Curry party
by Michael Vinárek and Vicky Licková

Just over a month ago we had (our group AJ 2 in tercie/kvarta) a special party – Indian. The party was in the school dining room. It was prepared by Jasmína Orlická, Lucie Krumpholcová, Viky Licková, Eva Tremlová, Johana Čejková, Zdeněk Bureš, Michael Janeček, Michal Vinárek and also our teachers Mr.Haschek and Mr. Vacek. We had to prepare a meal – chicken curry, cucumber salad, Indian bread called “Naan”, “poppadoms” (these are something like crisps but much much bigger) and non-alcoholic drinks.

For the evening all of us were preparing hard. We had to play sketches – each of three groups had to play one. The sketches were from India and they were about situations which ended with someone dead. All of these stories had a moral (this means that the reader learns some important rule about life, eg. Be careful when choosing your friends). We practised them on Monday and Wednesday during prep time in the dining room and theatre.

For preparing all the dishes we brought many types of oriental spices and many special ingredients. First we started with the curry – it was cooked from 4 PM to 7:30 PM – which is a really short time for a curry (it is often cooked for up to 10 hours), then we made dough for the Indian bread called Naah. The worst thing of all that was cutting the onions – we all cried. During all of that some of us were frying poppadoms (Indian chips) in hot oil – Michal Vinárek burned his thumb. After that we started to prepare cucumber yoghurt sauce with mint. As the time ran on it was time to prepare the rice – sweet yellow rice. It wasn’t ordinary rice because it was special Indian rice called basmati. In the rice there was cinnamon, sultanas and many other ”oriental” spices. Lastly we made Naan – the Indian bread.

Then we dressed up in our Indian clothes and carried the food and CD-player with strange Indian music to the dining room. There were about fifteen people waiting, all of them in Indian clothes (they were all from tercie or from kvarta). For example Jitka Králová looked like a hippie, Patrik Brychta like a bandit and Tomáš Kulík like a widower. We didn’t eat everything (but almost everything). Then we played indian stories with a moral (Practice what you Preach, Crows and Owls and Unreliable friends). All of the guests who sat there liked them.
Support and services for the mentally retarded should be offered in a common environment, among people without handicap – not in the enclosed communities of mental homes or separated schools.

Mental Retardation: Integration Is the Best Solution

In 1990, an important social reform was introduced in Norway. The goal was to improve and normalize living conditions for the mentally retarded. This meant closing the regional institutions specially designated for handicapped persons. It improved the lives of 12 000 mentally retarded (Jakubův). According to one of the Unesco websites which deals with the housing for the mentally retarded in Norway, Kristina is a former institution-inhabitant directly affected by this reform. Having lived in a regional institution for 10 years, she moved to her own home (Housing for Mentally Retarded in Notteroy Norway). Kristina is a 24 year old woman who is mentally retarded and also physically handicapped. She is in need of extensive practical and personal care and assistance. Since the age of 9, Kristina lived in the Solb Central Institution. Housing about 120-140 mentally retarded persons of all ages, Solb was isolated from community centers and ordinary housing areas, like many similar institutions. For the residents, this meant a segregated life apart from the rest of society. All work and training activities were placed within the institution. Except for the bedroom, all of the living-facilities were shared with others, which meant absolutely no privacy. All daily meals were prepared by the staff. The stay at the institution meant care and assistance for her, but also an isolated life among only handicapped people.

In 1991 Kristina moved to her new home. It is a one bedroom flat situated in a small two-storey building complex in a new residential area. Four of the twelve flats on the ground floor were especially designed for mentally retarded persons. Rooms for employees on night shift are included. The other 8 flats were given to other young people with special housing needs.

Kristina enjoys the company of people she feels close to and comfortable with. Those are assistants or especially members of her family, who had not visited her in Solb because there was no privacy. There are no negative responses toward the integration of Kristina and the other mentally retarded in the local neighborhood. Kristina and the other mentally retarded residents have become a natural part of the neighborhood. She has become more relaxed after being given more privacy. The provision of new private homes has been an important step towards a normalized living environment.

Further steps like the one that was done in Norway are possible, necessary and wanted. Broad psychological research proves that the features of a mental illness are modified and improved when the brain of a mentally retarded person adapts to a standard style of living and has the opportunity to be involved and experience contact with society (Marková 107). This implies that the support and services for the mentally retarded should be offered in a common environment, among people without disabilities – not in the enclosed communities of mental homes or separated schools, because the environment where the person lives is the most important factor in forming one’s personality and developing the ability to live an rich and full life.

The psychic development of a mentally retarded child does not differ from that of a healthy child. The development of a mentally retarded child is controlled by the same factors and it goes through the same developmental stages, but it is slower and it is not as smooth and simple as the development of a healthy child. There are four different aspects that are necessary for the psychic development of every child and it is important for the retarded child to have the chance to draw from them. The first one is the self experiences with the outside materialistic world and the second one is the impact towards it and the procurement of it from other persons living with the child (the way the child is raised influences the character of the self experiences). Another aspect is the activity of children’s psyche, which is mostly sparked off by the people around, and the last factor, which is hard to develop in the retarded child, is the maturation of nervous system (Marková 106, 107). It is possible to restrict mental retardation and improve the abilities of the child by timely and active incitation. One should not wait till the child grows older, because retardation develops with the age.

Although there are some disadvantages of integration, it is still better to integrate rather than segregate people with a diagnosis of mental retardation. Though mentally retarded people could be integrated at every age, and there are special rehabilitations programs for adults who want to start working and living on their own, the best time to start integrating is in the childhood (Jesenský 39). The idea of the mixed classes and
March | 3

**English Project Work**

Schools in Scandinavian countries is very advanced and it does not live in an enclosed community with other handicapped children. The child has a normal social life and must deal with everyday problems and difficulties (Kábele, 51, 52). In school there are healthy children who help him and support him like his patrons and this creates a more motivational environment than a special school. The main disadvantages of integration could be the lack of professional help, trained teachers, and special tools needed in the school or at the job. On the other hand, the number of personal assistants is increasing and the attitude towards mentally retarded people is improving rapidly (Jungerová).

Segregation harms the individuality of mentally retarded people and does not help them to live independently. With segregation, one is removed from the natural environment of family and social life and placed in the institution where a special environment is created to ensure adjustment to a handicapped person's life. Everything is done for them and the only work they know is the one in the protected workshops (sometimes they do not even work at all). Clients of these institutions have problems with returning to the normal world, because they are not used to solving everyday problems and communicating. The special schools are not very motivational and do not enable the child to meet with healthy individuals. Those schools are mostly boarding which totally removes the family from the child life (Kábele, 51, 52).

There is a chance to integrate the mentally retarded individual, the earlier, the better and it all starts in the childhood when there is only one important issue: placing the child into a good school to provide the most intensive development and improve his communication skills and abilities to live with the healthy individuals, because long-lasting passivity represses activity and desire to play, work, or communicate with people not only in adults but also in children (Marková, 107). Another important step towards integration is the acceptance of the handicap by the mentally retarded person and his family and starting to learn how to live with the disability and how to reduce it. Integration itself is the final goal and it is the state when the mentally retarded does not consider to be a special part of the society himself and the society does not consider it, too. One of the definitions of mental retardation (from year 1956) regards it as a state of incomplete development which does not allow the handicapped individual to adapt to the environment that is “normal”, which totally disagrees with the term “integration”. The society has to enable full involvement of mentally retarded people in social life. If the society is not able to facilitate this than the society is to be considered as the defective one (Jesenský, 15).

