

**Západočeská univerzita v Plzni**

**Fakulta filozofická**

**Bakalářská práce**

**2012**

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**LEADING THEORETICIANS OF CZECH AND  
SLOVAK TRANSLATOLOGY IN 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY**

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Katedra anglického jazyka a literatury

**Studijní program Filologie**

**Studijní obor Cizí jazyky pro komerční praxi**

**Kombinace angličtina – francouzština**

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Plzeň 2012

Prohlašuji, že jsem práci zpracovala samostatně a použila jen uvedených pramenů a literatury.

*Plzeň, duben 2012*

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Děkuji vedoucí bakalářské práce PhDr. Evě Raisové za cenné rady, připomínky a metodické vedení práce.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

The theme “Leading theoreticians of Czech and Slovak translatology in 20<sup>th</sup> century” has a really broad field of interest. It is almost impossible to comprise the whole 20<sup>th</sup> century and its development of Translation Studies and for this reason, it was needed to specify this theme. It meant to confine the work to one branch of Translation Studies – the translation, which can be also understood as its most important branch, as well as to choose only the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the most important facts and personalities of chosen period.

Accordingly to the limitation of the work, the main objective of this Bachelor thesis is to explain what the Translation Studies are and to give a short summary of the fundamental translational development of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century including its main personalities and theoreticians and its cultural context.

The main reason why this theme was chosen is that the Translation Studies form an integral part of our everyday life and are still the current topic. Moreover, the interpretation from one language to another played always important role in communication of our small country with other countries with different languages, therefore the translation has the long tradition in the Czech Republic.

The thesis is divided into three main parts. The first part is going to introduce the Translation Studies as an individual branch of science, the educational centres which are closely connected to the Translation Studies and also the competitions and its prizes which are awarded to translators.

The second part deals with the historical development of translational procedures of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, especially of the Anglo-

American literature. The chapter is divided into three subchapters dealing with three main periods of the history – the period until the World War I, the interwar period and the post-war period. This fragmentation is not strict because many translational procedures and translators affected more than one period. However, the author tried to adhere to the division as much as possible.

The third or the last part contains the information about main personalities in the development of translational procedures of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. To be concrete, there are pieces of information about their life and work and about their theories as well.

## 2 TRANSLATION STUDIES / TRANSLATOLOGY

### 2.1 What are the Translation Studies?

The Translation Studies or simply the translatology was created as an individual branch of science in the 1970s and 1980s. However, the tradition of the interest in translation processes can be found in the whole history of the Czech literature.

The Translation Studies can be understood as the borderline discipline between literary science and linguistics. In light of the linguistics, it is concerned with the translation from the one system of signs to another. In light of the literary science, the translation of the text is also analyzed with the emphasis on the aesthetical aspect and on the aspect of correctness. In other words, the literary science concerns with the question how the translation influences the original text, mainly in the issue of keeping the artistic value and in the issue of choosing the translational method.<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, the Translation Studies can be divided into three types. The first one is the theoretical translatology, which describes the general theoretical questions of the translation and the interpretation. The second type is called descriptive translatology, which means that it describes the translation and interpretation like the "*material*"<sup>2</sup> for the theoretical studies and the final part is called the applied translatology, which concerns with the practical work with the translation, as is for example the practical translation or the review of translation.<sup>3</sup>

## **2.2 Educational Centres Connected to the Translation Studies**

### **2.2.1 The Institute of Translation Studies**

#### **2.2.1.1 History**

At the beginning, there were three important names of the field of linguistics which initiated the foundation of Institute. In the concrete, the three names were Professor Josef Dubský (Spanish), Professor Ivan Poldauf (English) and Professor Josef Václav Bečka (Czech).

As well as the most of interpreting and translating schools in Europe, the Institute was founded after the World War II in 1963, when it was established at the University of 17th November based in Prague and in Bratislava. When the University was closed in the mid-1970s, the part of the Institute in Bratislava was abolished and the part in Prague was transferred at the Faculty of Arts as the department of Charles University. Since then, this department has become the only academic place in the Czechoslovakia, subsequently in the Czech Republic, aimed at the Translation Studies.<sup>4</sup>

#### **2.2.1.2 Present**

The Institute of Translation Studies is constantly, as it was mentioned, the only academic place in the Czech Republic, which is concerned with the education of future translators and interpreters. The students can choose besides the Czech language to study five foreign languages – English, French, German, Russian and Spanish.

The Institute comprises approximately 400 students and 35 educationists who are mostly the active translators and interpreters. This number ranks it among the largest teaching and research departments at the Faculty of Arts of Charles University. Moreover, the Institute belongs to the International Permanent Conference of University Institutes of

Translators and Interpreters (CIUTI), which unifies the best interpreting and translation schools in the world, in other words, which ensures a high quality in the education of translators and interpreters.<sup>5</sup>

### **2.2.2 Czech Literary Translators' Guild**

The Czech Literary Translators' Guild (Obec překladatelů) associates translators of belles-lettres as well as translation theoreticians, critics and historians dealing with the translation itself.

The function of this association is to concern about the level and the prestige of translation in the Czech literature as sure as to maintain the rights of its members and to promote their professional interests.

The member of the Guild can become every citizen of the Czech Republic who published at least two translations or who is systematically publishing in the field of theory, history and critique of translation, but also every foreign citizen who is translating from or into the Czech language. These requirements are currently fulfilled by its 340 members.

