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**Aspects of Drama Translation  
and Case Study of Play *Ucpanej System***

**(diplomová práce)**

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Prohlašuji, že jsem tuto diplomovou práci vypracovala samostatně a uvedla úplný seznam použité a citované literatury.

V Olomouci dne .....

Upřímně děkuji vedoucí mé práce Mgr. Jitce Zehnalové, Dr. za její čas, metodické vedení a rady, které mi poskytla v průběhu psaní této práce, a všem ostatním, kteří mě jakkoli podpořili během studií.

**Explanatory Note:**

Since some of the primary texts (reviews), which are discussed in this thesis, are not freely available, they are not included in the printed version of the thesis. Their digital versions can be found for visual reference on the enclosed CD.

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# 1. Introduction

*The word theatre comes from the Greeks. It means the seeing place. It is the place people come to see the truth about life and the social situation. The theatre is a spiritual and social X-ray of its time.*

— Stella Adler, American actress

Theatre has been a part of people's lives for a very long time. Being a tool of entertainment, education, political regime or other purpose, it has reflected, as a faithful companion, people's lives in every period and continues to do so even nowadays. Long before the globalized world of today, people felt a need to communicate and they were interested in other cultures, including their art, and the same has held true for their love of entertainment and education. As an excellent mixture of all of this, there has been theatre. Since many great works have been written in many different languages, translators have always been valuable (though not always valued) mediators among different cultures.

First, translation was simply being done but soon it also started to be explored and analysed, though mostly practically through translators' individual works. In the course of time, more and more works on translation theory have been written, discussing its various aspects. Initially, mainly the dichotomy of word for word versus sense for sense was discussed, later followed by more complex and better defined concepts. Although literary texts have been translated as well as commented upon for centuries, they came into question more theoretically in the 20<sup>th</sup> century together with other translation topics. The first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was "the pre-linguistics stage" which was still "concerned with the continually recurring discussion of the merits of word-for-word, as opposed to sense-for-sense, translation" (Newmark 2009, 20–21). At that point, theatre texts were, if at all, discussed within the broad area of literary texts and mainly in semiotic terms.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> One of the earliest authors discussing the semiotics of theatre was for example Otamar Zich (*Aesthetics of the Art of Drama*, 1931) and other authors from Prague Circle.

Translation as such and its various subcategories have been given more and more attention, yet translation of drama was largely omitted up to the 1980s. In her work, Susan Bassnett, one of the leading persons in drama translation theory, states (already in 1980) that “theatre is one of the most neglected areas. There is very little material on the special problems of translating dramatic texts, and the statements of individual theatre translators often imply that the methodology used in the translation process is the same as that used to approach prose texts” (2002, 123–124). However, favourably for the field of Czech and Slovak translation, there was Jiří Levý as a notable exception. The first edition of his *Umění překladu (The Art of Translation)* was published as early as in 1963 and offered not only a comprehensive view of translation and its general issues but also, and more importantly, a discussion of more specific areas, such as drama or poetry translation.

Drama translation undoubtedly is a part of literary translation from which it can utilise many methods, theories and rules; however, it is also an autonomous area, both specific and demanding. Gunilla Anderman (1998, 74) quotes André Lefevere who stated back in 1980 that “[t]here is practically no theoretical literature on the translation of drama as acted and produced”. Yet, Lefevere added that the situation had slowly began to change thanks to progress in the field of pragmatics (especially the theory of speech acts, an area of interest for a drama translator) and the contribution of sociolinguistics (quoted in Anderman 1998, 74). If we take into account the existing theory on the topic of theatrical translation, it is usually concerned with a few recurrent topics. For the past thirty years, the main discussed terms have been: speakability, playability, performability, readability and other –abilities, the role of a drama text translator, the page versus stage question, dialogue, the role of nonverbal elements in drama, and last but not least, reception and audience. Actually, the existence and role of the audience is crucial for drama, and thus, drama translation. Peter Handke, an Austrian playwright and novelist, comments on audience in his play *Offending the Audience* as follows: “You are the topic.... You are the

centre. You are the occasion. You are the reason why” (quoted in Freshwater 2009, 1). Besides works which deal with drama translation in general, there are those (either whole books or at least chapters or pages) which discuss the role of the audience specifically, for example *Theatre & Audience* by Helen Freshwater, *Audiences* by Nicholas Abercrombie and Brian Longhurst or Susan Bennett’s *Theatre Audiences*. Some of their views will be mentioned again and elaborated upon later in this thesis.

Existence of theatre audiences presupposes that there is such a place as theatre where plays are staged and vice versa. However, some dramatic pieces do not have to be staged. In reality, when a play is written and then assigned to be translated, “[t]he translator is therefore faced with the choice of either viewing drama as literature or as an integral part of a theatrical production” (van den Broeck quoted in Anderman 2009, 92), and then adjusts their translation accordingly. Theoretically, discussions have been led about this distinction and while most authors acknowledge it, other scholars, such as Zatlin (2005, vii), do not accept the option of drama for readers and argue that “theatrical translation should be intended precisely for performance”. Practically, in case of individual translations (or works in general), the path to be taken is usually decided on by the author, agency or theatre company.

The presented thesis deals with the neglected field of drama translation, specifically with (a) the way and extent theoretical principles are respected/reflected in the real drama production, (b) the notion of source text in drama translation (the way a particular translated drama text was created from different sources), (c) the role of audience and perception. Naturally, drama production has got many faces and it is not within the compass of one’s diploma thesis to cover all these aspects in a way that would enable to draw general conclusions. However, it is possible, within a case study, to choose a sample play and try to shed some light on these issues through the analyses of texts samples of different text versions, of the production of these versions, as well as an analysis of reviews. The aim of



this work is to collect available data related to the selected play and analyse how it actually became a play, how it is perceived by its audiences and how it was translated with regard to its strongest aspect.

The play which was selected for the case study is called *Ucpanej systém* (*A Blockage in the System*). It is based on a book of short stories, published in 1994, and a screenplay for a film screened in 1998, both under the name of *The Acid House*, by Irvine Welsh. The short stories were translated into Czech almost ten years ago, in 2008. Later, it was adapted by a Slovak dramaturge Daniel Majling for the stage and premiered in 2012 under the name of *Ucpanej systém* in Dejvické divadlo. Even after four years of being staged, it is continuously sold out and so it is almost impossible to see it. What makes it so attractive for the theatregoers? The play is described by its home theatre as the most vulgar in their staging history, which certainly makes it special. Yet, it would be short-sighted and rather narrow to assume that this is the reason for such a high popularity of the play. An analysis of the critical reviews might at least partly answer this question.

As for the structure of this thesis, it is divided into several parts. The first, theoretical part, strives to provide a theoretical framework concerning basic aspects of drama and specifics and development of drama translation. Since translation, as well as interpretation and any other language-based area, is a highly interdisciplinary field, it is useful to find its links to other areas that might help with studying this topic. Using various available sources, the position of drama translation within translation theory and its distinction from other types of translation is commented on. Also, the most important aspects of theatrical translation with an emphasis on the audience is mentioned and elaborated upon.

Subsequently, the play chosen as the subject for the case study is contextualised. Besides the basic information, such as the name, author, publication date, etc., information about the adaptations of the play, its translations, its aim and impact, and any other data useful for the purpose of this work are included. In the case study itself, an analysis of the reviews is

provided. Methodologically, there has not been a lot of research on how to work with reviews therefore this thesis draws upon the study of paratexts by Genette (1997) and extratexts by Tahir-Gürçağlar (2002). It strives to find out, through the thesis author's own analysis and method, whether it is possible to use reviews as a form of evaluation of plays' reception. The second part of the case study comprises an analysis of selected parts of the original short stories and their Czech translation. The aim of this analysis is to identify translation strategies used for the transfer of those features that are most significant from the point of view of reception.

In this introduction, the author of this thesis tried to touch upon the importance of theatre and position (and omission) of drama translation within translation theory. Main aspects of drama translation, such as the audience and page/stage issue, were mentioned. The research area of this thesis is drama translation genesis and reception which will be examined through the following research questions: What are the aspects of drama translation from the theoretical point of view? What were the steps in the genesis of the final translated play? What aspects of the play were reviewed and focused on? How was the strongest aspect of the play handled in the translation process?

## 2. Theoretical Part

This part is divided into two main subchapters. The first of them offers an outlook on drama and theatre from a general point of view, the second looks more specifically at drama translation.

### 2.1 World of Drama and Theatre

#### 2.1.1 *Drama and Theatre as Terms*

This part discusses the notion of drama and theatre, and tries to find the specifics of theatrical text. The history of drama is very long, starting back in the ancient Greece. At that time, being mainly of religious and mythological nature, it was practically a part of everyday life. Since then, it has gone through a lot of changes. Nowadays, drama is mainly a tool of entertainment but sometimes also a means of more serious issues, such as the expression of political views. *Encyclopaedia Britannica* defines *dramatic literature* as “the texts of plays that can be read, as distinct from being seen and heard in performance”, followed by stating that the term *dramatic literature* actually implies a contradiction because literature originally meant something written and drama meant something performed. This clearly illustrates one of the issues often discussed in theatre-related literature. Dramatic texts are either supposed to be read – after all, they are texts – or performed because they are dramatic. This dichotomy can be seen very often in the works discussing drama (as well as drama translation) and it is unlike prosaic texts in case of which this question does not arise.

Both words come from Greek, *drama* meaning “to act/to do” while *theatre* originated from the verb “to see”. Thus, one can see that both words are closely connected to action and perception, and when thinking about the world of drama or theatre, it seems natural not to think only about words on a sheet of paper. Similarly, *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines *drama* as “a piece of writing that tells a story and is *performed* on a stage” (emphasis added). According to *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and*

*Literary Theory*, it is “in general any work meant to be performed on a stage by actors”, both thus connecting it to stage, not page.

As for drama versus theatre, Mark Fortier, in his work *Theory/Theatre*, differentiates as follows: “Those who study theatre make a commonplace distinction between drama and theatre. Drama is most often written language, the words ascribed to the characters, which in the theatre are spoken by actors.... Unlike drama, theatre is not words on a page. Theatre is performance (though often the performance of a drama text) and entails not only words but space, actors, props, audience and the complex relations among these elements” (2002, 4). Again, although drama can and does mean words on a page, it is inevitably connected to stage and performance, too.

To complete (and perhaps to complicate) the picture, another explanation is provided by Aaltonen (2000, 33), who states, “The double tie of dramatic texts to the literary and theatrical system is present in the way in which the word ‘drama’ is used to refer to both a written text and a theatrical performance.” She points out the complexity of the situation since “there is drama which is no longer or perhaps never has been performed (closet drama), and there are performances which are not based on any written work, or which are not accompanied by the publication of any text (improvised theatre)” (33–34). Drama and theatre are thus interrelated, however, at the same time and to a certain extent, independent of each other.

### ***2.1.2 Multimodality of Drama***

A discussion about what constitutes drama was started centuries ago. Marga Munkelt (2010, 145) mentions Aristotle who discussed six dramatic elements characterizing every play. These cover *spectacle*, *mimesis of character*, *plot*, *verbal expression*, *song* and *mimesis of intellect* (where *mimesis* means doing something in order to represent life, i.e. action). Aristotle was of the opinion that *action (mimesis)* and *speech (verbal expression)* in drama are of equal significance and that “they could also

exist without each other” (quoted in Munkelt 2010, 145). In fact, some plays might, as Munkelt maintains, take extreme forms consisting of spoken words or action only; a usual case, though, would be a play in which one of the characteristics is more or less foregrounded to achieve particular effects (146).

While a discussion is led about which element is more important, it could be settled that their relation is not one of superiority and inferiority but rather a mutually complementary one. Apart from the two main elements, *action* and *speech*, the third component constituting drama, listed by Munkelt (145–6), is the *role of the spectator* or *perception*. Essentially, the *action* and *speech* are ‘produced’ by actors but they must be, above all, received, deciphered and understood (correctly) by viewers. According to Munkelt (146), the spectator’s task is to find meaning in action, speech and perception. She further elaborates: “[P]lays without words are a greater challenge than plays without physical action. The spectator must think more actively and intensively about meaning than in plays with words” (159).