Cinderella

As one of my class projects with my Terce level 1 English class I asked them to write the story of Cinderella. It was interesting to see how many variations there are of this world-famous tale.

One of my students made such a good effort in his version that I thought I would include it in this month’s edition of O.G. Chronicle for you to read yourselves.

So, here is CINDERELLA by Tomáš Kulík.

Cinderella

Once upon a time, a long time ago was Cinderella. Cinderella was one of three sisters. Her step-mother was cruel because she doesn’t like her. Cinderella must clean the house every day. She had a wish to find a prince. One day, a prince invited the step-mother and sister to a ball, but he didn’t know about Cinderella.

Some time later the prince discovered Cinderella and invited her to a ball. When the ball began, the prince didn’t know where Cinderella was. Cinderella had three nuts. When she threw a nut down it changed into a beautiful dress. At that moment a fairy godmother appeared next to her. The fairy godmother had a magic wand. The pumpkin turned into a coach and the fairy godmother disappeared. Then Cinderella went to the castle where the prince found her. She danced with him in the ball. Suddenly, the clock struck 12 and she ran away.

Unfortunately, her shoe fell off and the prince found the shoe and he tried it on everybody in the nearest town. This shoe didn’t fit Cinderella’s step-mother or sisters but then Cinderella tried the shoe on and it fitted. They were engaged and lived happily ever after.

THE END
Jana Cviková, a Slovakian publicist and founder of the feminist educational club Aspekt (www.aspekt.sk, www.ruzovyamodrysvet.sk) wrote in her book “Žena nie je tovar” (Woman is (not) a product) about how one can recognize the basic characteristic sexist ads. She primarily says: “An advertisement is sexist, when pictures and texts insult women and show them in a humiliating way. There belong as well double-meaning cranks.” (See ex. 1 in Appendix) Following this definition, it’s hard to find some advertisement with women which doesn’t embody this criticism.

It seemed to be a normal weekend program on the Radio Europe 2, when the flow of songs was interrupted by a shirley: “We will make you a present of lean, blond meat, which you won’t burn!” The same day on another station, an editor of the TV station Nova, during the preparation of a contest Český slavík, claimed: “If I sat there, I could be Lucie Bílá, but I haven’t got the right lure.” And don’t forget the poster with a lascivious woman in wrapping paper saying that you this present from Vodafone won’t pall you. These examples show the inequality between men and women in advertisement is apparent and the stereotypical image of women is astonishingly outlasting, but the first revolutionary swallow of a new concept of a woman’s identity in ads is emerging.

... Jana Cviková, a Slovakian publicist and founder of the feminist educational club Aspekt (www.aspekt.sk, www.ruzovyamodrysvet.sk) wrote in her book “Žena nie je tovar” (Woman is (not) a product) about how one can recognize the basic characteristic sexist ads. She primarily says: “An advertisement is sexist, when pictures and texts insult women and show them in a humiliating way. There belong as well double-meaning cranks.” (See ex. 1 in Appendix) Following this definition, it’s hard to find some advertisement with women which doesn’t embody this criticism.

Is important to realize, that these sexist ads have been here a long time (See ex. 2.), because in history, unlike today, women were usually treated worse than men. In fact, it was thought that woman was a subordinate person and the possession of a man. However, in the last 30 years has one crucial thing changed – women do a majority of shopping nowadays. And why should producers insult their main costumers? In spite of this fact, they’re still doing that.

The second most common stereotypical view of a woman is a housewife. She is definitely found on every second ad for a meal or food. She is often shown on a commercial for cleaning-agents or washing powder. She usually looks like a dumb, naïve person. On the other hand, a man acts as if he is her advisor and she can’t do anything without him, a woman. Another surprising paradox is the Versace commercial (See ex.4). Does it make any sense that the woman in the ad for CLOTHES is NAKED? Maybe it does in the Czech Republic, where according to research for Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs only 7% of people are for banning these humiliating advertisements. If the same research took place in France, about 2/3 of women would have liked to ban this stereotype and even 1/3 of men!

The most often and the well-known stereotypical image of a female is an object of sexual interest. Nothing can outrage an intelligent woman more than this. She is seen everywhere, a lascivious sexy woman, usually naked or at least in a seductive position. It could be acceptable in the ad for underwear or a body lotion, but what has got a naked woman to do with cutlery? Or leasing? (See ex. 3) And that is next characteristic of a sexist ad by Jana Cviková – any obvious connection between the product and a woman.
maybe even live – see the famous Calgon example with a repairman.

The last, third image of the limitation of women in media is a mother. She cares about everyone in her family and looks after the household. Some people say that this picture is natural, after all, women are mothers, and there don’t have to be any arguments about that. However, the question is who takes care of mom’s needs and wishes? Is there anyone for her when she is here for everybody? Secondly another problem arises – the fact, that this image of woman is “inherent” makes life harder for those, who decided not to have children; although that’s really their natural law, their family press on them – or for those, who cannot give birth to a baby, even if they wanted.

A separate theme of this topic is a naked woman on the title page. What’s the reason for journalist to put such a picture on a title page and what does it say about them? Money. That’s the right answer. According to the editor-in-chief of a media magazine Marketing and Media, Daniel Köppl, a bare-dressed woman simply sells. In fact, the purchase of such news or magazine increases about 15%! And Daniel Köppl adds that she should appear in news at least one time per week! Unfortunately, the bad and news is, that it became almost impossible to determine the “serious” media and the tabloid one just according to what they have got on the cover. For example, is a weekly magazine Euro serious or not? After seeing a cover page with a naked, sexy woman sitting on a tube of meds (another good example of “just decoration”) it’s hard to say...

Fortunately, because of many ads banned by Advertising Standards authority, because of more people and organization fighting against sexism in advertisements (e.g. Love your body! – loveyourbody.nowfoundation.com or Media and woman – mediaandwoman.org), even companies and advertising agency started to wake up. The first swallow emerged in an advertisement for Dove. Actually, it hits off the whole Campaign for a real beauty. It was almost taboo for an older woman to promote a product, much less a bit corpulent or simply “imperfect” one. They have broken through the rooted convention. Even though it may be just one uncommon marketing test and apparently successful one, it makes both sides happy.

Whispering tongues claim, that’s just a huge, phony bubble. Why? Because the global company staying behind the brand Dove, Unilever, owns another cosmetic brand – Axe. And their commercials are one of the most sexist ever. In major cases they use women as sexual objects and they are likely to leave impression on a man-costumer that actually he can buy or have a woman with the product! Luckily or unluckily, not so many people have so far noticed this dark side of Unilever’s promotion. (That same company uses positive and negative ads.)

The last and final question could be how a normal, ordinary human being can struggle with this problem. Apart from babies, we are all consumers. It’s crucial to realize our power. Just stop buying products which use sexism in ads. Boycott brands, which are insulting women. In last days, more and more so called “positive” ads emerges. How does a woman on such commercials look? Except for the problem with dressing, she should carry herself with dignity and self-confidence. She should promote qualities, which could be attributed to men – some sport equipment or an economic company.