Furthermore, the Czech Literary Translators' Guild is a member of the European Council of Literary Translators' Association (CEATL) and also the official partner of UNESCO's International Cooperation and Exchange in the Field of Literature and Translation. The Guild organises many translational conferences as well as a large number of translational competitions.<sup>6</sup>

#### **2.2.2.1 Translational Competitions**

##### **2.2.2.1.1 Josef Jungmann Prize (Cena Josefa Jungmanna)**

The prize is awarded by the Czech Literary Translators' Guild for the best translation work which is published in the first edition in the Czech language. The work should be from the field of humanities and from the

domain of prose, poetry, essays, drama and non-fictional literature published in the past calendar year. The prize was first awarded in the 1992.<sup>7</sup>

#### **2.2.2.1.2 The Translational Competition of Jiří Levý (Překladačská soutěž Jiřího Levého)**

This competition is also organized by the Czech Literary Translators' Guild and is designed for beginning translators under the age of 35 years. In addition, the best achievements are presented at public readings and are offered for publication in literary magazines. Thanks to this effort, the competition endeavours to support the development of Czech literary translation and to discover new talents as well.<sup>8</sup>

#### **2.2.2.1.3 The Worst Achievement Prize (Anticena Skřípec)**

The Worst Achievement Prize is annually awarded at the fair called the BookWorld Exhibition (Svět knihy). The “anti-prize” is devolved on the worst translation work from the foreign language into Czech and has two categories – the “Pince-nez” (Skřípec) which is for the artistic translation and the “Small Pince-nez” (Skřípeček) which is for the non-fictional translation. The prize is in the form of a pince-nez, what could be misunderstood with the Czech term (skřípec) as the meaning of torture rack.<sup>9</sup>

### **3 THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF TRANSLATIONAL PROCEDURES FROM THE TURN OF THE CENTURY TO THE 1950S**

#### **3.1 Period until the World War I**

##### **3.1.1 Fields of Translation**

During the 1890s and especially in the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, there was an effort to open the cultural horizons of Czech society to foreign impulses. According to Otokar Fischer, this period of translation was deservedly specified as the period of expansion and tendency to catch up with Europe.

Before the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the most important publishing house was only Ottovo nakladatelství (“Otto’s Publishing House”). However, the translational effort reflected also in the developing number of publishers, such as J. R. Vilímek, B. Kočí or Jan Laichter, the ambitious publisher of educational literature and fiction. Moreover, until 1906, the brother of Jan Laichter, Josef, led the anthology Laichterova sbírka krásného písemnictví (“Laichter’s Collection of Belles-lettres”) dedicated to the translation literature. This anthology later published for example W. Woolf, J. Conrad or S. Lewis.

With the tendency of publishers arose the number of translations, that is why the whole period until the World War I was considered to have a wide range of translations for readers, for example the English poetry started to be coveted. The translators, such as J. V. Sládek, J. Vrchlický, E. Krásnohorská, V. A. Jung or A. Klášterský, tried to translate the way the original was written or, in other words, they tried to have a content closeness.

On the other hand, the approach to the content or to details was greatly individualistic. For example, Josef Václav Sládek was very closely connected to the work of Robert Burns, he translated his poems which he saw similar to his works. Among other things, he created the translations of 33 theatre plays of William Shakespeare (these translations were later criticized by Otokar Fischer) and Antonín Klášterský can be considered as his successor, because in the 1920s he finished the collection of Shakespeare's works. Klášterský also composed the first anthology of modern American poetry (*Moderní poezie americká* 1 (1907), 2 (1909)).

The works by Byron, Shelley, Poe or Burns became also the point of interest. For example, in 1904 were published, in translation by V.A. Jung, four volumes of "Don Juan", which is considered to be the most widespread Czech translation of a part of Byron's work. It is also due to the fact that interest in Byron's work was more or less fading with the period of Lumírovci group. The interest was also put for example on R. Browning. His works were translated by František Balej, who translated his socially strong poem "Pipa Passes" (1919). However, Arnošt Procházka, who was often translating under the pseudonym Norbert Fomeš, was also interested in R. Browning's work. Procházka was not only the translator but also the writer, the critic and the theoretician of Czech secession as well. He also created and published the magazine *Moderní revue* (1894-1925) ("The Modern Review") and worked as the editor of strongly translation oriented library *Knihy dobrých autorů* (1905-1931) ("Books of Good Authors") led by publisher Kamila Neumannová. Thanks to her, he published "Hyperion" (1911) as the first translation of John Keats' works. In the year 1899, Procházka in *Moderní revue* introduced Oscar Wilde in the Czech cultural field. Wilde was later translated by J. Krejcar, O. Theer, E. Lešehrad or V. A. Jung. In the interwar period, the tradition of Oscar Wilde translations turned into his plays.

K. Neumanová also introduced on the Czech scene Thomas de Quincey, the author of the romantic period and the ancestor of decadents, or the classicist Alexander Pope, who was introduced after a long pause from the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Joseph Conrad was firstly introduced in 1912 with his “The Lagoon” (collected in “Tales of Unrest”) and he was abundantly translated and published in the interwar period too.

The Medieval English literature was also translated in this period thanks to illustrative examples of Vilém Mathesius in his work called *Dějiny literatury anglické v hlavních jejích proudech a představitelích* (“The History of the English Literature in its Main Streams and Leaders”) which dated back to the Anglo-Saxon period and up till 15<sup>th</sup> century.

With this accretive number of translations and development of modern philology, cogitations about the quality of translation were rising. Especially in the 1890s, a large number of criticisms of the aesthetical level of translations originated (for example the criticism of style of J. Vrchlický, the supporter of the idea that the Czech language can express everything, which is possible but his translations were slightly weird). The attention was devoted to poetry and verse drama, prose was characterized by non-creative literality and translators found many problems with foreign realia and plays on words. That is why the new generational approaches were needed. Translators endeavoured to get over the elderliness of turns of phrase and means of expression.

Moreover, there were more significant problems, such as interventions in the text which could even cause the incompleteness of translated text. Another problem with the translation of prose was how to deal with different language levels of each social group and with their specific dialects. However, the Czech translators were particular about the tradition of standard and literary language in this situation too.

In the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, there also arose the number of translations of thinkers and political figures who were occupying with different social, aesthetical and economic issues which brought special demands on the translators too. In this period, the names such as John Locke, Charles Darwin, Herbert Spencer or Thomas More and his “Utopia” were published. Among the American names, there can be mentioned Thomas Paine, R. W. Emerson or “Autobiography” by B. Franklin (published in 1918 by V. Dědek). In these translations could be seen how a clear interpretation was important for the translator and how it was difficult to find Czech equivalents for specific terms.<sup>10</sup>

### **3.1.2 Finding New Approaches to Translation**

The necessity for a new approach to the translational work culminated on 14 May in 1911, when translators were disengaging from the theories of Czech Modernism, which held the view that the translation should be word-for-word.