This being said, the translator’s role in the process is of utmost importance because the quality of their work influences not only the verbal side of a performance but also the action directed through the stage directions which have to be allowed for and translated as well. It is clear, from the above mentioned, that a theatre play meant to be staged is a complex medium. Katharina Reiss, who discussed different text types in translation, classified it among *audio-medial*, later renamed *multi-medial*, texts, i.e. texts “written to be spoken or sung and hence... dependent on a non-linguistic (technical) medium or on other audio-visual forms of expression for their full realization; language is only one part of a broad complex of elements” (quoted in Snell-Hornby 2006, 84). Today, drama falls within the subcategory of *multimodal* texts which “involve different modes of verbal and nonverbal expression, comprising both sight and sound” (Snell-Hornby 2006, 85).

### ***2.1.3 Audience, Reception and Perception Explained***

Audience, reception and perception are important terms in this thesis and therefore will be explained and specified in more detail. According to the *Oxford Dictionary (8<sup>th</sup> edition)*, the word *audience* carries three meanings: 1) a group of people who have gathered to watch or listen to something (a play, concert, somebody speaking, etc.); 2) a number of people or a particular group of people who watch, read or listen to the same thing; 3) a formal meeting with an important person. Naturally, the latter meaning can be omitted in this work. The first two definitions are very similar, saying that audience presupposes (a group of) people (not a single person) who share a particular experience or event, or just people who enjoy the same work but not through a locally shared event. Thus, if we speak about theatre audience, this may cover viewers of a play in a theatre building just as much as readers of the drama texts at any other place. Depending on the author and/or context, both or only one of these definitions is considered. As was already mentioned, not all authors regard dramatic text as something intended to be read.

*Perception* is also presented through three meanings in the *Oxford Dictionary* and those are: 1) the way you notice things, especially with the senses; 2) the ability to understand the true nature of something; 3) an idea, a belief or an image you have as a result of how you see or understand something. In case of perception of a play then, it is the (subjective) internal processing of what is happening on stage (or in a play script).

Lastly, *reception*, according to the *Oxford Dictionary*, represents the type of welcome that is given to somebody/something and its synonyms might be words such as response, reaction or feedback. One can see that while perception is rather internal, reception is the outside reaction to the input perceived.

In the topic being explored, an audience are the viewers in the theatre (although the play is also available as a play script, presumably the majority

of people will know its staged version); perception covers the inner experience of seeing this play in a theatre, and reception, then, is the evaluation of it, as a reflection of what was perceived. This evaluation can take many forms, one of them being reviews which are used as a database for the analytical part of this work.

#### ***2.1.4 What Makes Theatrical Audience***

Theatre audience and its related topics have been examined from various points of view, for example historically (Wiltshire 2015), semiotically (Pavis 1981, Ubersfeld 1978), sociologically (Freshwater 2009, Abercrombie and Longhurst 1998) or comprehensively (Bennett 1988).

Audience is the very reason why theatre exists. Theatre can arise even if its setting looks far different from what we would call common, as expressed by Peter Brook's following statement, "A man walks across [any] empty space whilst someone else is watching him, and this is all that is needed for an act of theatre to be engaged" (quoted in Freshwater 2009, 1). One can observe that it is not as much a matter of what is happening and where but rather of somebody watching the scene and therefore completing the whole theatrical event.

Freshwater (2009, 5) explains that the origin of the word *audience* comes from Latin *audire*, i.e. 'to hear', suggesting that people were supposed to come to the theatre mainly to listen. On the other hand, the meaning of *theatre* is the 'seeing place'. These two may either seem at odds or contrarily as complementing each other because in perceiving performances both sight and hearing are fully engaged.

What is an audience? Following what was mentioned above, in the world of theatre as we know it, an audience can be understood as a group of people who attend a theatrical event. This happens at the same time and place, commonly after paying a certain fee, and these people are awaiting a cultural experience in return, although having different backgrounds and expectations. Williams (1970, 5) distinguishes between two types of theatre

audience, the popular and the particular. The former come to see the play on the ground of having money for the entrance fee, the latter because of their social, political and/or financial situation or by invitation (5). It is obvious that the real situation is likely to be more complex but Williams at least provides a certain distinction which can be further developed or challenged by others. Different groups of audience might have different backgrounds, knowledge and expectations related to theatre and performance, and therefore are very likely to react and evaluate it differently.

On the other hand, Michael Waters remarks on the topic of audience's income: "Although recent analysis of the audiences for theatre and associated art forms seems to indicate that income has little impact on attendance – other features, such as education, social status, and ethnicity – the first two of which are closely linked with income – were regarded as the most relative to arts participation, with more highly educated people of prominent social status being most likely to visit the theatre" (Waters 2009–10, 423). Firstly, this is a commentary related to English audiences, but it would not be too daring to use it as characteristics of any European audience either. Therefore, secondly, it can be assumed that while income, as in many other life situations, is a fairly deciding factor, whether a person attends a theatre performance or not is a question mainly related to their education and social position.

### ***2.1.5 Poyatos's Interrelationships in Theatre***

Fernando Poyatos (2008) in his work examines all kinds of relationships which take place in the theatrical (and cinematic) environment. He distinguishes five entities – spectator, performer, character, play and environment – which result in ten interrelationships (153). For the purpose of this thesis focusing on audience, only the ones related to spectators will be discussed. It is important to take them into account since they all clarify and contribute to the spectators' experience and form the way they perceive the play. Poyatos's study of interrelationships clearly shows how complex this area is.



The first relationship, between the spectators and the play (Poyatos 2008, 153), is distinguished from the others because it also involves the playwright, who should have the spectators in mind and think about the stage scenery they create in the text. The stage directions (giving the complexity of stage settings) have changed in the course of time, starting with only a few of them, which forced the spectator to retrieve the idea from characters' dialogues, and developing into complex ones which virtually hand all the details to the playgoers on a silver platter so that the audience experience "a very diminished intellectual participation" (154).

Secondly, there is a connection between the spectator and the character. Here, Poyatos distinguishes between a character whom a spectator first encounters on the stage and one they already know from their individual reading (154). In the former case, "his or her initial image seems to be the same for all of us" (154), in the latter, the image we have created and which varies from reader to reader, is forced to be replaced by the one on stage because it "appears sufficiently convincing to our eyes and ears" (154). Depending on the quality of the theatrical performance and on how strong our picture of the character is, this replacement can be mild and the 'new image' might fit the spectator's projection even better or we can resist it because it clashes with our too firm opinion.

As the third kind of relationship, Poyatos lists the spectator–performer one (2008, 156). This one is closely linked to the previously mentioned. In this situation, for us as spectators, it "is not a question of carrying out an intellectual or imaginative exercise, as in the reading of a novel, but of managing our sensorial confrontation with a character who is an actor, or an actor who is a character, and the degree in which that actor will be able to imbue us with the 'reality' of his model, or simply the reality of himself if he fails in his effort" (156). Actors' acting ability can enhance or spoil the experience for the playgoer even if the environment and the text itself is perfect. As an interesting example, Poyatos specifically mentions one instance of acting which "shutters the spectator's illusion: when the player,

even if only flittingly, looks at the audience without having to do that, perhaps even meeting a particular spectator's eyes" (156). Also, as opposed to the world of cinema or narrative texts, the feedback for the actors (and all other contributors to the theatre production) from the audience is immediate. According to Poyatos (157), it is "seldom verbal...but mostly paralinguistic, for instance: different kinds of murmured or open laughter and, at the end, whistles of approval (not in every culture), boos, hisses and murmurs of disapproval, etc.; and audible kinesic behaviours... like applause of approval and, in other cultures, foot-stamping".

As for the spectator–spectator relationship, the fourth kind of relationship, it might be something which does not come to mind that often, nevertheless, which might also influence person's reception of a play to a great extent. This relationship is (at least) twofold. As Poyatos points out (157–158), we interpret individually what is happening on stage although we are members of a collective whole. Our reception of the play is conditioned (in the following examples negatively) by what is happening around us – when other visitors arrive late, give their comments, mutter, cough, wear a strong perfume, occupy a shared armrest, etc. The impact of all these depends on how full the theatre house is. However, "all those individuals who surround us during the performance react like ourselves to the reality of the stage with smiles, laughs, paralinguistic expressions of admiration, indignation or protest, sharing such reactions with much solidarity in a mutually contagious way" (158). Even though it was previously mentioned that one viewer is enough for theatre to exist, it is this collectivity, this shared experience, what makes theatre performance complete. As anyone who has ever taken part in a large group event might confirm, the bigger the audience, the bigger or more intensive the experience.

The last relationship to be discussed is the one between the spectator and the environment, which covers "interaction with the theatre as [a] building, and the effect that its characteristics have on our perception of the play" (Poyatos 2008, 158). As for the building, we evaluate the exterior and

interior, which have always reflected the era in which the theatre was built. Poyatos mentions Greek amphitheatres of great size with actors' typical (and necessary) broad gestures and masks, Renaissance circular playhouses, new buildings of 1700s with proscenium arches and modern theatres with its 'flies' (159) and remarks that "[w]e should remember how the visual world of the stage has changed since the time of Greek and Roman amphitheatres; as a matter of fact, requiring less and less the cooperation on the part of the audience" (160).

### ***2.1.6 Communication in Theatre***

Since theatre is such a complex entity, any description of what is happening within it helps us understand the workings of it, for the purpose of translation or other, and understand what and in what way influences the spectator. A semiotic point of view is introduced by Elam who mentions Mounin's argument from 1969, now obsolete, that the performer–spectator bond is actually not a communicative relationship since genuine communication is based on the fact that a sender may become a receiver and vice versa, which is not the case in theatre where actors are always senders and spectators are always receivers (Elam 1980, 20–21). Mounin practically denies theatrical communication saying "the information-giving process is unidirectional and participants' roles fixed" (quoted in Elam 1980, 21). Although at some point in history, it might have been the case that audience only passively perceived and provided predetermined responses (Elam 1980, 21), much more often they have reacted very actively, contributing to the creation of the performance.<sup>2</sup>

In contrast to Mounin, Elam states that "it is the spectator who initiates the theatrical communication process through a series of actions at once practical and symbolic, of which the first is the simple act of buying a ticket" (1980, 59). Once again, it can be stated that spectators' presence in the process is vital; it starts the whole theatrical process and defines it

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<sup>2</sup> More about the participation and reactions of the audience during the history can be found in the following article: [http://www.shakespearetheatre.org/\\_pdf/first\\_folio/folio\\_argo\\_article.pdf](http://www.shakespearetheatre.org/_pdf/first_folio/folio_argo_article.pdf)

throughout the performance by its reactions, and even after the performance when the audience evaluate what they have experienced.

Having discussed a sender and an addressee who might be represented either by a performer or a spectator/spectators, the communicated information may also be conveyed through different channels. Elam (1980, 24) exemplifies this as follows: “[T]he information ‘night falls’, for instance, can be conveyed by means of a lighting change, a verbal reference or... gesturally.” In theatre communication, this multimodality is a certain advantage to the spectators who can receive the information in one way, however, very often in more ways, which gives a richer, denser message and even allows the spectator to select.

## **2.2 Drama in the World of Translation**

### ***2.2.1 Drama versus Literary Texts***

Apart from the above-mentioned multimodality and the immediacy of perception on the part of spectators, there are a few more ways in which drama differs from prose. As opposed to other literary forms, the production of a theatrical play is a collaborative process. The playwright produces dramatic material which is later adapted by a dramaturge. A director is in charge of actors who perform a play using the dramatic material. Besides these, theatre staff encompasses a variety of other workers such as sound and costume designers, theatrical producer, technical director, etc. Sometimes, a play in demand by a certain theatre might be originally in a foreign language, therefore a translator has to be employed, in which case their role is very important.

Another factor distinguishes theatre from other literary forms. It is its collective perception. Bassnett comments on this by saying that “the role of the audience assumes a public dimension, not shared by the individual reader whose contact with the text is essentially a private affair” (2002, 134). This notion of immediate shared experience poses additional requirements on the translator and on the receiver as well.

### ***2.2.2 History of Drama Translation and its Position in Theory***

As far as the history of translation theory is concerned, Levý (originally at the beginning of 1960s) writes that “to date, writing on translation only partially belongs to the realm of theory, as most articles and monographs have been confined to empirical observations or essayistic aphorisms” (2011, 3). A lot of new material has arisen since then but translation studies as such are a relatively new discipline which had not seen its formation until last century. Before that, scholars were mainly concerned with the dichotomy of free and literal translation (and its revision), determination of translator’s ideal skills and discussing their own applied translation methods. Munday (2009, 4–5) describes translation studies as “a relatively

new area of inquiry, dating from the second half of the twentieth century and emerging out of other fields such as modern languages, comparative literature and linguistics”. Gradually, translation theories were formed, starting with those based on linguistics, proceeding to a communicative and a functionalist one and finally reaching the current ethical/aesthetic stage (Newmark 2009, 20–21).