It’s empowering to be able to say “Sexism sells, but I am not buying it.”
Women in media – household servant or sex object
by Anežka Svobodová

Until there was television broadcasting on Fiji, chubbiness was considered to be beautiful, healthy and wealthy looking, and in particular practical. But after four years of watching the Americano-Australian channel, which was by the way the only one channel on the island, the number of adolescent girls with Eating Disorders increased up to 15 percent. According to Anne Becker, the author of book “Body, Self and Mind”, who has been investigating women on Fiji for more than five years, the reason for the increasing number of women considering themselves corpulent was due to their foreign beau-ideals in TV. The channel broadcast in principal programs like Melrose Place or Beverly Hills 90210, which show the western ideal of beauty; slim and blonde, absurd for plump South Pacific Islanders.

This example concisely illustrates that media have an influence, mostly influences women, which is done especially by women. Women are the ones who affect our community not only through advertisements, but as well by the way they are presented in media. It is very important in what context we read and hear about women, because it either consolidates or contradicts time-worn. Television tends to depict racial groups, as well as genders, in the some manner. People who watch large amounts of television begin to view these people negatively in real life (Shebloski 1).

Another example of how rapidly media determines people’s view of women is our Christian history. For many decades, women have been considered as second-rate man. It used to be that serious scientific attitude, that a woman is just a man with inverted genitalia, who is accustomed to born new individuals. Of course the average public attending church believed what it was told, and thanks to this women were put in a position from which they are now trying to escape from, by equal working as men.

In fact, there are more stereotypes that media convince us about, depending on the type of goods which are sold (to whom?) or purposes promoted. The first stereotype is a woman in charge of family, caring about the joy of her children, always looking gorgeous, but less than 40, and essentially being an efficient servant for her husband in all aspect of life. Then there is the most extended stereotype of women – passive and naive beauty. These inert models who just entice by their charm mostly appear in advertisements for men’s goods. Their only role is to be a decoration. The last type, which is not widely extended, is a woman who is at least a workaholic careerist, and with a bit of good luck a feminist. Those women aren’t favored and used as much as the two aforementioned, because in fact they aren’t stereotypical. In fact they break the traditional view of woman, which has been inferior in this culture.
My room at home in the morning

by Nikola Marková

My room at home in the morning is so chaotic that you can’t find anything. There are clothes lying everywhere on the floor. In the left corner of the room is a beige table, that is often not used by me nor my room–mate Tereza. Our housemistresses put our washed clothes on it, so when we come home from school, there is no empty place on this table. Three dark blue one meter high wardrobes run along the white wall toward my unmade bed, which sits in the front corner. Near the bed and under the window is a beige and dark blue table, where books, papers, pencils and also some socks are strewn everywhere. Over the swivel chair standing behind the table our pyjamas are chucked. Tereza’s bed, positioned in the front right corner, is unmade like mine. In the middle of the right wall is a door into the loft, and on its door handle hangs my bag, big enough, just, for a mobile phone and a few bigger things. In front of the door lies a plush brown dog resembling a real Rhodesian Ridgeback. Our common, light blue wardrobe is so high that it ends just under the ceiling decorated with confetti. If you open it, you won’t see straightened clothes in racks. Though everyone in our home just cleans their room for less than an hour, we two clean ours almost the whole day, or not at all.

On the other hand, there is a certain institution, the office under the Ministry of social affairs fighting against and commanding gender inappropriate media, especially commercials. The office for supervising media doesn’t care about showing male and female in equal and true roles, but it cares about gender questions in sense of overseeing events of media, if they are not too much sexist.

Sexism is the biggest problem connected with ladies in general. The definition says that sexism is a behavior based on traditional sexual stereotypes, but then it would need the consideration of a traditional (above mentioned) model of a happy family as sexist, which it hopefully isn’t. But advertisements where the women are showed as a stripped decoration of the goods, as an object of men’s desire are considered to be sexist.

Immoral advertisements with sexual theme are everywhere, including billboards along highways, where they don’t influence only desired clients, but as namely teenagers who are just forming their view of society, and they might be negatively influenced by such stereotypes. For example, in accordance with fashion, which is decided by the media industry, young people imitate trends of their idols. It is widely known the life of famous people is not usually well-ordered. Concrete example would be in increasing numbers of those afflicted with anorexia.

Women shown in media really determine worldwide perception, which is proven by the fact, that two thirds of Czech people trust the media in the question of equality and women shown image (Diamantopoulou). It is important to think what society wants women to be like, what position they can achieve in this culture. Women’s right to be represented as they really are, and not in an unrealistic, sexist way, should be officially protected by law or at least supported by each of us. Everyone can influence advertisers and producers– by not buying the advertised goods.
Juno – A Path towards Maturity

by Klára Tučková

Juno is an emotional and powerful movie directed by Jason Reitman and written by Diablo Cody. The film premiered on September 8 at the 2007 Toronto International Film Festival, receiving great applause and standing ovations. Its plot is not very complicated but extremely moving, describing the behavior of a 16-year-old girl coping with an unplanned pregnancy. Once seeing this movie, you simply cannot forget about Ellen Page starring as the title character. From the very beginning, you are completely drawn into to the life and atmosphere of American teenagers. Juno loves pop culture, horror films and punk rock music. After a single sexual experience with her best friend she finds herself being... and an abortion is her best option at first. But sitting in the lobby of an abortion clinic, she decides to carry her baby to term and then give up for adoption. Evidently, this is the first step on the path towards her maturity. In some ways, Juno’s still a child who needs to spend time with her friends and keep plenty of kitschy stuff. Her room is a typical room of a girl who’s still too young to throw her old things away – with punk posters on the walls, Buddha light switch and a “hamburger” phone. But on the contrary, she feels perfectly well the weight of the responsibility lying on her. She’s determined to face the great pressure of “an adult world” and is sometimes even exaggerating it, behaving like if she understands it better than the “real adults” do.

Nevertheless, this is not typical moralizing film for teenagers, even though the topic could suggest it. This movie is full of emotions and thoughts which are not shown directly and lets observers develop and grapple with their own feelings about the general topic. Moreover, Juno does not take the pregnancy as an obligation but as a challenge. She handles it with unceasing sarcasm, which is a bit jarring at the beginning while step by step becomes more delicate. As Juno slowly changes and becomes more capable of accountability, you feel the movie itself to rise from a farce to a serious free-hearted comedy.

Finally, I have to say I highly recommend Juno as a film interesting for people of almost all ages. If you start watching and after the first ten minutes you think that it’s a waste of your time, just hold on for a while. You’ll get used to all the pseudo-folk songs and pseudo-joke-filled dialogues. There’s a reason for them—they are part of Juno, part of her life. And she’ll become part of yours, if you let her in.
...“What happens if a poor magician falls in love with the prince’s fiancée?”...
“Sometimes called an intriguing fairy tale for adults, the Illusionist is a rare treat.”
by Jaroslav Čech

Set in the 19th century in Vienna, Eisenheim (a poor young boy who loves magic) falls in love with Sophie (a beautiful girl who, unfortunately, is from a royal family). Our young couple is pulled apart by Sophie’s family. Eisenheim leaves home, apparently in order to see the outside world and to begin his “magic life”. It is not until years later when the magician has become a renowned illusionist and comes to Vienna. His reputation brings him to the attention of Crown Prince Leopold, a pretentious young monarch who is jealous of anyone’s fame. One day Leopold attends Eisenheim’s performance and when the illusionist requests an assistant from the audience for an especially difficult trick, the Crown Prince volunteers his fiancée Sophie.