On 14 May, J. V. Sterzinger launched in Czech newspaper *Národní listy* (“The National Newspaper”) a campaign with the article called *Za očistu české literatury překladové* (“For the Expurgation of Czech Translation Literature”) against the wrong language of translation literature. During the years 1911 and 1912, Sterzinger continued to write more articles, where he drew attention to the weaknesses of some translations, the irresponsibility of publishers and the lack of criticalness of readers. On the other hand, he proposed the idea of foundation of the association of readers and translators which could improve the quality of translation works.

In connection with this effort, preparatory meeting assembled in June 1911 and agreed on synopses of the first translation organization with the name *Sdružení překladatelské* (“The Association of Translators”). In these

synopses was written for example: 1. *“The association’s task is to protect the interests of good and diligent translators and to restrain all imperfect translations”*. [...] 3. *“Each member of this association is obligated to submit the manuscript of his work to the Commission before publishing and to submit to its resolution. It is permitted to make a reasonable appeal from the Commission report”*. [...] 9. *“The association wants to prevent the situation that the same book is simultaneously translated by several writers”*. [...] <sup>11</sup> On Christmas of the year 1911, the proclamation, which urged to care of language purity, was published. This proclamation was subscribed by the Rectors of Universities of Prague and Brno as well as by the leading writers of this period. The organization did not only try to care of the criticisms of translations but also to educate the young translators. In the 1913, Josef Zubatý published an article in the first double issue of magazine called *Věstník Sdružení překladatelského* (“The Gazette of the Association of Translators”), where he notified the plan of special translation courses which the organization was planning to hold.

Despite all of the efforts of the organization (“Sdružení překladatelské”), the magazine was soon abolished as well as the organization itself. The organization concentrated only on the criticism of translations and that is why during its operation the new method was not created yet. The criticism of translation was later led by the magazine *Naše řeč* (“Our Speech”) and the next stable organization was founded even in the 1936 and carried the name *Kruh překladatelů* (“Circle of Translators”).

However, the new method of translating was created in that period, but by the different philologist – Vilém Mathesius, who later became one of the most important language theoreticians of Fischer’s period. In 1913, Mathesius published the article *O problémech českého překladatelství* (“About the Problems of Czech Translating”), where he explained the attitude of substitute theory, which meant to “poeticize” instead of to

“translate with the rhythm of the original.” He said for example: “[...] *The principle that equality of artistic effect is more important than the sameness of artistic means is particularly important when translating works of poetry. The proud note: 'translated with the rhythm of the original' should tune the readers more sceptically. [...] Harmony and expressiveness of the translation is valued higher than the detailed correctness, the art is needed to be put above the philology. [...]*”<sup>12</sup> Vilém Mathesius, who was very close to the theories of O. Fischer, examined the linguistic phenomenon in light of its value for the perceiver and in light of its effectiveness in the language system.

The necessity of finding new approaches was seen especially in the period shortly before the World War I, when there was only needed some new generation which could change this cultural need. In 1914, Otokar Fischer published his first significant translation “Thus Spoke Zarathustra” by F. Nietzsche and in 1915 the whole group of the most considerable poetry translators of the period (Karel Čapek, Hanuš Jelínek or Viktor Dyk) started to work on the anthology of the French poetry. The creation of the anthology as a whole was not successful but there were published some fragments which belonged, aside from the work by O. Fischer, to the most valuable translations of the First Czechoslovak Republic, such as *Francouzská poezie nové doby* (“The French Poetry of the New Age”) (1920) by K. Čapek or *Ze současné poezie francouzské* (“Of the Contemporary French Poetry”) (1925) by Hanuš Jelínek.<sup>13</sup>

## **3.2 Interwar Period**

### **3.2.1 Fields of Translation**

The interwar period can be understood as the period of inrush of translation literature which was caused by the development of Czech literature. During this period, the translation procedures of the sphere of

Otokar Fischer were rising. It means that there was a tendency to release the translation, to emphasize the equivalence of the impression instead of having a word-for-word translation and to find possibilities of substitute solutions. However, in this period there was the one translator, Jaroslav Skalický, who still wanted to show the currency of word-for-word attitude and the effort of prospecting the so-called internal form of presentation advocated by J. Karásek and his generation from the turn of the century. Skalický was interested in the phenomena of British and American cultural scene, especially in translators and their translations oriented in intellectuality, psychology and spirituality. Among his translations can be mentioned for example works by T. de Quincey – “On Murder Considered as one of the Fine Arts” (1925) or “Levana and our Ladies of Sorrow” (1927), further he translated the writings by W. Butler Yeats, W. Blake, Lytton Strachey’s “Elizabeth and Essex” (1930) or “The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club” by Charles Dickens.

The one specific place in fields of translation was occupied by a popular literature and a literature for children. Especially the literature which expressed and emphasized the entertainment was developing in the interwar period. Nevertheless, the volume of these works was increasing already from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Until the 1940s, the number of this kind of literature was about a half of the whole volume of offered translation works. The reason for this enlargement of translation publications can be seen in the developing economic situation and the changeover of the understanding the meaning of translation. It is known that as late as the 1920s, the authors of original works were given royalties for selling their copyrights; it means that the translations became more expensive than the original works.

Detective genre had also the rising tendency. Nevertheless, even in the 1905, the one of the biggest figures of detective genre was published – Arthur Conan Doyle and his “The Hound of the Baskervilles.” In the 1920s and 1930s particularly, Edgar Wallace was published in large numbers,

concretely 105 of his works were translated into Czech language. Furthermore, Agatha Christie, the classic of the detective genre, was also founded. However, this literature was generally translated from 1950s, where can be mentioned the translations of Poe or Wilkie Collins.