Sources on theatre translation are not numerous, yet, they look at this topic from various angles, giving the opportunity of assembling the whole picture by putting together the smaller pieces. Some issues are mentioned repeatedly in different works and these will be examined in the following part.

### ***2.2.3 Areas Discussed in Drama Translation***

Although theatre and plays have existed for about 2,500 years, the “true research” into their translation did not start until about forty years ago. Snell-Hornby mentions in her contribution to *The Companion to Translation studies* that theatre translation was omitted up till 1980 (2007, 106). “[T]he deficit was to some extent corrected during the course of the 1980s... [when] there were two basic approaches, the semiotic and the holistic” (Snell-Hornby 2006, 86). The concept of theatre semiotics deals with the trichotomy of icons, indices and symbols and other notions, however, “the problem for stage translation is that the interpretation of the theatrical signs can vary radically from one culture to another (particularly with symbolic signs, and much depends on the acting style and conventions of the cultural community concerned” (Snell-Hornby 2006, 86). The other, holistic approach, saw the stage text as a basis for the dramatic performance and employed key words such as actability and speakability (86), terms discussed more often than not throughout drama translation literature.

What was the reason for neglecting drama? During an international colloquium in Leuven in April 1976, Susan Bassnett described a play as “much more than a literary text, it is a combination of language and gesture

brought together in a harmonious frame of timing” (Bassnett-McGuire 1978, 161), which contributed to acknowledging the complex nature of theatre texts. This extra gestural dimension might be the reason for not giving drama translation enough space in works. Almost all reflections on drama translation mention the relationship of a verbal and a gestic dimension of drama, distinguishing it from literary translation; therefore it can be understood as one of its distinctive features. After Bassnett and others had acknowledged this special position of drama, scholars started to pay more attention to it and started to examine its aspects in more depth. Still, though, when searching for sources on drama translation, one finds oneself with a prevalent amount of individual articles, chapters in anthologies, and theses, but not just as many full-length books. Some of the authors who have largely contributed to works in the field are definitely Susan Bassnett, Phyllis Zatlin or Sirkku Aaltonen.

### ***Page or stage, reading or watching***

When discussing issues to be solved by a translator of a theatrical text, first on the list would be solving the “page or stage” dilemma. This is most commonly decided by a translation brief or playwrights themselves, not by translators. In theory, most of the authors tend to perceive such a text as inevitably connected to stage, one of many being Zatlin (2005, vii) with her argument stating that “if a play translation is nothing but ink on a page, it is not theatre (performance text)”.

After making it clear whether a text in question is to be staged or not, a crucial second step for the translator is to have in mind the gestic dimension of a text which it possesses as something extra, something beyond the linguistic input. However, therein is the rub. As Bassnett (1991) points out, this task is actually “superhuman”, since the translator is responsible for decoding the gestic texts while sitting at a desk and only imagining the performance which simply does not make sense (100). Furthermore, Peghinelli says that “often translators are not trained to translate for theatre. In most of the cases, they only have a literary academic education” (2012, 24). The case may also be that the translator has got only linguistic

education. Either way, ideally a translator for theatre “must be trained at university to gain linguistic and cultural competence but also at theatres or academies of dramatic arts” (26). Familiarity with theatre seems to lie in the very core of drama translation. After all, it is crucial for a translator of legal texts to know law or for a translator of manuals to be acquainted with the design and function of a device. Drama translator’s work should not be any different in this aspect.

Additionally to education, working on the translation actively with the theatre staff is beneficial for the translation process. This is, however, possible only if the play is to be adapted by a particular theatre, not in case of preparing the play for a theatrical agency which functions as a mediator collecting plays and forwarding them to those interested.<sup>3</sup>

Yet, not all authors share the opinion that close contact with theatre is necessary. Mick Short challenges the idea of many drama critics that “play can only be properly understood and reacted to in the theatre” (Short 1998, 6) and argues that “sensitive understandings of plays can be arrived at through ‘mere reading’” (7), giving a list of points in favour of sufficiency of reading drama texts. He gives eight arguments, a few of which are particularly important for creators of a staged text. As a matter of fact, reading and re-reading of a play is the very core of their task. As Short points out, “[R]estricting full understanding to theatrical experience alone would appear to have the logical consequence that plays could never be sensibly performed” (7). If it was enough for directors and actors to read the play, understand it and uncover most of its features, might the same apply for a translator?

Beside the dialogue itself, a play script usually consists of stage directions as well. Short’s opinion is that the network of information a person with at least a reasonable experience of going to the theatre can infer from stage

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<sup>3</sup> In the Czech Republic, such agency is for example DILIA.



directions and various other sources<sup>4</sup> can be and often is very rich (1998, 7–13).

### ***Various –abilities***

Concepts of playability, readability, speakability and performability seem to receive a considerable amount of attention throughout the literature on the topic. Common are discussions about their relevance and their very existence, and authors differ in what these terms actually mean.

Performability and playability (one of the first to mention playability was Robert W. Corrigan in 1961) are two words denoting the same notion. It is something a dramatic text, an optional system among other interrelated systems comprising the spectacle, is conditioned by (Nikolarea 2002, without numbered pages). Bassnett speaks about a theatre translator “faced with the added criterion of playability as a prerequisite” (2002, 126) as opposed to a translator of a different kind of text. Playability/performability thus could be described as a certain quality of a text which makes it performable. What makes a text performable? In an original piece it should be guaranteed by the playwright since they “hear” (or are supposed to hear) the lines being uttered in the process of writing the play, see the gestures and imagine the scene. If a dramatic piece undergoes the translation process, however, this duty is transferred on to a translator. In the early 1980s, Susan Bassnett advocated that “the translator must determine which structures are performable, and translate them into the target language, even though major linguistic change may occur” (quoted in Nikolarea 2002, without pagination). Interestingly, only a few years later, in 1985, Bassnett takes a completely opposite stance while calling the notion of performability a “very vexed term” (90) and a “loose and woolly concept” (98) in her work. She, instead, emphasizes the deictic units in the text, especially their function, which the translator has to analyze in both, the source and target

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<sup>4</sup> Some of the systems and informational sets that a reader/creator/translator of a stage text might employ to infer performance features are for example: background information about the world and how it works, implicature/inference theory, politeness theory, turn-taking conventions, speech acts, sociolinguistic conventions, etc. (Short 1998, 13)

language. Such analysis enables the translator to understand what the presence or absence of deictic units signifies and what happens when they are altered during the translation process (1985, 98–101).

In 1990, as Nikolarea maintains, there were two extreme viewpoints in the theory of theatre translation – Patrice Pavis’s performability and Bassnett’s readability (2002, without pagination). In their theories, both of them speak about deictic units but while Pavis views them as an “encoded gestural patterning”, Bassnett, conversely, describes them as “linguistic structures”. Instead of refusing one or the other, the question is whether such concepts really exist and what they practically mean for the translator. How would two plays, one intended to be staged, the other to be read, differ in practice? Nikolarea (2002, without pagination) offers an answer: “Examination shows that, in practice, there are no precise divisions between a performance-oriented translation and a reader-oriented translation, but rather there exists a blurring of borderlines.”

However, if we abandon the whole idea of differences between texts viewed and processed with either performability or readability in mind, and take into account solely the texts to be performed (i.e. the ones considered by many to be the only ‘proper’ theatre texts), we can definitely find certain general rules or suggestions which apply to such texts. A very significant work, not only for translation in general, but also for theatre translation and theory in particular, was published in 1963. It was Jiří Levý’s *The Art of Translation* in which he dedicates a considerable number of pages to pitfalls of drama translation.

As one of the qualities of theatre dialogue, he lists speakability and intelligibility (Levý 2011, 129). These terms seem more specific, giving a more concrete idea of what they denote, in comparison to the ones previously mentioned. Levý starts with an elementary, acoustic level. Since “[t]heatre dialogue is spoken text intended for oral delivery and aural reception,” (2011, 129) it should be pronounceable and intelligible. This can

be achieved by reducing the amount of sounds which are difficult to articulate and easily misheard (129) and limiting demanding consonant and sibilant clusters (133). Even more important, according to Levý (129), is the syntax. Actors' lines should mainly consist of coordinate structures and short sentences. In accordance with this, Peghinelli says, "A theatre translation above all has to function within the immediate context of performance – without annotations or editorial commentary" (2012, 23). Everything uttered on stage should be understood immediately because during the performance it is not possible to rewind it and listen again. Above all, semantically the text should be based on words which are easily deducible. Levý claims that "the lower the frequency of occurrence of a word, the more difficult it is to understand (more mental effort is required to decipher it) and the harder it is for listeners to guess if they miss it" (2011, 133).

These recommendations to make the text speakable are undoubtedly more practical than stating that a theatre text should be performable (which it should) but not giving any definite guidance on how to achieve it. Aaltonen summarizes that what is being criticised is the vagueness of the term and missing clear definitions (2000, 42). She quotes Bassnett who gives a very valid point: "[E]ven if a set of criteria could be established, it would constantly vary from culture to culture, from period to period, and from text type to text type" (42). Eventually, the most suitable way out of this situation might be setting steps for reaching a performable and speakable translation (whatever the translator decides this to mean) in each particular case.

### ***Spectators***

Next term, very often mentioned in works on drama translation, is theatre audience. It is indeed a crucial aspect of theatre since audience is the reason for its survival, not only in terms of income. Similarly to the long-lasting omission of theatre translation in translation theory, also the role of the audience was not studied in too much detail. Susan Bennett, in her doctoral thesis *The Role of the Theatre Audience*, published in 1988, states that

“dramatic theory has largely neglected the role of the receiver, the process of audience response” (4). This statement is still present in the second edition of this work of hers, almost ten years later.

### 3. Comparative Part

The analytical part of this thesis has the form of a case study, the goal of which is to map the genesis, staging and reception of the play in question. Since its development was rather complex, all steps in the process will be analysed in order to provide a complete picture. Apart from listing basic information about the author, short stories, film screenplay and the theatre screenplay itself, relevant parts of the source and target texts will be analysed along with the reviews of the final product – the play. As the review analysis proves that the use of vulgarisms is the most salient feature from the point of view of the reception of the play, it is this feature and its transfer into Czech that the comparative analysis focuses on in the second part of the case study.

#### 3.1 Methodology and Data

Munday (2008, 154–155) speaks about various ways of analysing translation strategies, one of them being “analysing the reviews of a translation, author or period”. One of its methods is to examine the criteria by which reviewers judge translation. However, “there is no set model for the analysis of reviews in translation, although the whole gamut of paratexts (devices appended to the text) is the subject of the cultural theorist Gérard Genette’s *Paratexts*” (Munday 2008, 156). Genette defines paratexts as accompanying productions of a text which vary in extent and appearance, and surround and extend a text in order to present it and ensure the text’s presence in the world, its reception and consumption (1997, 1). Their “ways and means change continually, depending on period, culture, genre, author, work, and edition,” explains Genette (3) and he distinguishes two subcategories of paratexts: peritexts and epitexts<sup>5</sup> while “[t]he criterion distinguishing the epitext from the peritext...is in theory purely spatial. The epitext is any paratextual element not materially appended to the text within

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<sup>5</sup> Epitexts, according to Genette (1997, 345), can be further divided into a few subgroups but these are not essential for this thesis.

the same volume” (344). Genette (1997, 3), as the author of the theory of paratexts, does not include reviews among paratexts, saying: “Many future readers become acquainted with a book thanks to, for example, an interview with the author (if not a magazine review or recommendation by word of mouth, neither of which, according to our conventions, generally belongs to the paratext, which is characterized by an authorial intention and assumption of responsibility).”

However, there are other approaches, such as the one of Tahir-Gürçağlar (quoted in Bielsa 2013, 159), which do take reviews into account, classifying them under the notion of *extratexts* described as “the general meta-discourse of translation circulating independently of individual translated texts”. Following Tahir-Gürçağlar’s opinion that “the study of both extratexts and paratexts offers important insights into the conditions under which translations are produced and consumed” (quoted in Bielsa 2013, 159), reviews will be taken into account and analysed as an important source since they provide valuable information regarding the reception of the play in question. Also, a comparative analysis of the chosen text samples will shed more light on translation strategies leading to the creation of the play. As was previously mentioned, there is no set model for such analysis, therefore a strategy has to be devised first. Since one of the strongest specifics of the play is its expressivity, this analysis is focused on the transfer of vulgarisms among the selected versions.