Once Sophie faces Eisenheim, they immediately recognize each other, and it is obvious that the close relationship they shared as children has not weakened. Crown Prince Leopold is obviously offended by Eisenheim’s presence and he sends his dependant chief inspector Uhl to investigate the magician, in an effort to destroy Eisenhaim’s career and reputation. Chief inspector Uhl charges the magician with making threats against the empire and Leopold does as much as he can to ruin Eisenheim and not let him continue the relationship with Sophie. The self-assured Eisenheim comes up with a truly ingenious, perceptive and intricate idea to make his dream come true and finally live with his most beloved person, for whom he is actually willing to forego his biggest love to magic, Sophia. But, is it going to work?

The Illusionist is an intense battle between a cunning and perspicacious magician and a pretentious, self-indulgent Crown Prince. The chief inspector is quite an intriguing role in this film. By contrast to Eisenheim, he is an amateur wooden magician and, as someone who is really fascinated by Eisenheim’s magic, is stuck in the middle. Moreover, there is a big dilemma that inspector Uhl has to solve: will he obey the Crown prince or will he pull Eisenheim through all the troubles he has to go through? Throughout the whole film inspector Uhl seeks answers to Eisenheim’s magic and he is also balancing his great admiration for the magician with his duty to the Crown Prince. That dilemma is one of many aspects that makes the film even more thrilling.

I would honestly recommend it to everyone! If you like magic, then there is no doubt the film is perfect for you. If you like romantic stories, then the story of never-ending love of two young people is just tremendous. If you like crime stories, then way Eisenheim manages to convince everybody about Sophia’s death is really clever. If you like contemporary films, then this is for you, set in Vienna in 1900 century. If you like historical films, The Illusionist is full of historical data and events. And finally, if you take all I have mentioned here and put it all together with the distinguished performance of actors such as Edward Norton (Fight club-the narrator) and Jessica Biel (The Matrix-Trinity) then you get an absolute masterpiece. There’s nothing better to watch this year.
THE BEST GAME EVER MADE?

When gaming company Blizzard announced that they are going to produce a MMORPG (massive multiplayer online role playing game) based on the gaming hit Warcraft, its success was assured. The game has since become a phenomenon. No other game is experiencing such interest from players. With almost 10 million players all around the world, the World of Warcraft (WoW) built the largest gaming community ever. Even though the other companies have been trying to take part in the enormous success of WoW by making similar games, none of them yet achieved such popularity – despite the fact some of them have better graphics and they are using completely new gameplay systems. It is clear that the success of WoW is caused mainly by its amazing story - the World of Warcraft has its own history, laws and legends. Those things are worked out in great detail; players who are interested in the story can find a lot of information about almost every single creature which has some role in game. The strength of the game is in its story.

Now for the readers who have never played or seen the game – the game is set into mystic world of warcraft – that is a bit similar to early the middle Ages. At the very start player chooses a character that will represent him in the game. The character is formed by choosing a race (human, dwarf, blood elf, etc.) and profession (warrior, mage, hunter, etc.). Each of the professions has its own abilities. There are about 50 abilities of each profession which you learn during the game. The aim of the game is basically to get the highest level of your character and get him the best possible equipment so you can compete with other players and win as often as possible.

WoW is one of the best computer games ever made in many respects. The game is pretty old in the computer industry but it’s still more and more popular and everything seems to suggest it will stay this way for some time. The game is proof that top quality graphics and sound in the latest games still does not beat a subtle story and a game system that has been tested by years of success.

THE MOST UNDER-RATED PC GAME OF THE YEAR

GUN is an action adventure game that takes you to a world without laws. The player takes on the persona of protagonist Colton White, a revengeful young gunslinger, who must finish the work, which his stepfather has started: solving a mystery of an old Indian story. During an unsafe tour, he fights against corrupt lawmen, grim villains, renegade army psychopaths, cursed Indians, merciless outlaws and, last but not least, against a murderous preacher who want to be as prolific as possible. Along the way, he wages war on horseback, upholds the law and protects those who really need help. You will enjoy yourself by travelling through the landscape of high mountain wilderness, deserts and bustling territorial towns in an epic story of betrayal, greed and revenge.

The impressive plot, the exquisite soundtrack as well as the compelling environment of scenes makes this pc game a real thriller. You will feel exactly as if you were Colton White himself. This aspect should be one of the most important features of every adventure game. It is true that on the one hand, the players miss efficiently developed playability after the successful finish of the main story: as soon as player finish the whole campaign, he can actually only ride on the horseback through the high plain. However, on the other hand, we can be cheerful that we have been given an opportunity to play after the game is already completed, even if no bandit already left there, player have a chance to explore the scenery. For those who love Westerns, I’m pretty sure that you will get a kick out of this pc game from Neversoft.
Miloš Urban – Santini’s Tongue
by Markéta Tučková

S antini’s Tongue is the fifth novel by Czech writer Miloš Urban, which was published in 2005. The book is about Martin Urann, advertisement company worker, who is assigned to find a general slogan for his firm. Under pressure of possible suspension, he grabs the first motive seen, a book with stars, a castle and saints on cover. Ordinary research for a slogan slowly changes his life into dangerous, bloody quest to solve a historical mystery.

The first thing to highlight is that the plot noticeably evokes another work of intricate historical fiction with components of horror, The Da Vinci Code; although Urban’s book is more trivial, less convincing and situated (mainly) in the local surroundings of Czech castles. Nevertheless, containing several layers of the story, their intricacy and connectivity certainly draw reader’s attention, introducing Martin’s life and search, work of famous architect Jan Blažej Santini, and legends about the enchanting historical figure John of Nepomuk. Furthermore, the above-mentioned tongue strongly links those independent actions and events together in one impressive complex.

Characters of this story are rather classical: an incorrigible, determined main character, who is drawn into action without any effort, trying to understand what is going on for most of the story, beautiful, clever, and dangerous women, using popular motive of identical twins; an even more over-used character, the antagonist’s girlfriend, and finally the antagonist himself, a firm director who is afraid to be cheated by a secret slogan, and feels the need to force information out of the main character. At least half of the characters act like a bunch of phoneys.

My general impression, however, is that this slightly over-rated book would bring delight to reader searching for a lavish, relaxing novel. It connects thrills, amusement and surprise in a unique and breathtaking story. Miloš Urban is an extraordinary writer and deserves praise, no matter how arguably predictable his newest piece could be.

If you want to submit any articles, drawings, editorials or recipes to the OG Chronicle, please send them to sommers@opengate.cz
Photo Essay
Why The Great Gatsby and The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn are considered the best books in American literature 

by Peter Sommers

There is much critical debate about what is the greatest American novel, but two books emerge time and again as leading contenders—Mark Twain’s The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn and F. Scott Fitzgerald’s The Great Gatsby. Though each is a very different story, told in very different styles with characters from vastly different walks of life, the works share something in common: both depict the distinctly American tendency to embrace an ideal in the reinvention of itself.