The interest in Anglo-American literature, especially in novelistic writings, was rising as well as the economic development of book industry during the interwar period. Among the publishing houses mentioned in the pre-war period, the strong position was still retained by J. Otto, but J. Laichter had also an important role. He continued in the anthology *Laichterova sbírka krásného písemnictví* ("Laichter's Collection of Belles-lettres") and he also founded the innovative edition *Dějiny literatur* ("History of Literatures"). In the interwar period the publishing houses, such as Aventinum, Symposion, Odeon or Melantrich, played an important role. Particularly, Melantrich as the National Socialistic publishing house became a very important publisher during the late 1920s. *Melantrichova knihovna* ("Melantrich's library") (1928-1934) created the edition of domestic and foreign works by literary classics (Fielding, Dickens, Stevenson, Defoe) which was under the control of F. X. Šalda. Melantrich also published selected works of particular authors, such as J. Galsworthy, J. Conrad.

It is clear that the authors who were published in this period had to be considered as the most valuable in the aesthetical way. The works of Arnold Bennett, the traditionist of realistic social novels, became very popular among Czech readers; to be concrete, fourteen of his novels were published until the 1940s. Probably the most translated English author of this period can be considered John Galsworthy whose "The Forsythe Saga" and "Modern Comedy" were published in one compact translation.

H. G. Wells, as the next British author, had also a very friendly reception among Czech readers. That is why almost all of his works were

translated until the beginning of World War II. Wells was also really appreciated by the Czech Anglicist and Americanist Otakar Vočadlo. These and others commentaries on the English literature could be seen in his work *Anglická literatura 20. století* ("The English Literature of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century"). According to this overview of the English literature can be seen that the Czech culture did not try to catch up with Europe any more (as it was in the previous period), but started to choose from the English and the American production by itself, by its priorities and by its own direction. On the other hand, there are some speculations about how Vočadlo could influence this selection of translations, such as the publishing lack of interest in Thomas Hardy which was in accordance with a distant appraisal by O. Vočadlo.

One of the most interesting themes of this period can be considered the reception of works connected to modernism. The Czech translators had a very quick response to the modernistic works of Anglo-American authors, as it can be seen in the translations of James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Katherine Mansfield or David Herbert Lawrence. The translation of Joyce's "Ulysses" (1922) by L. Vymětal and J. Fastrová was published in 1930 as well as "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man" (1916) in translation by S. Jílovská. In the 1930s, the works by D. H. Lawrence, such as "Sons and Lovers" (1913), "Women in Love" (1920) or "Lady Chatterley's Lover" (1928), were published by the publishing house Odeon. Also the publisher Škeřík introduced Lawrence's novels "The Virgin and the Gipsy" (1930) (in translation by H. Skoumalová) and "The Man Who Died" (1930) (in translation by E. A. Saudek). Škeřík also published the novel by W. Woolf "Orlando" (1928) in translation by S. Jílovská in 1929, it means that just one year after the publication of original. K. Mansfield was translated by Aloys Skoumal, the one of the most creative Czech translators from the English and the author of post-

war translation of James Joyce's "Ulysses." Mansfield's "The Wind Blows" (1920) was introduced in 1938 by the publishing house Melantrich.

To sum up, it can be said that the Anglo-American modernism attracted some translators and publishers very much. However, this interest was evidently different from the opinions of O. Vočadlo, who was criticizing the works of modernism like *"momentary, extreme and hardly comprehensible expression of the post-war depression of values and scepticism."*<sup>14</sup>

The one special category of the interwar period was the progressive development of women participation in the literary translation, which became one of the most important domains of their intellectual assertion and which was developing even from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The author Staša Jílovská (1898-1955) was one of the most eminent figures of the interwar period. She was closely connected to the members of left-wing avant-garde and was a very active publicist, for example she was preparing for publication the periodical of Liberated Theatre (Osvobozené divadlo) – Vest Pocket Revue. Nevertheless, another woman can be considered as the founder of this trend, concretely Olga Fastrová, who became the first Czech professional journalist and translator at the same time. However, as translator she was using male pseudonyms like Fr. Šimák and Jos. Novák.

In conclusion, the interwar period was specific for the development of avant-garde in the Czech culture, which also reflected in literary translations.<sup>15</sup>

### **3.2.2 Finding New Approaches to Translation**

As it was already mentioned, one of the most important figures of this period can be definitely considered Otokar Fischer. The translators who were closely connected to his theories or unwittingly shared his views or who were building on his theories are called the members of Fischer's

translation school. O. Fischer, himself, specified his era as the time of revision. This denotation showed that the most important question of his program was the relationship to previous translational development. The revision was especially pointed at translations of Lumírovci group, concretely at their translations of dramas. Already in 1916, O. Fischer put his translation of Shakespeare's "Mackbeth" against the translation of J. V. Sládek. In later years he rewrote "Cyrano de Bergerac" or dramas by Calderon and he found that the translations by Vrchlický were not sufficient to be staged.

To sum up, the poetical and prosaic generation of the First Czechoslovak Republic had different requirements than the generation Lumírovci. They had a demand for naturalness, simplicity, folksiness. In the translations of poetry there was an effort to be natural, in the translations of drama there was an endeavour more likely after colloquiality. In translations the stylists wanted to detach words from the sentence flow to emphasize and isolate the meaning of the word. They also used more expressive words like emotional or dramatic expressions. Because of this effort, some translators of this school overstated the expressions or they used folk words excessively.

The whole interwar period was defined as searching for new and extraordinary means and thus distinctive. Infrequent rhyme, new phrases and the portrait which revealed new features of the reality were the requirements on the translating literature as well as on the original literature. It means that the distinctiveness became the criterion of selection. The translators from the Fischer's translation school complicated their poetical translation instead of making them easier. To give an example, they increased the number of rhymes of the original, as Bohumil Mathésius presented it in "Torquato Tasso" by J. W. Goethe or as E. A. Saudek used it in Shakespeare's plays. This fooling around with words and the effort to keep the stylistic colour revived the principle of compensation, for which O. Fischer created this denomination. The

danger of compensation was just that the authors sometimes overexposed the stylistic value. Fischer also said: *“only by the translation some average poem becomes a creative art”*.<sup>16</sup>

In regard to the method, Fischer drew in certain manner from the theoretical discoveries and principles of previous generations. However, he did not appropriate their ideas, he reached the new findings by negating them. He contested the statement by Lumírovci group about content closeness or “adherence,” which meant to remain the form as much as possible, but he also contested the decadent “congeniality,” which stood for the intellectual alliance of the author and the translator.