First, it is necessary to define what a vulgarism is. For this, it can be useful to look at a dictionary definition. According to the *Oxford Dictionary*, a vulgarism is “[a] word or expression that is considered inelegant, especially one that makes explicit and offensive reference to sex or bodily functions”. With this definition in mind, such words will be detected and with further use of a dictionary their translation will be examined.

Because the amount of material is large, it is practical to narrow it down to a representative number of examples, giving a qualitative and quantitative outline. The material for the analysis was therefore selected to be only the

short stories which were later used for creating the Czech play *Ucpanej systém*, i.e. five short stories altogether. The focus is then on the vulgarisms as they are defined above and the analysis attempts to find out what changes they underwent in the process of creating the Czech play. The aim of this part is not to criticise the translator's and creators' decisions but rather to look at the translation process and product.

The texts in question are rich in slang and vulgar words and so they provide an interesting material for the analysis. The focus of the analysis is on the strength and nature of such words. It is likely that these will change across the texts because the analysis works with three different types of texts (short stories, film script and play script) and two languages.

## 3.2 Contextualising the Work

The play selected for the analysis is based on a collection of short stories and a film screenplay by Irvine Welsh, *The Acid House*. The original work was published in 1994 and comprises 21 short stories and one novella. The author himself also wrote a screenplay, and in 1998, three stories from the book were dramatized by Paul McGuigan into a film of the same name. The Czech translation of the book was created by Olga Bártová in 2008 and the staged version was premiered in Dejvické divadlo in 2012.

The play provides a good source for an analysis not only because of the journey it took from its literary English template to the final Czech play but also because of its register and coarse, provocative language. It can be assumed that the audience's reception of the play might differ according to its expectations, familiarity with the work, the place of staging (i.e. a home stage vs. guesting), etc.

### 3.2.1 Author

Irvine Welsh was born on 27 September 1958 in Scottish Edinburgh. He is a postmodern British author of novels, short stories, plays and screenplays. One of the features of his writing is the Scottish dialect he uses and also the harsh topics he covers in his works. Welsh spent a part of his life in London, which, together with various people he was in touch with and some old diaries of his, influenced him in writing his first and most famous novel *Trainspotting*. Critically acclaimed<sup>6</sup> but also resulting in some people's disgust, this well-known book tells a story of a group of young men living with heroine addiction and their non-addict, though no less corrupted, friends.

These and similar themes are common for all his books. The lowest of the low, homeless people, drugs, alcohol, violence and often black humour are

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<sup>6</sup> Actually, parts of *Trainspotting* were first published in various magazines before being published as such, and the editorial director did not really believe it would sell.



running through *Trainspotting*, *The Acid House*, *Ecstasy*, *Filth*, *Glue*, *Porno*, *The Bedroom Secrets of Master Chefs*, *Skagboys*, and his most recent work *The Blade Artist* (official website of Irvine Welsh). Welsh did not receive any major awards for his work although he was almost shortlisted for the Booker Prize with *Trainspotting*. However, the rumour (and a very plausible explanation) is that its content did not agree with two judges' sensitive perception of language.

### **3.2.2 Literary Text**

*The Acid House* is a book that came out only six months after *Trainspotting*. The first edition was published by Jonathan Cape in 1994, followed by a new edition by Vintage in 1995 and a few others later on. It presents new characters and plots in 21 short stories and one novella. All stories in the collection are linked with a disturbing feeling, dragging the reader into a world full of filth, tragedy, dirty tricks and even death. Scottish accent, used in many of them, makes the stories seem even more real and more imaginable, however, they do not lack humour and still contain humanity.

To get the best picture of the reception of the book, one can go through the reviews and commentaries included in the inside sleeve of the book itself (if there are any), officially published reviews, and ratings of the book on the widely used reading and books-related websites and forums.

Two reviews of *The Acid House* can be found on *The Independent* website, and in those Irvine Welsh is mostly praised for his style of writing and the authenticity he managed to create in his stories. A comparison to *Trainspotting* is also made, concluding that *The Acid House* is actually even darker with the characters' deeper sense of guilt. The articles comment on Welsh's ability to find or create humour in absurd situations, rendering speech rhythms accurately and being sensitive to nuances of different classes and characters. His writing is versatile, experimental and innovative, and through it, Welsh is "turning feeling and disgust into art". However, sometimes the influence of other authors is seen as too heavy and resulting

in the fact that not all stories work perfectly. Eponymous *The Acid House* is rated as the best story.

Furthermore, the extracts from reviews inside the book mention vigour of language, narrative skill, minute distinctions of vocabulary, and linguistic and structural invention. On the *GoodReads* website, the book has received 3.67 points out of 5, based on more than 10,000 readers' ratings.

### ***3.2.3 Czech and Other Translations***

Apart from the original English versions, including eBooks and audio books, the work has also been translated into several foreign languages. These include German, Dutch, Spanish, Japanese, Hebrew, Italian, Serbian, Hungarian, Croatian, Chinese, Russian and Czech. In some of these languages, more than one edition has been published. As for the Czech version, two translations have been produced. The first one was done by Vít Malinovský and published by Maťa in 1999. The second edition followed in 2008, was created by Olga Bártořá and published by Argo. This second edition was the one used for creation of the play.

To get an idea of how the translated work has been received, one can look at the website of *Czechoslovak Bibliographic Database* where *The Acid House* has received 77 % from 128 readers, 80 % from a reviewer on [www.knihovnice.cz](http://www.knihovnice.cz) and 79 % from 133 assessors on [www.databazeknih.cz](http://www.databazeknih.cz) (this site also provides a rating of the individual short stories). Although evaluation for the translation only cannot be found, it can be assumed that its quality largely shapes the general ranking of the book.

While the work undoubtedly is an interesting reading for some, when assigned for translation, it might become a tough nut to crack. The first issue lies in deciphering the Scottish variety of English and deciding how to handle the register. Also, the nature of the stories has to be dealt with carefully and the translator has to aim at depicting them as naturally and credibly as possible. Last but not least, the content of the stories then shapes

the surface level of the language in them, in case of *The Acid House* this means frequent occurrence of swear words, vulgarisms and pejorative expressions. How this was solved is examined in the analysis later on.

### ***3.2.4 Film and Screenplay***

In his own sincere introduction to *The Acid House* screenplay, Irvine Welsh explains how it was brought to life. As already mentioned, *The Acid House* came out only half a year after *Trainspotting* and Welsh says that in the first year, the former actually was the more popular of the two and thanks to it, many readers backtracked *Trainspotting* (Welsh 1999, vii).

Later, *Trainspotting* was made into a play and a cult movie, although Welsh himself was not involved in the process. As he said, “At that point I didn’t really fancy doing any stage or screenwriting; basically because I had just packed in the day job, had moved to Amsterdam, finished writing the *Marabou Stork Nightmares* and was trying to get used to the idea of lounging around in hash bars doing nothing” (Welsh 1999, viii). However, he succumbed to some colleagues’ voices wanting him to adapt *The Acid House* for the screen, and since the short stories were more digestible for him to work with, he eventually agreed. Originally, three stories from the book were supposed to be adapted into a series of short TV films for Channel 4 but in the end, influenced by the success of *Trainspotting*, it was decided that *The Acid House* would be made into a big-screen film directed by Paul McGuigan.

The film came out in 1998 and featured three short stories from the book, *The Granton Star Cause*, *A Soft Touch* and *The Acid House*. It was nominated for BAFTA TV Award and received a few other awards, mostly for Paul McGuigan’s direction. However, the critical acclaim was not that high and even Welsh himself later expressed dissatisfaction (*Independent* 2013): “I adapted my own book *The Acid House* and it wasn't very good.... You've got to have a bit of distance. I could tear apart anybody else's book but it's hard to do it to my own. You need to get somebody in who's really

going to try and find the cinematic heart to it.” In the same review, the adaptation of *The Acid House* is described as “relatively unremarkable”.

In the *Internet Movie Database*, *The Acid House* has received the score of 55/100 based on 15 critics’ reviews. In the *Czechoslovak Film Database*, the movie has been rated at 64 % in reviews from almost 3,500 users. How much the translation (i.e. the subtitles or dubbing) contributes to receiving the positive/negative reviews from Czech viewers would have to be examined further. Individual reviews and ratings very often differ and range from excitement to disgust. What is worth noting is that because of the thick, indecipherable Scottish dialect, the original film is mercifully (as one article aptly adds) subtitled in English.

### ***3.2.5 Theatre Play and Play script***

Based on several short stories (*The Shooter, A Soft Touch, A Blockage in the System, The Granton Star Cause, The Two Philosophers* and *Sport for All*) and the film screenplay, a Czech theatre play came into existence in 2012 under the name *Ucpanej systém*. The script was prepared by Daniel Majling, a Slovak dramaturge, and the play was directed by another Slovak artist, stage director Michal Vajdička. The piece was composed for Dejvické divadlo (DD) where it is still in the programme nowadays and has been sold out ever since its premiere on 20 February 2012. In an interview with the creators (A#3, 2012), Vajdička and Majling say that the ensemble of DD is of a very high quality, talented and coherent. Also, Vajdička mentions that Welsh’s language was “very contagious” which is why he had to take a short break before working on other plays to prevent transferring it elsewhere.

Majling managed to compose a script which, although being inspired by several sources, is coherent and whole. Characters from different stories meet in one which still gives a natural impression. Main characters in the story are God, Bob/Father/Innkeeper, Gary, Larry, Johnny, Boab, Marge, Evelyn, Katriona and professors Ornstein and McGlone. The stage is set in a

pub somewhere in the suburbs where bleak surroundings can be seen through the windows.

One indication of the quality of *Ucpanej systém* might be the spectators' interest and unfailing attendance. As for official recognition, it can be mentioned that in 2012 both the play and Ivan Trojan portraying the main character (God) received the Alfred Radok award (best staging and best male acting). Ivan Trojan was also nominated for Cena Thálie in the same year.

The server *www.i-divadlo.cz* organizes an annual survey in which hundreds of spectators vote for their favourite actors, actresses, best theatre/theatre ensemble, and best and worst productions. In 2012, out of almost one hundred plays, *Ucpanej systém* ended up at the third place, Ivan Trojan was chosen as the best actor for his portraying of God, Miroslav Krobot as 34<sup>th</sup> for his role of Father and DD was the third most favourite theatre of that year.

On *www.i-divadlo.cz*, the rating by editors, as well as users, is at 83%. Those editors/users who give broader commentary on their rating mostly discuss actors and acting, vulgarity, scene, the moral of the story, and even translation. Although some commentators criticize the lack of deeper idea and flood of swearwords, the majority praises the acting, accepts the vulgarity and reflects on the message.

Not many professional reviews are freely available online, however it was possible to acquire a number of articles from the archives of The Arts and Theatre Institute in Prague. The contents of all available reviews will be thoroughly analysed in the following chapter. Those professional reviews which contain numerical rating rate the play as follows – 100 % (review #7), 95 % (#4), 70 % (#13), however, even those which do not, correspond in viewing the play as very well-done.

### 3.3 Analysis of Reviews of Play *Ucpanej Systém*

Reviewers/theatre critics are a part of the audience just as much as “ordinary” theatregoers. In this chapter, a range of articles/reviews will be examined in order to find out what is evaluated and discussed in these extratexts.

For simplification, objectivity and transparency, the extratexts are referred to as reviews R#1–12 and they are available on the enclosed CD for reference. In addition, two online reviews are used, marked as R#13 and R#14. These are included in the references. A few more articles related to, but not directly evaluating, the play are discussed as well. These are labelled as articles A#1–4.

The following table shows whether or not certain features are present (x) in a given review. While most reviews discuss the same topics, their points of view often differ. This is addressed in more detail in the text below the table.

<b>R#</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>topic</b>														
<b>genesis</b>				x	x			x	x					x
<b>scene</b>		x	x			x	x			x				
<b>theatre/DD</b>														
<b>acting</b>	x	x						x		x		x	x	x
<b>story</b>	x		x	x		x		x	x		x	x	x	x
<b>language/ vulgarisms</b>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x
<b>translation</b>	x												x	

**Table 1: Areas discussed in particular reviews**

As for the genesis of the play, R#8 praises Majling's ability to put individual stories together into one compact play. Also, the dramatization in general is termed as successful. R#9 mentions a certain similarity with the Czech series *Okresní přebor*. R#14 also speaks about Majling's work with the original text material from which he carefully chose, combined and modified characters, motives, situations and dialogues. R#4 is of the opinion that *Ucpanej systém* was written using Welsh's less rough stories; however, their harshness is still not anyhow reduced, according to R#5.