Through the relationship that evolves on their river journey, Twain’s hapless, amoral protagonist Huck and the black man Jim at once expose the evil hypocrisy of America’s great “sin,” while offering a hopeful vision of what might exist one day between white and black if we would only just let it. Huck’s and Jim’s relationship on the raft represents a kind of utopian vision, Twain’s contribution to the great American tendency to reinvent itself into something new, something ideal, something better. Every time they immerse themselves in the society of town and city along the Mississippi, they encounter corruption, religious hypocrisy, evil, and sadness. These “adventures” make them retreat to the raft—to the purity and simplicity of their understanding and acceptance of each other. The river itself, the ever present third party in their relationship, becomes a consistent and dependable friend, always there for them, always moving, always pure and cleansing.

Twain’s greatest literary invention may be Jim, whom he imbued with the wisest and most moral behavior of anyone in the book. Repeatedly Jim guides Huck and acts as a father-figure, because Huck’s own corrupt “Pap” forces him to flee to the river to escape his murderous rage. With the exception of the last ten chapters, when he arrives at his Uncle Silas’ house (indeed, the most troubling part of the book), Huck develops into a moral, empathetic human being who is capable of great compassion, thanks in large part to the help of Jim. That an uneducated slave can quite capably debate, argue and stand up for himself against a young, able-bodied white man in the antebellum South is a testament to Twain’s radical reinvention of an ideal society that he saw as not only imminent, but necessary. In the end, Huck and Jim move on to better days, with Jim earning his freedom and Huck setting out for adventures in the Wild West. Fitzgerald’s protagonist also reinvents himself, but with much more tragic consequences. Jay Gatsby’s relationship with Daisy Buchanan, though dictated more by his delusions than by an ability to accept reality, is fueled by the same idealism and desire for a better day that keeps Huck and Jim continually coming back to the raft. Gatsby is a dreamer, seeing in the green light at the end of the pier a vision of what might have been once in the past, but is now only a mirage on the horizon of his future. It is Gatsby’s downfall to embrace the notion that we can recreate the past, even when all signs show him otherwise.

Fitzgerald’s society of West Egg, like Twain’s antebellum river towns, is exposed for all its shallow corruption and hypocrisy. The industrial ashpiles where George and Myrtle Wilson live and die are the byproduct of the careless and thoughtless lifestyles of the West Egg Buchanans, and Gatsby traverses both worlds, maintaining his fragile, reinvented self. On the surface, he is a man of means, of beauty, of character, of kindness, of honor; but the moment Nick or Tom or anyone gets too close to the well-buried fragments of his past, or the reality of his present, his ideal begins to crumble. The question throughout the novel becomes “who is the real Jay Gatsby?” Is there any substance to him at all—any belief system, any appearance, any gesture or claim—that is not crafted by his all-encompassing desire to bring back what he and Daisy had (or given Daisy’s proclivity for invented melodrama, perhaps they never had it) a long time ago for a few brief months. When Gatsby can no longer keep out the ugly reality of his past or the present, his reinvention of himself, of his future with Daisy, comes crashing to a halt, literally and figuratively.

But both Twain’s and Fitzgerald’s creations are uniquely American heroes in the sense that they dare to forge new identities in the face of incredible odds which try continually to corrupt and destroy them. Time and again we can find these heroes who embrace an idealized sense of self throughout American literature and history: Ben Franklin, Crevecoeur, C. August Dupin, Emerson, Whitman, George and Lennie, Whether or not they succeed in maintaining it is irrelevant; their quests mark the universal human desire for change, for improvement, for a promise that the future holds something better than today. Merely trying for it is heroic.
The commonwealth of nations
by Gavin Haschek

What exactly is the Commonwealth of Nations? Many people know roughly what it is and some of the member states, but what is its purpose?

First it is necessary to define the Commonwealth of Nations. The Commonwealth, as it is often known, is an organisation, or association, of 53 countries around the world who have decided to join voluntarily. Nearly all of them were British colonies and, in fact, the only exceptions are the United Kingdom itself and Mozambique.

Next is a description of the origins. The Commonwealth is a direct result of the existence of the British Empire. In 1884 Lord Rosebury, while visiting Australia, described the changing British Empire as a loose “Commonwealth of Nations.” In the Balfour Declaration at the Imperial Conference in London in 1926, Britain and its colonial states agreed they were “equal in status and in no way subordinate to one another in any aspect of their domestic or external affairs.” It is interesting to note that, to this day, over 80 years later, nearly all the original members have voluntarily elected to remain as part of the Commonwealth.

Let’s now turn to the member states and common goals. Each member is considered as having equal status despite their diverse social, political and economic backgrounds. Common goals shared by all are, for example: the promotion of democracy, human rights, good governance, the rule of law, individual liberty, free trade, multilateralism and world peace. Other aims include the fight against racism, poverty, ignorance and disease.

As many people already know, the Head of the Commonwealth is currently Queen Elizabeth II. This is only symbolic in nature, as she does not have any power to influence member states either politically or executively. It is the Secretary General who is the chief executive of the organisation.

One could mention that there are a total of 53 member states with a combined population of 1.9 billion people, which is nearly a third of the world’s population. The 5 largest nations as regards population are: India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nigeria and the United Kingdom. In terms of size the 3 largest members are: Canada, Australia and India.

Some may ask if any state member has ever been banned from being a member. In answer to this question, Fiji was suspended between 1987 and 1997, and Nigeria between 1995 and 1999. Other countries to have been suspended are: Pakistan, Zimbabwe and Rhodesia. The prevalent reason has been failure to uphold democratic government.

Last but not least are the Commonwealth Games. The most well-known event, which takes place every 4 years, these are the games where all the member nations pit themselves against one another in a variety of sports. It is held in the same year as the Winter Olympic Games and includes games such as bowls and netball.
Who Governs the Czechs after the Autumn Elections?
by Z. Veverka, our correspondent in Prague

The Czech system of government in the light of the results of the last elections.

In theory everything seems to be very straightforward and understandable. The Czech Republic is a sovereign, democratic state whose institutions were largely modelled on the American system of government quite long ago: the new Constitution adopted in 1993 was inspired by the system of democratic institutions of Czechoslovakia formed on the overseas model in the early nineteen-twenties. In the same way as in the United States, the government is divided into three branches – the legislative, represented by a two-chamber Parliament, the executive, represented mainly by the President and the government, and the judicial branch, represented by independent courts at various levels.

It has never been easy to govern the ever-complaining Czechs, a nation ready to make jokes of the most serious matters. To make things even worse they have succeeded in electing the 200 members of the Chamber of Deputies in such a way, that the government coalition and the opposition parties have exactly the same number of seats, thus playing a really good practical joke on the lazy parliamentarians used to sleeping or playing computer games during the sessions. Luckily enough there is still the Senate, whose 81 members are elected in a two-round election, in which voters do not vote for a party list, but for a particular person. That gives much bigger chance of success to independent candidates, and in this way the composition of the Senate is different, too. The Senators’ view often differs from the short-sighted and sometimes directly selfish decisions of the Deputies forced to vote according to party directives or private interest. Although most citizens have been criticizing the very existence of this second Chamber since its first appearance in the Constitution, the Senators have mostly fulfilled their main task – guarding the state against populist laws aimed at attracting voters for the next election – quite well.