The theories of O. Fischer were developed as the reaction against the word-for-word translations of the period from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century until the World War I. In his translation of “Macbeth” in 1916, he defined his attitudes towards the older ones. Among many of his ideas he also said that to be a faithful translator did not mean to be precise at all, but to eliminate this type of translation. It meant that the translator should be faithful to the entirety, not always to the detail. Karel Čapek also expressed the main principle of the translational work in his preface to his *Francouzská poezie nové doby* (“The French Poetry of the New Age”): *“The target of a translational work is not to be conspicuous, but to interpret the original the way it did not pass through the work of a foreign personality and a foreign adaptation.”*<sup>17</sup> Viktor Dyk sympathized with this attitude too, he wanted to create the work which would have the gracefulness and the flavour of the original.

Bohumil Mathesius and others experienced translators of this period proposed to translators to find and read the work with a similar style by some Czech author while translating some foreign literature and with the aid of this work to search for so-called language key.

Another favourite method, which was not used and not required by O. Fischer, was the substitution of foreign dialects for the Czech dialects.

This substitution was reasoned by the analogical conditions of social and historical field. It sometimes happened that translators needed to create a new artificial social dialect because of the lack of necessary means in the Czech language, for example the English or the French languages have more socially coloured conversational means.

As it was mentioned, one of the main features of this period, concretely the Fischer's translating school, was also the enforcement of entirety over particulars. These features again criticized the theories of Czech modernism but also the contemporary dilettantes. The target of the best translators became the equivalence of impression instead of copying the text.

Fischer also understood that the translation was the work which was dependent on time and on the era when it originated, in other words, that it was limited in its existence. That is why he held the view that the translator should be satisfied with translating for the present, not for the future. He also said that every translation was replaceable and could be innovated. From these attitudes originated the one of the most important features of this period – the updating tendency of already translated works.

With this generation also arose the question of cultural context and the shift of the individuality of translator into the translated work. They were talking about the so-called translational concept. It was taken into account that the appearance of foreign author in the Czech literature was influenced by the creative individuality of author and translator and moreover that the objective values of work were connected to different Czech cultural situations. Translators were aware of the relations among the subjective idea of the author, the objective idea of the work and its various concretizations in various historical situations. That is why translators needed to think about the genesis of the work and its realization in the society.

The historical context led into the integration of translation into the Czech contemporary cultural context. O. Fischer or B. Mathesius were strictly against the eclectic objectivism of J. Vrchlický, which was also criticized by decadents who were getting over it by subjective selection. On the contrary, the Fischer's generation led the different view of overcoming this approach, they used the historically fixed selection and they wanted to approach the original to the Czech social background as much as possible. With this interpretation of foreign works arrived the interconnection of scientific knowledge to the artistic sentiment, in other words, the synthesis of scientific and artistic instinct about which O. Fischer was talking very often. The translations became the instrument of demonstrating opinions of the current situation of the Czech people. However, this attitude could be seen only in the works of the most considerable personalities of that period.

The translational procedure of Fischer was the product of the era and afforded the opportunity to the Czech translating to fulfil its cultural message. However, as was mentioned, it had its weaknesses, such as the danger of inappropriate localization and the pointless aggrandisement of expressions among less talented translators. Although there was Fischer's translating school, many of his followers had slightly different opinions, such as B. Mathesius, the one of the most important figures in translating the Russian literature, was freer in his translational processes.

It is evident that the Fischer's translating school did not comprise all the leading personalities of the interwar period because the residues of previous periods were evidently overlapping with the rudiments of the new period.<sup>18</sup>

During the World War II, the translation of literature was almost completely stopped and concentrated particularly on German translations. Therefore, this period does not have to be analyzed.

### 3.3 View into the Post-War Period

The period between two world wars can be regarded as the important line in the development of translation, because with interwar generation ended the era, when it was needed or there was an endeavour to elaborate the Czech literary and poetical language to be able to translate anyway. As it was mentioned, the main features of the previous period were that there was the updating tendency and there was an effort to maximize the expressiveness, which sometimes led to the overstatement of expressions by less talented translators, but the post-war period brought the enlargement of translational procedures and the creation of repertoire of possible approaches to the conversion of the artistic literary work to the other language. The problem of this attitude arose in choosing the right translation process for each concrete example. With this changeover of approaches arrived also the modification of the meaning of the translational theory. We can say that in this period the formulation of generally valid rules was over and the analysis of alternatives was more preferred. On the other hand, the cultural politics required the emphasis on generally applicable norms. This normative attitude could be seen in the whole sphere which was under the control of cultural politics.<sup>19</sup>

After the World War II, publishing houses resumed their activity as well as the new publishing houses were founded. However, after the coup in February 1948, the private publishing houses were forced to stop their businesses. The political orientation of the country brought the targeted cultural politics as well; it meant that in 1953 the Ministry of Culture limited the specialization of the publishing activity. The publishing of belles-lettres was divided among Státní nakladatelství krásné literatury, hudby a umění (SNKLHU) ("State Publishing House of Belles-lettres, Music and Art"), which later carried the name Odeon (like the denomination from the First Czechoslovak Republic), Mladá fronta ("The Young Front"), Naše vojsko

(“Our Military”) and partly the publishing house Československý spisovatel (“The Czechoslovak Writer”) and Státní nakladatelství politické literatury (SNPL) (“State Publishing House of Political Literature”), which later became the publishing house Svoboda.