The setting is another interesting aspect of the play. R#2 points out how the confined space of the stage supports the general feeling of "being pissed off". R#3 describes the scene as an "unsightly taproom" and "formica box". R#6 speaks about a simple yet all-containing interior and according to R#10 the scene is "spellbinding".

The acting of DD's ensemble is quite a common topic and is therefore naturally discussed also in these particular reviews. An interesting fact is that while some reviews point out that the actors play their usual character type (A#2), others state the exact opposite (R#8), which is seen as positive. Highlighted are mainly the performances of Bob (Miroslav Krobot) and God (Ivan Trojan). According to R#1, the actors' co-operation is admirable. R#2 sees the ensemble as being in top form. R#10 and 12 also assess the ensemble as excellent, R#12 highlights Krobot's unusual performing position. However, R#13 affirms that the actors are capable and skilful but are "often pushing it", repeating jokes, and that even the level of acting is varying (e.g. Marge, Boab). Boab's transformation into a fly is viewed as "shallow" by R#13; R#14, on the other hand, praises it as a great minimalistic performance.

It is certainly true that Majling's story is well done, although some aspects are not entirely praised by the reviewers. For example, R#1 points out that the second part of the show does not conclude the story from the first half.

A similar view is expressed in R#9 which states that from the point when the story progresses to the second, more serious part, the play starts to drag. R#3, however, views the second half simply as more minimalistic and the final dialogue is perceived as more important than uncovering the causes of each plotline. As R#4 puts it, *Ucpanej systém* is about simplification of communication, reign of nitwits and one possible end of the civilization. R#11 sees it as a quite realistic picture of today's world. R#6 describes the story as one to strike the spectator and, according to R#12, unlike the movie template, the play uncomfortably draws the spectator in. While Welsh's stories might be understood as a grotesque probe into a particular environment, theatre offers a more general depiction of futility without a way out (R#8) and it might seem more depressing. R#14 is of a completely opposite opinion, saying the sadness of the play is far from Welsh's hopeless individuals. Some reviews do not agree on the quality of certain scenes. While, for example, R#13 and 12 find the professors' number greatly comic and well-done, R#8 considers it overly complicated and dispensable.

The last aspects to be discussed are language and translation. These are connected and will be therefore discussed together. The table shows that language (or more precisely the vulgarisms) is mentioned, to a smaller or larger extent, in almost all the reviews.

R#1 notices that audience's laughter often follows swear words and word distortion. The dialogues are funny for the first twenty minutes and then they start to be a bit repetitive. Translation is mild and even though the vocabulary is spicy, it is not exploited to the fullest. R#2 considers the vocabulary as extra vulgar but not rude, since it is appropriate in the given circumstances. In R#3, there is a note about characters' language being so specific that the way they connect vulgarisms creates a charm of purgatorial slang. R#4 states that the rumour about the most obscene play on the Czech scene is misleading and useless, just like the age limit for entrance, if we take into account the argot present in our daily lives. R#5 compares the



amount of swear words in the play to the amount of articles in English sentences. R#7 and 8 agree that the used vocabulary is crude. R#11 points out that it does not matter if the story is taking place in Scotland or Ostrava (interesting point as for translation). According to R#12, the language is style-forming, packed with vulgarisms which the actors handle impressively. R#13 gives an interesting opinion, saying the play offers a long line of swear words, however, the trouble is that the language of Welsh's original counts on automated use of such terms, their deviation from their former vulgar meaning and on using them as substitute signs of common language in practically any situation. Their Czech translation is criticised as not apt, the words lose their charm, do not function properly and stand out too much. As for R#14, the language is seen as juicy with a wide range of more or less known expressions. This review contains a paragraph called *What is Our Attitude to Vulgarisms*, in which the author discusses vulgarisms taking up on stage at the end of the 1990s with the so called "cool drama" and its subgenres. There are two possible points of view on vulgarisms – they can be understood as linguistic signs characterizing a certain class in a particular place, or semantically as signs of decay, anger and complaint against the present-day, seemingly decent world which does not use swear words in public but the manners of which are indeed vulgar. The usage of swear words on stage is not too surprising nowadays but its inventiveness and outpouring can be disgusting or entertaining for us.

## 3.4 Comparative Analysis of Czech and English Versions

### 3.4.1 *Vulgarisms in Languages and Translation*

Kufnerová (2003, 72) discusses the difference between languages and the varieties within them. As she points out: “The situation of Czech language differs largely from most of other European languages... such as Russian or English.... These usually do not have a “common” variety of language but rather employ other non-standard structures, dialects, interdialects, languages of ethnic groups, slang and other social dialects” (author’s translation).<sup>7</sup>

The more stylization there is in the text, the more it is crucial for a translator to think about how to express it naturally in the target language. As Kufnerová (72) puts it, “When stylizing non-standard structures, it is necessary to keep them at a tolerable level so that they fulfill their function but do not distract the reader no matter what their language base is” (author’s translation).<sup>8</sup> The amount and types of texts are so varied that it is probably impossible to state what “tolerable” means in general and every instance has to be looked at and solved individually.

In case of *Ucpanej systém*, the text undergoes translation from English short stories into Czech short stories, some of which are subsequently adapted into a Czech theatre play. Naturally, this final text will be different as for its structure and form but it remains a question whether the language will be somehow adjusted to a different mode of text. That is why the following research questions were set up for the purposes of the comparative analysis:

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<sup>7</sup> „Jazyková situace češtiny je značně odlišná od situace většiny ostatních evropských jazyků, existujících i mimo Evropu, např. ruštiny, angličtiny, jazyků balkánských, v nichž vesměs neexistuje obecný útvar, zato se různě uplatňují jiné nespisovné útvary, nářečí, interdialekty, jazyky etnických skupin, slang a jiné sociální dialekty.“

<sup>8</sup> „Při stylizaci nespisovných útvarů je vždy potřeba dodržet v uměleckém textu únosnou míru těchto prvků, aby plnily svou funkci, ale nepůsobily rušivě na čtenáře, ať už je jeho jazyková báze jakákoli. Názory překladatelů, lingvistů a laiků na jednotlivá řešení se různí.“

Will the amount, strength and type of vulgarisms be the same or will it somehow be adapted to its new environment? What will be the Czech counterpart of a strongly non-standard, vulgar language and Scottish dialect/Scots? Can it be assumed that the vulgarisms on the page of a book (supposed to be read silently) will eventually be stronger than those in a theatre play (meant to be spoken out loud)? The short stories, and consequently the play as well, belong to the “in-yer-face” production, i.e. works which are supposed to shock the audience. If the assumption proves right, a possible explanation might be that the translated stage play, as the more direct “in-yer-face” rendition, might be toned down by the translator in order to compensate for the vocalised rough content.

The style of language we hear in the play or read in the short stories might be too indigestible for some but it is not surprising with regard to the characters and nature of the stories. According to Povejšil (2003, 141), “There is a dialectical relationship between the character in a theatre text and the language which has been put into their mouth (by the author or translator). The character determines the nature of language and the language is a means by which the person is characterised” (author’s translation).<sup>9</sup>

However, when relocating the work into the target environment, it is essential to keep to a relevant language sphere. Povejšil (142) criticises irrelevant use of substandard language in places where it does not belong and is wrongly used in order to pander to the viewer. This weakens the theatre dialogue and gives the impression of tawdriness (author’s translation).<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> „Mezi osobou v dramatickém textu a jazykem, který jí je vložen (autorem nebo překladatelem) do úst, je dialektický vztah. Osoba určuje ráz jazyka a jazyk je prostředkem, kterým je osoba charakterizována.“

<sup>10</sup> „Ve snaze přiblížit se publiku a lidové mluvě se v rozporu s originálem často užívá výraziva ze substandardních jazykových vrstev a nebere se na vědomí, že jazyk dialogu není kopií běžné mluvy, nýbrž pečlivě a uváženě stylizovaným funkčním prvkem výstavby dramatického díla. Podbízivou slovní expresivitou zaměřenou přímo na diváka se dramatická řeč oslabuje a stává samoúčelným prostředkem laciného (většinou rádoby komického) efektu.“

In an interesting article named *Prokletej bídák aneb Jak se překládají anglické vulgarismy*, Dana Hábová, a well-known Czech translator and interpreter, discusses the history of handling swear words in films translated into Czech. The notes she makes can easily be applied also to theatre and book production in general since the political regime used to influence and control all kinds of cultural activity. The following paragraph lists some notable points from this article:

“The history of the use of vulgarisms in film is, according to Hábová, relatively short; the two most widely used English profanities, often translated as “zatraceně”, were first uttered by actors no sooner than in the late 1960s. It was because of a Hollywood regulation from the 1930s, the so-called Production Code or Hays Code, named after William Hays, president of an association which was responsible for watching over all film issues.... It was not only vulgarisms that the guardians of morality were against, the Code also forbade using the word “God” in a sense which was not dignified enough.... However, gradually The Code had been moderated until it was revised in 1966 and the key word of all English vulgarisms, “fuck”, made it into a film two years later.... [Since then] the English “fuck” has almost lost its meaning, become a sentence filling and serves as a kind of punctuation mark” (author’s translation).<sup>11</sup>

Luckily, *The Acid House* came out much later than in the 1960s, otherwise it could have never made it into the Czech translation. Yet, the perception of

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<sup>11</sup> „Historie používání vulgarismů ve filmu je podle Hábové relativně krátká, dva anglické nejpoužívanější vulgarismy, často překládané jako „zatraceně“ vypustili herci z úst až koncem 60. let. V Hollywoodu totiž od 30. let platil takzvaný Production Code neboli Haysův kodex pojmenovaný podle Williama Hayse, prezidenta asociace, jež měla za úkol bdít nad všemi problémy kolem filmu.... Strážcům dobrých mravů nevadily jen vulgarismy, ale kodex zakazoval i slovo God (bůh), pokud se použilo ve smyslu, který nebyl dostatečně důstojný.... Kodex však byl postupně zmírňován až byl v roce 1966 revidován a za dva roky nato se již ve filmu objevilo klíčové slovo všech anglických vulgarismů, tedy „fuck“.... Slovo „fuck“ totiž v angličtině už téměř ztratilo význam, stalo se výplní věty, má funkci jakéhosi interpunkčního znaménka.“

vulgarity still varies. In accordance with the above mentioned, Knittlová (2000, 65) maintains that “[v]ulgarisms belong among taboo words, however it depends on what is regarded as permitted and prohibited in a particular time and society”. She adds: “The strength of vulgarity and taboo decreases and fades with frequency” (author’s translation).<sup>12</sup>

### ***3.4.2 Comparison of Text Samples***

This part presents the actual comparative analysis of the translator’s choices in translating vulgarisms from English to Czech in selected short stories. The relevant analysed parts are those (and only those) which were used in the play as well. The samples will be assessed using the following dictionaries: *Oxford Dictionary* (hereinafter referred to as OxfD), *Macmillan Dictionary* (MacD), *A Dictionary of Slang* (SlgD), *Lingea Lexicon* (LL), *Slovník nespisovné češtiny* (SNC), *Slovník spisovného jazyka českého* (SSJC), and *Urban Dictionary* (UD) when further reference is needed.

To distinguish the text samples clearly, the original English version will be referred to as Version 1 and its Czech translation as Version 2. Attention will be also paid to the screenplay which was a source of inspiration in the process of the play creation as well. Because the final play makes use of Version 2 to a great extent (i.e. many parts of text are copied from the short stories into the play), a complementary chapter will aim to find out whether there are any changes at all between these two, regarding vulgarisms and other theatre-related aspects.

As for the structure of the analysis, first, an overall account of the short stories is given in terms of content and the use of vulgarisms (their function in the text). Second, text samples selected on the basis of their preservation in the play *Ucpanej systém* are analysed and the strategies used for the

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<sup>12</sup> „Vulgarismy patří mezi slova tabuová, záleží ovšem opět na době a společnosti, co je kdy považováno za dovolené a co za zakázané. S frekvencí se vulgárnost oslabuje a stírá a tabuovost ustupuje.“

translation of vulgar expressions are discussed. Third, conclusions are drawn based on three types of strategies:

1. vulgarism translated by vulgarism
2. vulgarism translated by an expression with lower degree of expressivity
3. non-vulgar expression translated by vulgarism

These strategies draw upon Knittlová's discussion of expressive connotation and decreasing and increasing the level of expressivity (2010, 64).