The President, elected every five years by the Parliament, represents the country abroad, appoints judges, generals of the army, ambassadors and university professors. He is also the commander-in-chief of the army. But his main task is to call general election and appoint the leader of the winning party to the post of Prime-Minister. On his suggestion the President then appoints all other ministers of the Government. This is the main difference from the American model of government, where the President (having been elected directly by the people) exercises much more power being both the head of state and the head of the government. Nevertheless, after the last general elections it took the President several weeks just to appoint the Prime-Minister, but finally we had a functioning Government.

In autumn 2008 - as if they wanted to show their politicians that they cannot take anything for granted - Czech voters changed the character of the Regional Councils in all 14 regions sending the Social-Democratic Party to power there. You might ask what is wrong? Weren’t these perfectly democratic elections? Of course, they were. But there is one BUT to it. The Social Democrats won these elections giving promises not about local or regional issues these Councils are entitled to deal with, but stressing their willingness to change unpopular laws and regulations concerning healthcare – something that can only be done by the Parliament.

Having won the elections the Social Democrats started to act: Trying to fulfill their really nice pre-election promises (a good thing in itself, of course), they made the otherwise really unpopular charges for medical treatment, hospital stays and prescriptions into a complete mess, most probably acting not only against laws passed on these matters by the Parliament, but attacking in this way the very principles of the Constitution. That is why we have to ask: Who governs the Czech Republic in fact – the Parliament (as it should), or the “orange” Regional Councils (with strong communist support)? Did the Czechs really attend their history lessons of 1946 and 1948, or did they go to the pubs once again to have their (otherwise really excellent and healthy) beer instead - and forgot?
Why Are Cave Paintings Considered Art

by Richard Seccombe

‘Cave and Tomb paintings can be found all over the world from the earliest days of man and from almost every culture……..

‘Take three examples and say, what materials/ techniques were used to create them, and for what reasons, other than decoration, might they have been created?’

It is possible from our twenty-first perspective to think ourselves back into the minds of our ancestors some hundreds of thousands of years ago and to imagine what life might have been like for them?

If you have visited the caves at Lascaux in central France, then very likely your imagination would likely have been stirred by the experience, whether or not you were aware you were seeing a minutely constructed copy of the originals, a few kilometers away.

Who was it who painted those pictures on those cave walls?

Why did they create these images that can still so affect us, far further into the future than they could possibly have imagined?

The paintings depict hunters and their prey. Whilst the human figures are symbolic, ‘stick’ shapes, the animals are extraordinarily solid and lifelike, sufficiently accurately drawn that paleontologists have been able to distinguish several significant differences between them and those further down the evolutionary line today.

Current theories suggest that the pictures had a dual objective: firstly, they were used as a record of significant events in the life of the tribe – of successful hunts, of disasters and of particular strategies.

Their other objective possibly related more to the spiritual life of the tribe: if each animal were to have its own spirit being, then in secret rituals, the shaman would lead the hunters in a ceremony to capture that spirit prior to the hunt itself……..

Not only are the animals extraordinarily lifelike, but so are their movements: deer poised for flight - an angry bull auroch, head lowered, huge horns ready to disembowel an incautious hunter – a herd of mammoths grazing, upwind and as yet unaware of danger……..The hunters were represented symbolically only, lest the spirit of an individual be endangered.

Far from being random sketches on an idle afternoon, every one of these paintings would have had a deep significance and would have been created within a religious ritual. Probably there would have been music and symbolic dancing.

The artist would likely have been a shaman himself or a retired hunter with an artistic gift.

He would have made white pigment from chalky clays mixed with urine, black from charcoal, and reds, yellows and browns from clays. Animal fats would have helped fix the pigments to the stone.

In some cases, the outlines have been scored with a flint first. In some cases, the pigment was applied with fingers, in others it seems to have been applied with a twig or bone.

The artists have used the shape and outline of the rock itself to enhance the form and to lend apparent movement: those depicted on walls worn smooth by running water are very different from those on the rough roof……..

We see them today in cold, fixed electric light, but in the artists’ time they would have been seen in the flickering, unstable light of torches burning animal fat, so that the animals would have seemed to have been moving of themselves…………enough to arouse a sense of superstitious awe in the minds of fearful and impressionable hunters.

In the central Australian desert, under overhanging cliffs, there are sheltered spaces used by humans and animals for hundreds of thousands of years. On one of the inner faces is a representation of a female human, pregnant with twins - we are shown a paleolithic ‘x-ray’, clearly showing the embryos either side of her spine.

Like many such representations around the world, the figure would have been used to gather spiritual forces to increase fertility in individuals and of the tribe as a whole.

In addition, pregnancy and childbirth were fraught with danger – infant mortality was high and the spirits would have been called upon particularly were a woman thought to have been carrying twins – in itself a matter of great symbolic significance.

The figure has great power and dignity and yet seems vulnerable, exposed as she is to the gaze of the gods upon her innermost secrets. The colours, still vibrant and vivid, preserved in the virtually arid desert air, are made of chalks, clays and charcoal.

In the innermost secret chamber of the Great Pyramid of Cheops, are hieroglyphics and paintings of a very different era.

These were designed to guide the soul of the Pharaoh on its journey to the spirit world and eternal life.

By this time, experiments had led to the discovery of many new pigments – blue from lapis, purple from spider blood, and of course gold itself, and the colours are still extraordinarily vivid, preserved in what was a virtually biologically pure environment.

Sadly, all of these treasures are threatened by the most simple of matter – human breath, carrying CO2, and moisture born microbes that can destroy in a few years what had been miraculously preserved for hundreds of thousands………..
**OG4 – Maturita 2009**  
by Richard Secombe

**Topic # 24 - The History of Britain to 1660**

1. **The Celts to the Norman Invasion:**

   **How did the successive invasions shape the language(s) we speak today?**

   After the last ice age ended, the sea level rose, and the lands called Britain became an island.

   Many different tribes sailed across the sea and settled in the new lands as the climate became progressively warmer.

   Around 500 BCE (Before Common Era), a new race began to arrive in Britain – **The Celts.**

   The Celts were an ancient race, but had always been on the move. Recent research seems to suggest that they came originally from central Asia. Certainly by 1000 BCE they were spreading through central Europe.

   Therefore, in 55BCE, Julius Caesar led an exploratory offensive across the English Channel and met the British tribes in battle. The result was inconclusive, but he returned the following year with two legions. The British tribes could not agree on a strategy to fight the Romans, with the result that each tribe was successively overcome and Caesar reached the crossing of the River Thames which is now London with little difficulty.

   However, he did not return, and the tribes were left to themselves for nearly another 100 years until in 43 CE the Emperor Claudius led an invasion of 10 legions and gradually took over the whole of southern and central Britain. The Celts became a slave race, apart from those who escaped north and west to what are now Kernow (Cornwall), Cymru (Wales), Gaeldom (Scotland) and Eire (Ireland).