Readerships were very popular in this period, for example Máj (“May”) or Klub čtenářů (“The Club of Readers”) could be found in Odeon. The cultural interest was focused on publishing the classical worldwide literature by editing its texts, by adding commentaries or by publishing the new ones, such as some works by Dickens or Twain. On the other hand, the selection of contemporary Anglo-American literature was limited by the political regime only on the activity by so-called progressive writers. For this reason, the pieces of information about the war or about the international literary development were absent. In the turn of the 1950s and 1960s, the situation started to be more and more liberalised.

The publishing action was limited by the requirements of proportional representation of so-called Western and Eastern literature. This situation was because of the economical reasons (capacities of printing offices or quotas of papers) but also because of regulation measures of political organs as well. Despite of all these requirements, the number of translated contemporary authors was increasing.

On the other hand, the translations of classics of the English poetry were in decline because of the lack of sufficient Czech translators. The different situation was with the 20<sup>th</sup> century poetry, especially Jan Zábrana was appreciated for his translations of modern American poetry including the translations of Beat generation.

Stylistically difficult works by modernists were translated too. For example W. Faulkner was translated by J. Valja, J. Schwarz or by L. and R. Pellars. Jiří Valja also realized the crosscut of T. S. Eliot’s work. J.

Fastoralová and Vlasta Dvořáčková were concentrated on the rest of work by V. Woolf or, as was mentioned, A. Skoumal translated “Ulysses” by James Joyce.

In this period, the political influence of what would be translated or not was very strong. Moreover, the plans for translation were subject to the ministerial agreement. However, the editor’s offices were more or less successful in the enforcement of broad spectrum of contemporary Anglo-American authors. The situation got worse after 1968 with normalization process.<sup>20</sup>

To sum up, it can be said that with the post-war period the influential role of translators was more and more restricted because the political regime was feared of their power.<sup>21</sup>

One interesting point was in the development of translational language culture. There was an effort to use more the colloquial language and the slang in artistic texts. Nevertheless, the language theories from the beginning of 1950s, which were strongly refusing the usage of colloquial language, dialects and especially slang and argot, found many favourable feedbacks from the readers, but when the whole modern international literature was characterized by the liberation of form and the penetration of colloquial language, it was needed to change this view.<sup>22</sup>

## **4 LEADING PERSONALITIES OF THE FIRST HALF OF THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY**

### **4.1 Jiří Levý (8 August 1926 – 17 January 1967)**

#### **4.1.1 Life and Work**

Literary theoretician, translation theoretician and Anglist Jiří Levý was born on 8 August 1926 in Košice and died in less than 41 years in Brno. He was the descendant of well known romantic translator from the French

language, Otakar Levý (well known for the translation of the novel *The Red and the Black* by Stendhal, for example). After his school-leaving exam at “reálné gymnázium” grammar school in Prague, he decided to study Czech and English at Masaryk University in Brno at the Faculty of Arts and in the 1949 he obtained the academic degree Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) on the basis of his work *Srovnávací pohled na anglický verš* (“Comparative View of the English Rhyme”).

In the years 1950-1963, he was lecturing at the Department of English Studies at Palacký Univerzity in Olomouc, and from the year 1924 he worked permanently at the Department of Czech literature and the Literary Science at Masaryk University. In the year 1957, he obtained the academic degree Candidate of Sciences (CSc.) (*Vývoj překladatelských metod v české literatuře*) (“The Development of Translation Theories and Methods in the Czech Literature”), in 1958 he habilitated with his work *Základní otázky teorie překladu* (“Fundamental Problems of the Theory of Translation”) and in 1963 he achieved the degree Doctor of Philological Sciences with the work *Problémy srovnávací versifikace* (“The Problems of Comparative Versification”), which defined his orientation and his priorities in researching. He was contributing with his writings into domestic and foreign science magazines and he was lecturing about the issues and problems of translating in homeland and in abroad as well (for example in Warsaw, Vienna or Stuttgart).

In the 1960s, Levý was at the position of vice-chairman in Translation Department of the Union of Czech Writers (*Překladatelská sekce Svazu českých spisovatelů*) and also its representative at the International Federation of Translators (FIT). Furthermore, he founded the Group for Exact Methods and Interdisciplinary Relations (*Skupina pro exaktní metody a mezioborové vztahy*) and edited with J.F.Franěk the edition

called *Český překlad* (“The Czech Translation”)\*, where, in the first edition in 1957, was also published Levý’s monograph *České teorie překladu* (“The Czech Theories of Translation”).

Among the voluminous number of his works must be mentioned his monograph *Umění překladu* (“The Art of Translation”) (1963), which was standing at the beginning of the Czech Translation Studies. Levý published two mimeographed and also contributed in Czech and foreign scientific periodicals (for example *Essays in Criticism* (Oxford), *Slovo a slovesnost* (“The Word and the fine literature”), *Host do domu* (“The Guest into the House”)), he also published his translations from the English, Spanish and French poetry, and he added epilogues to a large number of works from the English literature (Ben Jonson, William Butler Yeats, William Shakespeare, Oskar Wilde, etc.). Levý organized and published many issues, for example the anthology of poems by W.B. Yeats *Slova snad pro hudbu* (“Words for Music Perhaps”) (1961) or *Západní literární věda a estetika* (“Western Literary Science and Aesthetics”) (1966), where he described his opinion about the translation process which stood on the extended study of aesthetics and the theory of the literature.<sup>23</sup>

#### 4.1.2 Theories of Levý

Levý saw the sense of translation like the reproductive art which was similar to the dramatic art. The question of the correctness of translation was slightly influenced by the cultural politics which acquired the normative approach of the process of translation. Accordingly to this norm, here arose the problematic term “*the realistic translation*”<sup>24</sup> which was, by Levý, taken as “*everything which contributes to more correct and artistically valuable interpretation of the artwork.*”<sup>25</sup> Therefore, the only

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\* The edition (*Český překlad*) was published in 14 volumes between 1957-1990 (*Český překlad*, *Martinova webová stránka* [online])

translation, which could be taken as the opposite of this definition, was simply the wrong translation. The works by Levý also originated in the period, when the translation was examined from the linguistic aspect, which was developing further in the sixties.<sup>26</sup>

