani protovýtisk novin, z něhož
by mohly být vystřiženy, neexistuje. Podobným výstřižkem (či kva-
zivýstřižkem) textu, jenže v tomto případě mluveného, je i každá
přímá řeč fiktivní povahy. I tato řeč je citát, i když citát
fiktivního prototextu. Tak je tomu aspoň z hlediska sémiotiky, či
- přesněji - z hlediska teorie modelování. Zatímco jazyk modeluje
skutečnost a modeluje ji v měřítku až 1:∞ (co jiného je slovo
vesmír poměřeno svým nekonečným denotátem!), citáty modelují vý-
lučně texty a modelují je v měřítku 1:1 (a navíc i v materiálu
modelovaného originálu). Je to nejazykový, divadelní, herecký
způsob modelování, a každý citát, kvazicitát a zejména pseudoci-
tát je vpravdě divadlo. Jak blízko má citát k divadlu vyplývá mj.
i z toho, že velice často v každodenním hovoru, jakmile citujeme
z promluv někoho jiného, obyčejně začneme tohoto "někoho jiného"
nejen citovat, ale přímo imitovat, hrát. Citát není vůbec něco
suše vědeckého a školometského ("cituji" a "konec citátu"!), ale
cosi bytostně blízkého divadlu.

Domnívám se, že tyto principy stojí za to, aby se i v lite-
rární vědě podrobily důkladnému zkoumání. Najdeme-li a uplatníme
dostatečně obecný základní princip - takový, jaký nabízí kupř.
teorie modelování nebo poněkud reformně pojatá sémiotika -, můžeme
převést na společného jmenovatele dokonce i takové malířské postu-
py, jako je tzv. iluzivní malba typu nástropního trompe-l'oeil
v barokních katedrálách či typu Maroldova panoramatu Bitva u Lipan,
s takovými postupy, jako jsou techniky polopřímé či nevlastní pří-
mé řeči v románu: v jednom i v druhém případě ikonické zobrazení
nepozorované přechází v token: token modelům vystavovaných objek-
tů. Možná, že snad najdeme cosi společného i v takových atrakcích,
jakými jsou Disneyův snový jarmark Disneyland a joyceovský bděle
snový vnitřní monolog. Na první poslech to vypadá nehorázně - ale
nevypadalo snad na první pohled nehorázně i to, když Bachtin mlu-
vil jedním dechem o Dostojevském a o - karnevalu?!