   During the 400 years of Roman occupation, many of the British Celts became 'Romanised' - adopting their language and customs and being given increasing responsibility in administrative roles. They also became Christian.

   However, after 400 CE, the Roman Empire was coming under increasing pressure from tribes such as the Vandals and the Goths, and in 450 CE the last of the Legions left to help defend Rome.

   The British Celts then found themselves on their own. The veneer of Roman civilization was thin, and it was not long before they reverted to their old tribal boundaries and antipathies. Only in the Christian churches and monasteries were the arts of reading and writing preserved, exclusively in Latin, as the Celtic language was entirely an oral one.

   To add to the confusion, new invaders were arriving across the sea from what is now northern Germany – **The Angles, Jutes and Saxons.** At first they came as summer raiders, but it was not long before they began to settle in the fertile lands of the south and east of Britain, either taking the Celts as slaves or driving them ever further north and west as had the Romans before.

   It is about this time that the legend of **King Arthur** is based. If he existed at all, he would have been a Romano-British warrior, who managed briefly to unite the warring British tribes and drive the Saxons out of western and central Britain.
Over the next 300 years, the north German tribes settled the whole of central, southern and western Britain. They became peaceful farmers, converted to Christianity and established famous places of study and the arts.

So, there were three languages co-existing in Britain.

In Cornwall, in the mountains of Wales, in Scotland, and in Ireland, the Celtic languages survived.

In the rest of Britain, the people spoke old German with local dialects.

In the churches and places of learning the language was Latin, the only language used for reading and writing.

Gradually, the lands conquered by the German tribes became known as Angle-land, rather than Saxon-land, to avoid confusion with the original Saschen lands in what is now Germany.

Around 700 CE a new wave of raids and invasions began: The Vikings or Norsemen

from what is now Norway and Denmark. They came as summer raiders, (as had the Saxons before,) in their feared longships, attacking particularly around the north of Britain and Ireland. They destroyed and burned Christian churches and monasteries in particular.

But as the Celts and Saxons before, gradually they began to settle and inter-marry with the indigenous people, adopting Christianity and contributing to study and the arts.

Cnut, a Dane, was King of all of Angle-land in the early 11th century CE.

Their language survives in some words and dialects in the north of Britain.

In 1066 CE, the old Saxon King, Edward ‘The Confessor’ died and the chiefs of the Saxon lands, the Thanes, came together to choose a new King. They chose Harald Godwinsson.

However, there were other powers interested in the throne of England, now a wealthy country.

The King of Norway, Harald Hardrada, landed in the north with a large army, and the new king marched to meet him. Harald Godwinsson defeated the invading army and killed their king, but he had no time to celebrate his victory.............

The Norsemen had also settled in what is now northern France and the region became known as Normandie. Duke William of Normandie had been related by marriage to the old King Edward and believed he had a valid claim to the throne.

The Normans landed with another large army on the south coast of England and had time to consolidate their position whilst Harald Godwinsson raced back south with his tired army.

At the battle of Hastings the Saxon army was defeated and Harald killed.

Duke William of Normandie was now king of England.

Over the next 20 years, William donated land to his supporting Barons who built a series of castles from which they dominated the enslaved Saxons. In 1089, William commissioned the first census, The Domesday Book, in which was recorded details of every bit of land in England, by whom it was owned and what income it provided.

It was, of course, written in Latin.

So, for the next 200 years, Britain was ruled by people who spoke Norman French.

The enslaved Saxons continued to speak a form of early English.

In the Celtic lands, the old Celtic languages continued.

And still, the language of study, of reading and writing, was Latin, taught and controlled by the church.

By the end of the 14th century, as a result of gradual integration, Norman French became less and less used, and mediaeval English became the ‘lingua franca’. Writers such as Geoffrey Chaucer established it as a language of literature.

English today is made up primarily of two language bases – German and Latin – that is why there are often two words for the same thing, such as ‘stop’ and ‘station’.

In addition, there are words deriving from Norman French and the Norse languages.

Unlike modern French, there are no Celtic words in English – the two languages have remained entirely separate over 1500 years............

..........though as there are no real swear words in the Celtic languages and there is a large and rich resource in English, it can be highly amusing to hear a person speaking in Welsh, interspersed with English swear words.............
JOURNEY TO PARDUBICE
by Gabriela Ašová & Kvido Tyl; Prima
A Story of Two Students Preparing for Maturita at Open Gate.

(In a shared dormitory room at Open Gate.)
Honza I: (Entering the room.) Jo, Ho-Ho: What’ya make of the #@%$*&# Maturita questions?
Honza II: (Finishing his sit-ups on the floor.) “Ho-Ho” yourself! As for the questions, I make everything of them …….. and more…….. Uh, are you talking about something specific?
Honza I: Yeah, ….. this one about the musical genres ………. Give me a break!
Honza II: Yeah, the question about musical genres is bizarre. But, wait a second, Bubbaloo …. Your tatínek.,….. some-kind-of-guy at SISP? [Swiss International School, Pardubice] Doesn’t …
Honza II: Ummm. You’re right. [As if from Shakespeare:] Shame me not no more Cassius. Thou art right. Let us venture forth and gain knowledge from …………. from …….. what’s his name?

(In front of a modest, one-family home in Pardubice.)
Honza I: This couldn’t be the right place. It’s the middle of February and the Christmas lights are still lit up, and there’s a mountain lion tied up near the front door.
Honza II: Bubby, relax! By the way, what is his name?
Honza I: Roy Lane’s his name. Mr. Dr. Professor Lane, to you. And cut with the “Bubby” jive.
Honza II: But what about the door? And the big kitty?
Honza I: (Humming an American Christmas carol.) Over the hedge and through the back door, Bub.

(ROY LANE: [visiting lecturer (in Psychology) from Canada] (Opening the back patio sliding glass door.)
Well, hello guys, you must be the students Filip (Father ofHonza II) was talking about. Come on in. Sorry about the Mountain Lion.

[Everybody introduces themselves. Tea, coffee, and cookies are served.]
H1H2: So, like, could you possibly tell us everything that is known about music? I mean, in a condensed format? I mean, we know you …. LANE: Listen, I don’t know where your father got the idea that I have any academic knowledge at all about this or that genre of music. Terribly sorry to disappoint you. He and I used to sit around and …. well…. never mind.
The stark truth is that nearly all the details I learned about classical music when I studied it at McGill almost 40 years ago are long since forgotten. I haven’t spent much time studying it since then.
Don’t get me wrong, of course I can tell the difference between Baroque with Romantic, Reggae and Ska, Swing and Be-Bop, but so what?
I’m good at the appreciating, but so strong in the Memorizing-names-and-places and names-of –works Department. No way.