The theories of Levý were also based on the translation as the part of communication processes which were dependent on particular culture. These theories reflected on the new ways of contemplation on the literature. For Levý, the systemic and the structural approach of interwar artistic disciplines, linguistics and exact methods were the strong methodological principle of the literary science. He was influenced for example by Noam Chomsky and his generative grammar or by Max Bense and his works about aesthetics.<sup>27</sup>

## **4.2 Otokar Fischer (20 May 1883 – 12 March 1938)**

### **4.2.1 Life and Work**

Poet, playwright, translator, philosopher and literary scientist, Otokar Fischer, was born on 20 May 1883 in Kolín into a Jewish family. After the death of father, the family moved in Prague, where they lived in poor living conditions. However, Otokar successfully finished the secondary school in Kolín, continued to study Germanic and Romance languages in Prague and finished his studies with doctorate in 1905 in Berlin. After his studies, he started to work in the University Library, where he was preparing for his future university career.

In 1909 Fischer obtained the degree docent and later he became the professor of the History of German literature at Charles University. He was not only lecturing in Bohemia but he was also invited to universities and to scientific congresses in abroad (for example he lectured at the universities in Paris and Strasbourg). From 1907 he worked also as a theatre reporter in many periodicals of his era, such as in Přehled ("The

Overview”) (1907-1911), Česká revue (“The Czech Revue”) (1910-1918), Národní listy (“The National Newspaper”) (1915-1923), Právo lidu (“The Right of the People”) (1924-1930) or Lidové noviny (“People’s News”) (1924-1930). Before the World War I, Fischer was even working as a dramaturgist of the National Theatre and in the 1935-1938 he led its drama. Moreover, he had merit in the initiation of advanced drama there. In 1930’s, he also acted as a member of the antifascist movement; he especially contributed to help to German emigrants and militant Spain.

Fischer died unexpectedly on 12<sup>th</sup> March 1938 because of his heart attack after he had got the message about the occupation of Austria by Nazi Germany.

In his works can be seen one prevailing question, the question of the relationship of individual to the over-personal values. Among his books of poetry can be seen Království světa (“The Kingdom of the Word”) (1911), Hlas (“The Voice”) (1923), Poledne (“The Noon”) (1934), Rok (“The Year”) (1935), Host (“The Guest”) (1937). Among his dramas can be mentioned Přemyslovci (“The Premyslid Dynasty”) (1918), Hérakles (1919), Otroci (“Slaves”) (1925).

He was looking for contexts between humanistic values of the past and the present and he also connected the cultural sphere with current social problems. According to these values, Fischer connected philological interpretation with the modified application of modern psychological processes. Among his literary studies can be mentioned Heinrich Kleist a jeho dílo (“Heinrich von Kleist and His Work”) (1912), Friedrich Nietzsche (1912), Otázky literární psychologie (“The Questions of Literary Psychology”) (1917), Heine (1923-24), Duše a slovo (“The Soul and the Word”) (1929), Slovo a svět (“The Word and the World”) (1937).

Fischer also contributed to the introduction of leading works of international authors into the Czech cultural field. In particular, he personally translated from German, but also from French, Spanish and Russian. One of the most considerable translations can be considered his translation of Faust by J. W. Goethe.<sup>28</sup>

#### **4.2.2 Theories of Fischer**

Fischer's theories were demonstrated in the previous chapter and that is why there should be only mentioned some of his concrete written words or some pieces of information which were not mentioned before.

*“The translation is a typical activity of people whose intellectual climate can be described by the word that they are living under the double heaven; that they arose from momentary era, that they are living at the boundary. [...]”<sup>29</sup>*

Otokar Fischer required that the translation of poetry should always be worked up by two writers to take into account the linguistic correctness, faithfulness and poetry, but also its practical conditions.

According to him, the most difficult part of translation was to translate the title of the poem correctly. The way out of this problem Fischer saw in the use of paraphrase or even in the free substitution.<sup>30</sup>

### **4.3 Bohumil Mathesius (17 July 1888 – 2 June 1952)**

#### **4.3.1 Life and work**

Literary scientist, university professor, translator from Russian, German, French and Latin language was born on 17 July 1888 in Prague. He graduated his Czech and Romance studies at Charles University of Prague but privately he was concerned with learning the Russian language. From 1912 he was working as a secondary school teacher. However, in 1914 he had to enter the forces of Austro-Hungarian army.

In 1919-1921, Mathesius was working as an official of the Ministry of Education and later he was self employed as a literary critic and a translator. From 1920 he was also publishing in Melantrich the edition *Nová ruská knihovna* ("The New Russian Library"). After the World War II in 1945 he became the first professor of Soviet literature at the Faculty of Arts of Charles University; his lectures were later published by Jiří Franěk in his anthology called *Přehled sovětské literatury* ("The Overview of Soviet Literature") (1962 and 1965).

The largest number of Mathesius' works fell in the period before the year 1945 and he focused on translating from the Russian literature. In concrete, the number of these translations from classical and modern Russian literature is about 150. He translated famous authors, such as Anton Chekhov, F. M. Dostoyevsky, N. V. Gogol, M. J. Lermontov, V. V. Mayakovsky, A. S. Pushkin or L. N. Tolstoy. His translations were accompanied by study about authors and their works.

He was also the author of passages about the Soviet literature in Otto's *Encyclopaedia*. And according to the language cooperation he was translating from Chinese and Japanese language too. His paraphrases of an old Chinese and Japanese poetry became very popular.<sup>31</sup>

Bohumil Mathesius was a cousin of the Czech linguists, philologists, literary scientist focused on English and Czech studies, Vilém Mathesius (3 August 1882 – 12 April 1945).<sup>32</sup>

#### **4.3.2 Theories of Mathesius**

Generally, B. Mathesius was a sympathizer with O. Fischer but his attitudes were more loosened.