The text samples are presented in the order in which they appear in the short stories and in which the short stories are arranged in the books. Italics is used to distinguish the text samples from the rest of the text and the vulgarisms themselves are in bold.

In the Czech language, terms such as "hanlivý" (derogatory), "zhrubělý" (semi-vulgar), "hrubý/vulgární" (vulgar) and "tabuový" (taboo) are used to indicate how pejorative a word is. Jaroslav Machač (1979, without pagination) discusses these levels as follows: "For example, according to *Basics of Stylistics*, "semi-vulgar" expressions are those which are used to express and elicit disgust or outrage, and "vulgar" are those used in coarse, improper speech" (author's translation).<sup>13</sup> He also mentions that a part of vulgarisms belongs to a group of taboo words which are only used in improper speech or rather which are never used in proper speech at all (author's translation).<sup>14</sup> Qualifiers for the analysed English words are taken over from the dictionaries used, e.g. informal, impolite, offensive, extremely offensive, vulgar, etc. All words are classified, if possible, by a qualifier and its source dictionary when they are first mentioned; for all the following references only the qualifier is mentioned.

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<sup>13</sup> „Lišívají se výrazy vulgární (hrubé) a zhrubělé, ale nikoli jednoznačně. Např. podle *Základů stylistiky* jsou zhrubělé ty, kterých se užívá k vyjádření a vzbuzení odporu nebo pohoršení nad něčím, vulgárních se užívá při hrubém nespolečenském vyjadřování.“

<sup>14</sup> „Část vulgarismů patří...k slovům „tabuovým“, a to ty, kterých se užívá jen při nespolečenském způsobu vyjadřování, anebo lépe per negationem: kterých se při společenském způsobu vyjadřování neužívá.“

### (1) The Shooter

The first short story in the collection brings the characters of Gary and Marge and the narrator who Gary calls Jock. Gary comes back from prison but he immediately gets in trouble again because he plans and realizes the murder of a man who owed him money and became too familiar with his wife while Gary was in prison. He talks Jock into helping him with the crime and at the end kills him as well.

In Gary's case, vulgarity is part of his personality; it works as a character-creating factor. Marge uses it for expressing anger, surprise, etc. Jock acts as a narrator, from whose perspective the reader perceives the story, and he uses vulgar language only in his direct utterances.

#### (1a) Version 1:

*Marge's face set into a tense snarl. — You ain't thievin again are ya?  
— I told ya I wasn't, didn't I? Gary aggressively replied. Her twisted mouth and narrowed eyes met his stare. — You promised me! **YOU FUCKING PROMISED! All those fucking things you said...***

#### Version 2:

*Margin obličej se stáhl do vztekly grimasy. – Nechystáš zase nějakou vloupačku, že né?  
– Dyk jsem ti říkal že né, odpověděl Gary bojovně. Narazil pohledem na její staženou pusou a přimhouřené oči. – Tys mi to slíbil! **TYS MI TO KURVA SLÍBIL! To bylo keců...***

As was already mentioned, the word *fuck* and its derivatives are said to be losing their former vulgar meaning. Still, however, they are far from having a neutral meaning. A note under the dictionary entry for *fuck* in OxfD states: “Despite the wideness and proliferation of its use in many sections of society, the word *fuck* remains (and has been for centuries) one of the most taboo words in English.”

In the two examples above,  *fucking*  stands in a position of an adverb and adjective respectively. OxfD classifies it as vulgar slang, and according to

MacD, it is a term with the following definition: “[A]n extremely offensive expression used for emphasizing what you are saying, especially to show anger.” In SlgD, it is designated simply as general intensifier. In SNC, *kurva* can be found as a vulgar word as well, therefore, based on the dictionary entries, it can be said that the level of vulgarity was kept. However, unlike the English *fuck*, the Czech *kurva* has not lost its meaning and strength, and so while in Version 1 we can see the same word being repeated, using the same word twice in Version 2 would not work; the utterance would get unnecessarily strong. The translator correctly kept the intensification, angry and ironic tone by employing *to bylo keců...* (SSJC: semi-vulgar) while avoiding the repetition of the same strong word.

**(1b) Version 1:**

— *Let’s sort the **cunt** out, I said.*

— *That’s my man, Gary slapped my back. — Alway’s knew you **had the bottle**, Jock. All you **fucking Jocks**, all **fucking crazy**! We’ll show that **cunt Whitworth** just who he’s **fucking abaht wiff** here.*

**Version 2:**

– *Tak toho **zmrda** srovnáme.*

– *Moje řeč, Gary mě poplácal po zádech. – Já věděl, že neješ **žádněj posera**, Skotáku. Co **Skot**, to **cvok**. Pěkně tomu **zmrdovi** Whitworthovi ukážem, s **kym má tu čest**.*

Excerpt (1b) is very rich in coarse language. The first to look at is the word *cunt* which appears twice in this part. This is listed as vulgar slang in OxfD and as an (extremely) offensive expression in MacD for “someone you consider unpleasant or annoying”. SlgD describes it as “[u]ndoubtedly the most offensive and taboo of all vulgarisms, and particularly so to women, however its use is becoming more frequent. Consequently, it is gradually losing its offensiveness and perhaps will in due course become as accepted as *fuck* in its use”. Its Czech counterpart was chosen to be the word *zmrda* in both cases. This term is described as vulgar in both SNC (vulgar common)



and LL, and naturally it does not even appear in SSJC. These two words can be considered equivalent.

*(To have the) bottle* is a British informal expression for “the confidence or courage that you need to do something difficult or frightening” according to MacD, the whole sentence then meaning that Jock has the courage to help Gary with the crime. The Czech translation uses the word (*nejseš žádnéj) posera*. SSJC labels it as vulgar, SNC as argot, which in comparison with informal *to have the bottle* sounds a bit stronger.

Again, there is the word *fuckin*g as an adjective (*fuckin*g Jocks) and adverb (*fuckin*g crazy), and both are completely omitted in the Czech “*Co Skot, to cvok*”. *Jock* is an informal, chiefly derogatory (OxfD)/British offensive (MacD) name for a Scottish person. *Skot*, on the other hand, is unmarked. While *cvok* is indeed semi-vulgar (SSJC) and more or less corresponds with the informal *crazy*, the negative expressivity of the whole sentence does not reach the vulgarity of the same one in Version 1.

The last phrase of this excerpt is a phrasal verb *to fuck about with* (used in distorted spelling), ranked as extremely offensive (MacD) and a vulgar slang (OxfD). In the Czech version, it is translated as *mít tu čest* which is not even expressive, let alone vulgar (regardless of using the common Czech version *s kým* instead of *s kým*).

All in all, this part seems much more vulgar in Version 1 than Version 2.

### (1c) Version 1:

*My heart stopped when, from under the seat, he pulled out a sawn-off shotgun.*

— *No way, man. No fuckin way. I moved to get out of the car. His hand fell on my arm.*

— *Relax! Ain't fuckin loaded, is it? You know me, Jock, for fuck sakes. Shooters ain't my fuckin scene, never have been. Credit me wiff a little bit bleedin sense, innit.*

— *You're telling me that gun is empty?*

— *Course it's bleedin empty, innit. You think I'm fuckin daft?*

### Version 2:

*Když zpod sedadla vyndal brokovnici s upilovanou hlavní, ztuhnul jsem.*

– *Tak to né, vole. V žádným případě. Chtěl jsem vystoupit. Drapnul mě za ruku.*

– *Klid! Dyk neni nabitá, nevidíš, vole? Skoťáku, snad mě **doprdele** znáš, né? Bouchačky nejsou moje parketa a ani nikdy nebyly. Přeci si nemyslíš, že mi **uplně hráblo**?*

– *Takže podle tebe jako neni nabitá, jo?*

– *Jasně, že neni. To mě máš za **uplnýho debila**?*

In the last excerpt from this short story, the word  **fucking**  can be seen four times. This vulgar slang/extremely offensive expression is transferred into Version 2 using much milder expressions in all cases. Two of them (*v žádným případě, uplnýho debila*) make use of the intensifying function of the word. The same holds true for a rather milder, informal (OxfD)/impolite (MacD) **bleedin/g** used as an adverb for emphasis in one case (**uplně hráblo**) and omitted in the other. The other two uses of  **fucking**  are also dropped, however the expressivity of one of them (“*Ain’t fucking loaded, is it?*”) is partly compensated for by using the semi-vulgar (SSJC) **vole**, as in “*Dyk neni nabitá, nevidíš, vole?*”. This word appears once more as a Czech counterpart of the informal **man** (MacD) and these two are therefore, as for expressivity, close to each other.

The expressivity of the phrase **for fuck sakes** can be derived, again, from **fuck**, and it is therefore vulgar slang/extremely offensive; the Czech **doprdele** from Version 2 is rated among common vulgar (SSJC)/vulgar (SNC) words. These two are thus comparable.

Finally, **daft** is ranked as informal in all three OxfD, MacD and SlgD. However, together with its attribute  **fucking** , it becomes more expressive. **Debil**, on the other hand, is an offensive name (SNC) in itself but its attribute **uplnej** does not add to its expressivity.

In this last part, we can see again that Version 1 is a bit stronger in expressivity than Version 2.

All in all, more than a half of the vulgarisms in excerpts (1a–c) are translated by an expression with a lower degree of expressivity (especially *fucking*). A few expressions are more vulgar in Version 2 (e.g. *have the bottle – nebýt posera*), and in the rest of the cases, the level of vulgarity is kept on the same level in both versions.

## (2) A Soft Touch

*A Soft Touch* brings a story of an unsuccessful relationship between Johnny and Katriona. Johnny has a gambling addiction, non-existent self-esteem and he lovingly takes care of their daughter Chantel. Katriona cheats on her husband with a neighbour and both exploit Johnny without scruples. It is a story about lessons never learned and a thin line between love and hate.

Vulgarity in this story is an inherent feature of the characters. In Larry's case, it also shows his attitude towards women when in a few cases he refers to Katriona as "it".

### (2a) Version 1:

*Ah gave her twenty quid and she came back wi forty fuckin bar in her purse. Ah wis **fuckin demented**. Ah goes, whit's this, eh? She just laughed at ays. Ah wanted tae check her **fanny**; tae see if ah could tell that she'd **been shagged**.*

### Version 2:

*Dal jsem jí dvacet a vona se vrátí se čtyřcítí. **Šel jsem do vrtule**. Povidám: A tohle je co? Vysmála se mi. Chtěl jsem jí skontrolovat **frndu**, zjistit, esi jí někdo **šukal**.*

*I was **fucking demented***, as a state of being angry, was translated as *šel jsem do vrtule*. As *fucking* is vulgar slang/extremely offensive and *demented* is informal (OxfD, MacD), this collocation is quite expressive. Its Czech counterpart is milder with its individual parts being words of standard Czech which together create a colloquial idiomatic expression.

**Fanny** is a British vulgar slang (OxfD), offensive (MacD) term for female genitals, Czech **frnda** (listed vulgar in SNC) seems as a suitable word here. The verb **to shag** is a British vulgar slang (OxfD), impolite (MacD) expression for having a sexual intercourse. As SlgD points out, it is less coarse than **to fuck**. Czech, again, offers a few synonyms, the chosen **šukat** (SNC: vulgar) is adequate.

**(2b) Version 1:**

*Alright **mate**, he sais. Listen, ah need a wee favour. **Fuckin** electric **cunts** have only gone and cut ays off, eh.*

...

*He goes: See if you ivir touch that **fuckin** plug or that switch, you're **fuckin** deid, Johnny! Ah'm **fuckin** telling ye!*

**Version 2:**

*Hele **vole**, prohlásil. Potřebuju malinko helpnout. Ty **zmrdi** **pojebaný** nám vodšmikli elektriku.*

...

*Von na to: Esi se tý zásuvky nebo toho kabelu dotkneš, tak je s tebou **šmytec**, Johnny! To ti **kurva** garantuju.*

Both **mate** and **vole** are ways of informal addressing and in a given situation are almost equivalent; in terms of dictionary qualifiers, **mate** is British informal (OxfD, MacD) and **vole** is semi-vulgar (SSJC). The slightly higher expressivity of the latter is balanced out further on because the four instances of **fuckin** in Version 1 are only twice reflected equally expressive (as **pojebaný** – offensive name in SNC and **kurva** – vulgar in SNC) in Version 2. The third instance is omitted in Version 2 and the fourth (**fuckin deid**) translated into the colloquial **je s tebou šmytec**. Vulgar slang/extremely offensive **cunts** was, as in the previous case (1b), translated as **zmrdi** (vulgar common insult).