LANE: So I’m no expert on anything, sorry! Except, psychology, but that’s not what you’re here for.
Honza II: No way. Hate the stuff. It’s all voodoo economics and worse. Those lobotomies …. when will they ever learn … ?
Honza I: Ho-Ho cool it! There are no lobotomies going on here, and what the?…. voodoo economics? We’re talking about Tex Mex music, Cajun music, Zydeco music, music that we want to expound on, mouth off about, elucidate, explicate, and illuminate, etc, at the Maturita. Let’s get down to business!
LANE: OK. But, like I said, I’m no expert. Aside from what I’ve forgotten from college, most of the details from the jackets of my Jazz
and World Beat LP’s that I once knew by heart are now in the deep freeze. The LP’s themselves have long been dormant or in storage and I’ve forgotten the details of what I learned from the album jackets. Those jackets I’ve referred to were often 2000-word 3000-word essays/reviews/biographies of the highest standard. Top quality stuff. I should show you sometime.

H1H2: [snoring noises]
LANE: (Clears throat. Boys wake up.) But since Filip asked me to help you out, I don’t want to let you down, so I’ve dug around a little on the internet, anyway here goes.

(Reads out:)

Text Mex (Sometimes called Tejano, which means “Texan,” in Spanish.)

Here’s what Martin Leal, a teacher of Texas history at I.S.D., Brownsville, Texas, has to say in his article on “ondanet.com.”

“In the 1850s Europeans from Germany, Poland and Czech republic migrated to Texas and Mexico, bringing with them their style of music and dance. They brought with them the Waltz, the Polka, and other popular forms of music and dance. However it was not until the Mexican Revolution (1910-1917) that many of these Europeans were forced to flee from Mexico into South Texas, and thus began the major musical influence of their culture, and its impact on Tejanos (Texans of Mexican origin). At the turn of the century, Tejanos were mostly involved in ranching and agriculture. “

H1H2: So Czechs were on the scene?
LANE: Yes, the Czech immigrant population was quite sizable and quite significant.

The remarkable thing is that, if you give a good listen to a broad spectrum of Tex-Mex music, you will eventually collide with not only bonafide Czech traditional dance-song rhythms and song structures, but also with Czech melodies.

H1H2: Golly.
LANE: I wish I could remember the name of the two songs I once played for my Czech colleagues from a Flaco Jimenez album, and they were jumping up and down screaming, “That’s our song, that’s our song.” Here, a century and a half later, the melodies were still intact!

H1H2: What kind of instrumentation did they use?
LANE: From the original flute, guitar and drum format, the Tex-Mex group gradually added vocals, an acoustic bass guitar, and accordion. The bouncy rhythms remained the same.

Some of my favorite modern groups include the Texas Tornados, with the late, great Freddie Fender sharing the vocals, and Doug Sahm and his long-term collaborator, Auggie Meyers also singing and playing guitar and keyboard, respectively. The latter two were big in the ‘60s in California as a combination Tex-Mex/Hippie band that still commands a cult following. (The Sir Douglas Quintet.) The previously mentioned Flaco Jimenez is also in that group – it’s an all-star group of true veterans, and they sing half in Spanish, half in English. Interesting, it’s two Mexicans and two Americans. I guess they really got along well – mutual respect and all that.

In later formations, some Tex-Mex bands included an organ, most famously the Farfisa, a brand with a unique sound, popularized in the ‘60s.

Talking about music is a bit like dancing about sculpture, if you catch my drift, ... So here are some links to a very narrow selectection of examples of the genre.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OKZvSz4qs2w
http://video.aol.com/video-detail/los-

...and Cajun music? Zydeco music?
LANE: So, you also wanted to know something about them, huh? Cajun music? and Zydeco? Again, I’m a big fan of these two genres, but I failed to bother to memorize the detailed musicological, discographical and biographical information on the jackets of the LPs I was collecting in the 70s and 80s. I’ve got old Savoy-Doucet and Clifton Chenier albums, and I don’t know what else, they’re all in storage. I can’t afford the cabinets I’d need or an apartment with a big enough living room to have them [the LPs] in my living room, where they belong. [Swiss International School in Pardubice, please take note! – The Authors]

As far as the history of these two genres is concerned, David Simpson, Professor at Louisiana State University, says there is one source that can soothe your research worries, and it is the Lomax collection. John and Alan Lomax travelled around southwestern Louisiana in the 1930’s, hauling a 140-kg portable disc recorder and making hundreds of “field” recordings.
Simpson goes on to say:

“Both Cajun music and the Creole music that evolved into Zydeco are the products of a combination of influences found only in Southwest Louisiana. According to Alan Lomax in his notes to a CD collection of field recordings in Louisiana that he and his father, John Lomax, completed in the 1930s, “the Cajun and Creole traditions of Southwest Louisiana are unique in the blending of European, African, and Amerindian qualities.”

The French influence in the 1700’s existed already in the French territory of Louisiana, including New Orleans, and was reinforced by the migration of the Acadians from Nova Scotia in 1755 (“Cajun,” is a distorted form of the word “Acadian.”) They brought not only musical forms and instrumental traditions, but also stories – hundreds of them. They mixed with the Spanish, the Native Americans, and the Black slave class. One of the most important Cajun musicians of all time, Dennis McGee, was the son of mixed Irish, Seminole Indian and French ancestry.

H1H2: So what about the accordion?
LANE: The accordion? Yes, well, yeah, the accordion is used in both Cajun and Zydeco. Zydeco is a rougher, bluesier, more break-neck beat kind of music. Cajun is softer and more rooted in traditional forms such as (and I quote from Simpson) “contradances, gigues, galops, reels, mazurkas, polkas, cotillons, vases Julien, valse a deux temps, Varsouviennes.” And yes, they both have adopted the accordion, though you’ll see more of the button variety used in Cajun, and more of the piano-style used in Zydeco, as with Clifton Chenier.

Another unusual instrument widely used in both Zydeco and Cajun music is the washboard [valcha in Czech]. But it’s not really a washboard like you would use for washing, but a vest made of ridged metal. The musician who wears it also wears metal finger picks, and he taps these on the vest or draws them quickly over the ridges, making a clicking or ratchety sound. It’s quite fun to watch.

The music that developed from Creole culture to become Zydeco stems from the same French roots as Cajun music, it simply brought to it a greater New-World African influence – Caribbean rhythms, bluesy melodies, and what-not. Whereas, you could say that Cajun retained more of a European flavor, Zydeco embodied more of an Afro-blues-roots foundation.

My favorite exponents of both of these genres at the present is a band called Beausoleil. They have been putting out original and traditional high energy versions of the style for 3 decades now.

Check out the following examples of each style to clarify for yourself what is Cajun and what is Zydeco.

http://www.live365.com/cgi-bin/minicgi?membername=radiowayne2&tm=1385
http://www.live365.com/cgi-bin/minicgi?membername=radiola&tm=110
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pEBr8u01Pq8
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BeauSoleil (a wiki article about Beausoleil)
http://www.emusic.com/artist/Beausoleil-MP3-Download/10560910.html (Ok, sorry, short samples. but Dig It!)

H1H2: Thank you very much, Mister Lane.
LANE: My pleasure.

(On the train back to Český Brod)

HONZA 1: Honza, are you gonna check out any of those web-links that Lane gave us?

HONZA II: You can’t be for real, Honza! I already emailed them to Lili. (Looking at his iPhone:) She says here that most of them are pretty hustej, and that Anybody who digs Ska and Reggae but can’t dig Cajun, Zydeco, and Tex-Mex is either deaf or demented or dead.

End of Scene 5 …….. But the play goes on.

Yours in the Music, Gabriela & Kvido