He said that the good translator could and had to arrange the original author's work, "*he could shorten, lengthen, complete, recompose, simply help this poor man*"<sup>33</sup> He hold the view that the translator had to avoid the author's mistakes and by contrast he should be full of mistakes of his

generation, in concrete the linguistic and mental mistakes. According to him, the best translator was the one who only translated the author's title and the rest he fished by himself.<sup>34</sup> It meant that the translator should translate the spirit of the work, the feelings and ideas which could influence the reader in the same way the author intended.<sup>35</sup> For this reason he later found difficulties after the World War II when the new cultural situation required the exactness as well as the maintenance of national and historical features of the original work.<sup>36</sup>

The main aim of translator was, according to Mathesius, to grasp the conscious and non-conscious purpose of the author, in other words to evoke the author's intended tenseness. The conscious purpose was the one that the author wanted to achieve and also achieved and the non-conscious was the one that the author wanted to achieve but because of any reason he did not achieve.<sup>37</sup>

About his theories this quotation said almost everything: "*To translate well means to remove the whole tissue from one cultural organism with its radicles and substrate and carefully replant it into the second organism.*"<sup>38</sup>

## 5 CONCLUSION

The objective of this Bachelor thesis was to explain what the Translation Studies are and mainly to give a short summary of the fundamental translational development of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century including its main personalities and theoreticians and its cultural context.

As it was mentioned, this theme is very extensive, that is why this work should be taken as a very brief summary of this issue with the selection of information that the author considered to be important and interesting. Especially in the second part – the historical development – where the facts and the personalities are uncountable, it was needed to concentrate on particular facts and for this delimitation principally two books were very useful. One was by Jiří Levý, *České teorie překladu* (“The Czech Theories of Translation”) and the second one was by Belisová, Šárka et al., *Kapitoly z dějin českého překladu* (“Chapters from the History of Czech Translation”).

The important figures of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as the third part of the thesis, brought the information only about the most influential personalities according to the author’s opinion. It is for example Jiří Levý, the most important figure in creative process of translating and also after whom the one of prizes awarded to the best translators is denominated, or Otokar Fischer as the most innovative contemporary translation theoretician.

It is clear that the translation is influenced by the period or we can say that the translation is a part of the national culture. For this reason, the era reflects in the way of translating, such as in selections of original works for translation, in selection of translational procedure or the selection of language figures.

For the circumstances of the historical development and the geographical location, the Czech society was always interested in the international evolution and opened to various impulses from the rest of the world. Even in the process of cognition, the translation was very important.

To sum up, this thesis is only analyzing the main stream of translational development. It is clear that the whole analogy of this theme would be for many hours and pages of researching and maybe that is why this thesis could be taken as the impulse for further examinations too.

## 6 ENDNOTES

1. PETRŮ, E. *Úvod do studia literární vědy*, p. 38-39.
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3. Ibid.
4. Kdo jsme?, *Ústav translatologie* [online]
5. Ibid.
6. Aktuální a obecné informace, *Obec překladatelů* [online]
7. Ceny, stipendia, akce, *Obec překladatelů* [online]
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9. Ibid.
10. BELISOVÁ, Šárka et al. *Kapitoly z dějin českého překladu*, p. 40-59
11. LEVÝ, J. *České teorie překladu (1)*, p. 209
12. Ibid., p. 211
13. Ibid., p. 209-212
14. BELISOVÁ, Šárka et al. *Kapitoly z dějin českého překladu*, p. 68
15. Ibid., p. 60-71
16. LEVÝ, J. *České teorie překladu (1)*, p. 219
17. Ibid., p. 220-221
18. LEVÝ, J. *České teorie překladu (1)*, p. 212-231
19. LEVÝ, J. *České teorie překladu (1)*, p. 10-11
20. BELISOVÁ, Šárka et al. *Kapitoly z dějin českého překladu*, p. 71-73

21. KALIVODOVÁ, Eva et al. *Tajemná translologie?*, p. 24
22. BELISOVÁ, Šárka et al. *Kapitoly z dějin českého překladu*, p. 73-74
23. Jiří Levý, *Slovník české literatury po roce 1945* [online]
24. LEVÝ, J. *České teorie překladu (1)*, p. 11
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid
27. Jiří Levý, *Slovník české literatury po roce 1945* [online]
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29. LEVÝ, J. *České teorie překladu (2)*, p. 5
30. VERNEROVÁ, Andrea. *Otokar Fischer jako překladatel anglického dramatu* [online]
31. Mathesius Bohumil. *Obec překladatelů* [online]
32. Mathesius Vilém. *Kdo byl kdo v našich dějinách ve 20. století* [online]
33. LEVÝ, J. *České teorie překladu (1)*, p. 231
34. Ibid.
35. LEVÝ, J. *České teorie překladu (2)*, p. 191
36. LEVÝ, J. *České teorie překladu (1)*, p. 231
37. LEVÝ, J. *České teorie překladu (2)*, p. 190-191
38. Ibid., 189

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## **8 ABSTRACT**

The topic of the thesis is Leading theoreticians of Czech and Slovak translatology in 20<sup>th</sup> century. The aim of the thesis is to explain what the Translation Studies are and mainly to give a short summary of the fundamental translational development of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century including its main personalities and its cultural context. The Bachelor thesis is divided into three main parts, in the first part the term Translation Studies is explained, the second deals with the main historical development of translational procedures of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the third part contains the information about the main personalities from the field of translational theory of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## 9 RESUMÉ

Tématem této práce je Významné postavy české a slovenské translatologie 20. století. Cílem práce je vysvětlit, co je translatologie a zejména pak uvést stručné shrnutí zásadního vývoje překladu včetně jeho hlavních osobností a kulturních souvislostí. Bakalářská práce je tvořena třemi nedůležitějšími kapitolami, v první kapitole je vysvětlen pojem translatologie, druhá část se zabývá historickým vývojem překladatelství první poloviny 20. století a třetí kapitola obsahuje informace o nejdůležitějších osobnostech z oboru teorie překladu první poloviny 20. století.