**(2c) Version 1:**

*Ever **fucked it up** the **erse**? he asked. Ah jist shrugged. He crosses one ay his airms ower the other one. Ah've started giein it the message that wey, he said, jist cause ah dinnae want it up the stick. Bairn **daft**, that **cunt**. Once ye git a **cunt up the stick**, they think thuv goat thir hand in yir poakit fir the rest ay yir puff.*

...

*Tell ye one thing, Johnny, he laughed, ah hope you've no goat AIDS or nowt like that, cause if ye huv ye'd've gied it tae me by now.*

...

*Naw, ah've no goat nowt like that, ah telt him, wishing for the first time in ma life that ah did.*

*Just as well, ya **dirty wee cunt**, Lary laughed.*

**Version 2:**

***Píchal** si jí někdy do **prdele**? zeptal se. Jenom sem pokrčil ramenama. Larry si překřížil ruce na prsou. Já jí vobtahuju jediňě do zadku, protože jí nechci dostat do jináče. Ta je z **fakanů** uplně **na větvi**. Dyž **ženskou dostaneš do jináče**, myslí si, že z tebe může až do smrti ždímat prachy.*

...

*Ale hele, Johnny, zasmál se, doufám, že nemáš ajc ani nic podobnýho, protože esi jó, tak už sem ho vod tebe určitě chytil.*

...

*Né, nic takovýho nemám, vodpověděl sem. Prvně v životě sem si přál, abysem měl.*

*Tak to je dobře, ty **prasáku**, zasmál se Larry.*

This excerpt contains a lot of sex-related vulgarisms. Small parts of the texts are omitted in this example to maintain its clarity while keeping the coherence. *To fuck* is translated as *píchat*, both being vulgar in the respective dictionaries (Oxford, SNC). *Arse* (vulgar slang in Oxford and impolite British in MacD) and *prdel* (SNC: vulgar) are also comparable.

*Bairn daft, that cunt* needed a creative approach and *ta je z fakanů uplně na větvi* is a very good solution. A more verbal expression was needed to comply with the rules of the Czech language and the vulgarity is again a bit toned down. *Bairn* is an unmarked Scottish English expression for a child/baby (MacD) while *fakan* is a common derogatory term (SSJC, SNC). *Cunt*, on the other hand, is a strong vulgarism that lacks in Version 2 (Katriona is only referred to with a demonstrative *ta*). *Daft* (informal in OxfD, MacD) and the idiomatic *být na větvi* are of comparable expressivity. Another moderation of vulgarity can be seen in the two following examples: *get a cunt up the stick* and *dirty wee cunt. Up the stick* is British informal for pregnant and equally *do jináče* is a colloquial variety in Version 2. A vulgar *cunt* is toned down to a common/derogatory *ženská*. The same word is adjusted to the context (i.e. referring to a man) in the second example and translated as *prasák* (semi-vulgar in SSJC and vulgar in SNC).

Excerpts (2a–c) feature mainly expressions which are vulgarisms in both versions (for instance *fanny – frnda, shag – šukat, cunt – zmrđ or arse – prdel*). There are a few instances of omitting a vulgarism (*fucking, cunt*) in Version 2, mainly to avoid repetition which would not sound natural in Czech. Also, it can be seen how expressivity is compensated for (although not completely) in different expressions within one utterance (*Bairn daft, that cunt. – Ta je z fakanů uplně na větvi.*)

### **(3) A Blockage in the System**

*A Blockage in the System* is a story about a group of employees from municipal services which takes place on one particular Sunday. They are supposed to deal with a problem which comes up when an old man's bathroom is flooded with excrements from the sewage system. However, they prefer competing in being lazy and disclaiming responsibility.

Since the characters are servicemen, their way of speaking (stereotypically) reflects that. Also, by using swear words and coarse language, they express irritation at the situation.

**(3a) Version 1:**

*Aw they **cunts** oan the flairs above uv been **shitein oot** thir weekend curry n lager this mornin; one ay they near simultaneous flushin joabs. Aw the **shite** faws doon... hits the **fuckin** blockage n comes back up it the first available space.*

**Version 2:**

*Všichni **pičusové**, co bydlej nad nim, ze sebe zrovna **tlačili** nedělní kari a piva a spláchli skoro naráz. No a tadle **vohromná sračka** sjela dólu,... zarazila se vo to ucpaný místo, a vylítla ven, kudyma to zrovna šlo.*

As the title suggests, this short story is full of faecal humour and related vulgarisms. The frequently occurring vulgar **cunt** is translated here into a slightly milder derogatory **pičus** (according to SNC). The verb **to shit (out)** is listed as vulgar slang (OxfD) and impolite (MacD) but its counterpart in Version 2 is nowhere near as vulgar, the activity is expressed by an unmarked verb **tlačili**. Similarly, **shite** is a British vulgar slang (OxfD)/British offensive expression (MacD) and the Czech **sračka** (vulgar in both SSJC and SNC) corresponds with it. **Fuckin (blockage)** is omitted at its original place but is compensated for by intensifying one of the previous expressions (**vohromná sračka**).

**(3b) Version 1:**

*Ah wisnae fir gaun intae that **bog** tae check it oot. — Ye ken whit happens, Knoxie. Burds pit thir **fanny pads** doon the **pan**, they aw clog up at the bend, ken?*

*— It's these **cunts** thit flush they **fuckin** disposable nappies away, that's the **cunts** thit git oan ma **fuckin tits**, Lozy shook ehs heid. — That's whit does the real **fuckin** damage, no the **jamrags**.*

*— Ah'm no arguin wi yous **cunts**. Git they **fuckin** rods oot the van n doon that **fuckin pan**.*

### Version 2:

*No já to teda do tý sračky zjišťovat nepudu. – Knoxie, dyk víš, jak to chodí.  
Holky tu házely vložky do hajzlu a ty pak ucpaly koleno, co?  
– Zmrdi, co klidně splachujou použitý plíny, ty mi fakt pijou krev, zavrtěl  
hlavou Lozy. – Plíny sou stokrát horší než vložky.  
– Chlapi, už ani slovo. Dojděte si do auta pro drát a vočíhňte tu mísu  
sakra.*

This selection is very rich in marked words. There are two synonyms for the inside of a toilet – *bog and pan* (used twice). *Bog* is British informal (OxfD, MacD), *pan* is an unmarked British expression. Their counterparts are *sračky, hajzl* (both vulgar in SSJC and SNC) and *mísa* (unmarked); apart from the last word, Version 2 expressions are thus stronger on the vulgarity scale. However, this is made up for by the strength of the following expressions. *Fanny pads* and *jamrags* (British vulgar slang/offensive and slang (OxfD) expressions for female sanitary products) are both translated as *vložky* (unmarked). Vulgar slang *cunts* (used three times) can be found in Version 2 as *zmrdi* (vulgar common), *ty* (unmarked) and *chlapi* (SSJC: expressive), being equally vulgar only in the first case. The frequently occurring adjective/adverb *fucking* is used four times in Version 1 (as an intensifier or to express anger). In Version 2, it has only one partly corresponding counterpart – *sakra* (SSJC: common expressive), the other three are dropped. The idiomatic phrase *to get on one's tits* is British vulgar slang (OxfD)/British impolite (MacD) and it is slightly toned down in Version 2 by using *ty mi fakt pijou krev*.

In this part, about one third of vulgarisms are translated by vulgarisms of a comparable strength (e.g. *cunt – zmrd* and *shite – sračka*). Some non-vulgar expressions from Version 1 are translated into vulgarisms in Version 2, such as *bog – sračka* or *pan – hajzl*. However, most of the expressions in Version 2 have a lower degree of expressivity or are completely omitted. These are for example: *shit out – tlačit*, *fanny pads – vložky*, *cunt – chlap* or *fucking – vohromná*.



#### (4) The Two Philosophers

*The Two Philosophers* is about two university professors who have spent most of their lives disputing over their differing philosophical views. Eventually they agree that a common man might solve their argument and set out to a pub. It all ends up with a very non-academical fight.

Since the main characters of this story are academic workers, their language differs considerably from other characters, for example the ones in the previous story. However, when expressing thoughts or later in the story when tempers become frayed, the degree of expressivity rises.

##### (4a) Version 1:

*He had had to earn the right to be self-obsessed, to slog his guts out in libraries for years and **brown-nose** the right people, generally **assholes** who you wouldn't **piss** upon if they were on fire.*

##### Version 2:

*Sám si musel právo na svou sebestřednost zasloužit, celé roky se mořil po knihovnách, **ležl do zadku** těm správným lidem, většinou **kreténům**, na které by **nenachcal**, kdyby je viděl hořet.*

Although still containing vulgarity, this story is rather toned-down in comparison with the others, therefore the difference in the strength and amount of vulgarisms in the two versions is minor. The verb **to brown-nose** is labeled as informal (OxfD, MacD) and coincides with **lézt do zadku** (SSJC: common expressive). **Asshole** belongs to American vulgar slang (OxfD)/offensive (MacD) and **kretén** from Version 2 is semi-vulgar (SSJC)/derogatory (SNC). Lastly, (*wouldn't*) **piss** is viewed as a vulgar slang in OxfD/impolite in MacD and translated into the comparable **nenachcal** (SSJC, SNC: vulgar) in Version 2.

This short excerpt shows expressions which are of comparable expressivity, only **kretén** in Version 2 might be viewed as having a slightly lower degree of expressivity than **asshole**.

### (5) The Granton Star Cause

A young man Boab Coyle is asked to leave his parents' house, loses his job and his position in a football team, and his girlfriend breaks up with him. Broken, he goes to a pub where he meets God who reproaches Boab for everything he has or has not ever done and punishes him by turning him into a fly.

In this short story, again, expressivity is used as a character-shaping feature. Boab is generally quite a harsh person and his language is coarsened by his rising anger and hopelessness. The other main protagonist, God, is presented as a copy of any ordinary human whose language reflects his disgust at the human race.

#### (5a) Version 1:

— *Stick yir **fuckin** pint up yir **erse**! Some **mates** yours, eh? Well **fuck** yis!*

#### Version 2:

— *Si to pivo nalej do **prdele**! To ste teda **kámoši**! **Seru** na vás!*

In this short excerpt, we can see the omission of **fuckin** at the beginning. Vulgar slang/British impolite **arse** is kept in Version 2 as **prdel** (SSJC: common vulgar, SNC: vulgar). **Mates** and **kámoši** also share the level of expressivity (Oxford, MacD: British informal and SSJC: slang). **Fuck**, as previously mentioned, is vulgar slang/extremely offensive, and **srát na** is also vulgar (SSJC).

#### (5b) Version 1:

— *Whit's goat intae you? Eh? Evelyn? Yuv nivir complained before. You n me. Ye wir jist a **daft** wee **lassie** before ye met me. Nivir knew whit a **ride** wis, fir **fuck** sake...*

...

— *YA **FAAHKIN SLAG**!...YA **HORRIBLE FUCKIN HING-OOT**!...*

...

— ***SLAAHT! FAAHKIN SLAAHHT**!...*

**Version 2:**

– *Co to do tebe vjelo? Co? Evi? Doted' ti nic nevadilo. Než si mě poznala, byla si akorát **pitomá husa**. Vo **šukání** si **neměla ani páru, doprdele...***

...

– *TY **DĚVKO!**... TY **HNUSNÁ RAJDO!**...*

...

– ***ČUBKO!** TY **HNUSNÁ ČUBKO!**...*

This part is full of insults from Boab towards his now ex-girlfriend Evelyn. *Daft lassie* (informal; lassie is chiefly Scottish and unmarked in OxfD) is translated as *pitomá husa* (the latter being derogatory in SSJC).

*Slag*, *hing-oot* and *slut* are all designations for a promiscuous woman. Their counterparts in Version 2 are *děvka*, *rajda* and *čubka* respectively. In English, all three are very close as for the level of expressivity: *slag* is a British informal, derogatory (OxfD)/British offensive (MacD) expression; *hing-oot* is too language-specific an expression to be listed in OxfD or MacD but UD confirms its above mentioned meaning. Lastly, *slut* is also derogatory (OxfD)/offensive (MacD). The Czech expressions are used appropriately, even though they slightly differ in their levels of expressivity: *děvka* is derogatory, *rajda* is vulgar (all according to both SSJC and SNC); *čubka* is semi-vulgar (SSJC) and derogatory (SNC). A *ride* is a vulgar slang expression for an act of sexual intercourse (OxfD), vulgar (SNC) *šukání* is an adequate counterpart to it. Similarly, *for fuck sake* (OxfD: vulgar slang) has its counterpart in *doprdele* (SSJC, SNC: vulgar). Lastly, *fuckin* (vulgar slang) is used three times in Version 1 while twice omitted and once translated into non-vulgar *hnusná* in Version 2.

**(5c) Version 1:**

— Yuv **fucked** this one **up**, ya **daft cunt**, the man said to him, raising a pint of eighty shilling to his lips.

...

God looked Boab in the eye. He seemed upset.

— Jist hud oan a minute, pal. Lit's git one thing straight. Every **fuckin** time ah come doon here, some **wide-o** pills ays up about what ah should n shouldnae be **fuckin** daein. Either that or ah huv tae enter intae some philosophical **fuckin** discourse wi some wee undergraduate **twat** about the nature ay masel, the extent ay ma omnipotence n aw that **shite**. Ah'm gittin a wee bit fed up wi aw this self-justification; it's no for yous **cunts** tae criticise me. Ah made yous **cunts** in my ain image. Yous git oan wi it; yous **fuckin** well sort it oot. That **cunt** Nietzsche wis wide ay the mark whin he sais ah wis deid. Ah'm no deid; ah jist dinnae **gie a fuck**. It's no fir me tae sort every **cunt's** problems oot. Nae other **cunt gies a fuck** so how should ah? Eh?

**Version 2:**

– **Sis to** teda pěkně **posral**, ty **blboune**, řekl mu chlápek a chystal se napít piva.

...

Bůh se podíval Boabovi do očí. Vypadal rozčileně.

– Tak prr, kamaráde. Aby bylo jasno. Dycky dyž si to sem k vám **přiseru**, začne mi nákej **drsňák** radit, co mám nebo nemám dělat. Nebo se nechám náky **natvrldlym** študákem zavlít do filozofický debaty vo mý podstatě, vo rosahu mý všemohoucnosti nebo vo náký podobný **pičovině**. Už mám toho sebevobhajování plný zuby, vy mě nemáte co kritizovat. Stvořil sem vás k obrazu svýmu. Tak se s tim smiřte a koukejte si s tim nějak poradit, **kurva**. Ten **pičus** Nietzsche se pěkně seknul, dyž tvrdil, že sem mrtvej. Já nejsem mrtvej, mně je to akorát **u prdele**. Já tu přeci nejsem vod toho, abysem řešil problémy kdejakýho **pičuse**. Všem je to **u prdele**, tak proč by to nemělo bejt **u prdele** mně? Co?

In this paragraph, God voices his disappointment in humankind through language not different from the one of all the other unfortunate characters. The analysis shows that this part too corresponds with the trend of Version 2 being toned down to a certain extent.

While *fuck up* (Oxford: vulgar slang and MacD: extremely offensive) is in terms of vulgarity identical with *posrat* (SSJC: vulgar), *daft cunt* (informal + vulgar slang/extremely offensive) is moderated into *blboun* (SSJC: semi-vulgar).

As for the second part of the excerpt, the two most common expletives will be examined first. Vulgar slang/extremely offensive *fuck* is present (in the form of *fucking* or *give a fuck*) six times. The word *fucking* often works only as a kind of padding, sometimes showing anger or intensification. In Version 2, it is compensated for by using the words *přisrat* (SSJC: vulgar) and *kurva* (SSJC, SNC: vulgar), and completely omitted in the two other cases. The verb phrase *to not give a fuck* is translated twice as *být u prdele* (SSJC, SNC: vulgar) with the level of vulgarity kept.

The second most frequent expression is *cunt* (used five times in Version 1), one of the strongest vulgarisms in the English language. It is completely left out in three instances in Version 2. In the remaining two, the derogatory word *pičus* is used (SNC).

*Wide-o* is not a very common expression, given that it is listed neither in Oxford nor MacD. However, UD defines it as a know-all or someone who acts like they are important. SlgD lists *wide-o* as an insensitive and objectionable person (Scottish use). Its chosen Czech counterpart is *drsňák* (listed as vernacular in SSJC). Another possible option could be *chytrák*.

*Undergraduate twat* is a vulgar slang (Oxford)/extremely offensive (MacD) expression while *natvrdej študák* is expressive and slang respectively in SSJC.

Lastly, vulgar slang/British offensive *shite* with the meaning of something unimportant is used in Version 1 with a corresponding *pičovina* (SNC: vulgar) in Version 2. The level of vulgarity is kept here.

Overall, the strategy used in excerpts (5a–c) is keeping the vulgarisms in both versions at the same level (for instance: *mate* – *kámoš*, *fuck up* – *posrat*, *slag* – *děvka*, *to not give a fuck* – *být u prdele*). Often, the vulgarisms (e.g. *cunt* and  *fucking*) from Version 1 are replaced by expressions with a lower degree of expressivity in Version 2, as can be seen in:  *fucking* – *hnusná*, *daft cunt* – *blboun*, *twat* – *natvrdej*. In many cases the vulgarism is completely omitted in the translation.

## (6) Sport for All

The content of this short story is a dialogue held between three people, however only one speaker's part is presented. This person interacts with the other two whose lines are to be deduced by the reader. The topic is rugby, sexual orientation of its fans and a lot of obtrusive questions.

Vulgarity is a part of the speaker's character. Also, it might be a result of excitement because the main character is a big football fan and he is discussing sport.

The following text is indented to indicate different receivers of the message (in accordance with the structure in the book).

### (6a) Version 1:

*Hear that Skanko? Scotlin **fuckin** won.*

*Whae wis it thi wir playin, **mate**? Fiji. FIJI? Who the **fuck**'s that?!*

*FIJI? Some **fuckin** islands ya **doss cunt**. Aye? Aye, well we're jist some **fuckin** islands tae these **cunts**, think aboot it that wey.*

*It's right enough though, eh **mate**? Still, wir aw **fuckin** Scotsmin the gither, eh **mate**? No thit ah ken much aboot rugby masel. S'a **fuckin poof**'s game if ye ask me. Dinnae ken how any **cunt** kin watch that **fuckin shite**. It's true though, it's aw **fuckin queers** thit play that game. Yir no a **poof** ur ye, **mate**?*

## Version 2:

*Slyšíš, Skanko? Skoti vyhráli, kurva.*

*A s kým sme hráli, vole? S Fidži. FIDŽI. A to má byť jako co?!*

*FIDŽI? To jsou nějaký pojebaný vestrovy, ty blboun. Jó? No taky sme pro ně akorát nějaký pojebaný vestrovy, dyž se to tak veme.*

*Ale i tak je to dobře, né, vole? Přeci jenom sme všichni Skoti, né, vole? Teda né že bysem toho vo ragby kór moc věděl. Podle mě je to sport pro buzny. Nechápu, jak na takovou píčovinu vůbec může někdo čučet. Holt je fak, že tendle sport provozujou jenom samý bukvice. Nejsěš buzna, že né, vole?*

Again, a look will be taken at **fuck/ing** (vulgar slang/extremely offensive). While it is used eight times in Version 1, Version 2 contains only three respective counterparts. Once it is translated into **kurva** (vulgar), twice as **pojebaný** (SNC: offensive name), these are thus corresponding. Importantly, the other five instances are omitted in Version 2.

**Cunt** (vulgar slang/extremely offensive) is present three times in Version 1, however only kept once in Version 2 as **blboun**, which is very toned down (SSJC: semi-vulgar). This is all the more so because **cunt** in this instance is preceded and strengthened by **doss** which, as an adjective, means thick, useless or stupid (UD).

**Mate** (British informal) is in all cases translated as **vole** (semi-vulgar) in Version 2 and a British vulgar slang/offensive word **shite** corresponds with Czech **píčovina** (vulgar in SNC).

Finally, **queer and poof** are both expressions for homosexual men. **Queer** is labeled as informal, offensive by OxfD and as offensive by MacD. SlgD, however, points out that it is being reclaimed by the gay community. Its Czech counterpart was chosen to be **bukvice** (SNC: vulgar). **Poof** is British informal, offensive (OxfD) and British offensive (MacD), i.e. practically synonymous with the former. In Version 2, its translation is **buzna** (SNC: vulgar).

Due to many omitted expressions, Version 2 is generally milder as for vulgar expressions. The same holds true for the following, last sample.

**(6b) Version 1:**

Goan gies a song, **mate**. One ay they **poof** songs ye sing in the rugby clubs before yis aw **shag** each other. Jist a wee **fuckin** song then, **cunt!**

Jist askin the boy tae gies a **fuckin** song. Nae **hassle** likes.

Gies a song, **mate**. C'Moan!... Sing Distant Drums.

Whit dae ye mean leave um?

Ah`m jist askin the **cunt** tae sing. Distant Drums.

Eh? Ye dinnae ken Distant **fuckin** Drums? No? Listen tae me, **mate**, ah`ll **fuckin** sing it.

I HEAR THE SOUND

DUH-DUH-DUH-DUH

DUH-DUH-DUH-DUH

OF DIS-TINT DRUMS...

SING YA **CUNT!**

**Version 2:**

Hele, nechceš nám něco zazpívat? Někej **teplajznickej** slogan, co vyřváváte, než na sebe v ragbyovém klubu **hupnete!** Tak aspoň ňáskou písničku, **vole!**

Jenom chci, aby nám něco zazpíval. **Nevopruzuju**, neboj.

Tak zazpívej něco. No ták!... Třeba Zvuk bubnů.

Cožé? Že ho mám nechat bejt?

Jenom chci, aby nám něco zazpíval. Zvuk bubnů.

Có? Ty neznáš Zvuk **zkurvenejch** bubnů? Né? Tak poslouchej, **vole**, tě to naučím.

V DÁLI ZNÍ

BUM-BUM-BUM

BUM-BUM-BUM

ZVUK BUBNŮ...

A TEĎ TY, **VOLE!**



The word *fucking* (vulgar slang/extremely offensive), again, can be found several times in this excerpt. Out of its four uses, only one is somehow reflected in Version 2, and that is in the adjective *zkurvenejch* (SSJC, SNC: vulgar). The remaining three instances are omitted.

Another recurring word, *cunt* (vulgar slang/extremely offensive), is translated twice into the milder *vole* (semi-vulgar) and dropped in the third case.

*Mate* (British informal), previously translated into the synonymous *vole* (semi-vulgar), is again referred to as such once, whereas the other two instances do not have any counterparts in Version 2.

*Poof*, as mentioned above, is a British informal, offensive expression. In Version 2, it is rendered into an adjective *teplajznickej* (*slogan*) which is listed as vulgar in SNC.

The informal (OxfD) *to hassle* is translated into the common Czech, slang *vopruzovat* (SNC).

Lastly, *to shag* in Version 1 is a British vulgar slang/impolite expression. Version 2 creatively employs the toned-down, in this context expressive, verb *hupnout na*.

Parts (6a–b) are very dense as for vulgarity but a closer look reveals that there are only a few recurring vulgarisms which create the main speaker's idiolect. These words are *mate*, *fucking* and *cunt*. In about half of the cases, a vulgarism is translated by a vulgarism (e.g. *shite* – *pičovina*, *poof* – *buzna* or *fucking* – *zkurvenej*). The other half consists of vulgarisms which are translated into Version 2 as expressions with a lower degree of expressivity. These are for example: *doss cunt* – *blboun*, *to shag* – *hupnout na* and *cunt* – *vole*.

### ***3.4.3 Comparison with the play *Ucpanej systém****

After presenting the analysis of the English and Czech short story versions, this chapter focuses on the Czech drama version, the Dejvické divadlo play *Ucpanej systém* itself.

Firstly, a look will be taken at whether, and if so, how it fulfills the basic features of drama. Like most plays, it is based on a dialogue. Structurally, the piece is divided into nine parts which are, during the staging, distinguished by darkening of the scene and musical interlude. In the play script, there is no introduction of the characters, which might be explained by the fact that the play was written directly for Dejvické divadlo and all the creators cooperated closely. Another interesting feature is the small number of stage directions. All nine parts, except for the last, start with a few lines setting the scene, and throughout the play there are some notes in parentheses explaining what the characters are doing or how. However, these are rather few, again leaving the actors with quite a lot of performance freedom. One can also notice their involvement when comparing the written play script with what can be actually heard on the stage. The actors are not constricted by the text and to a certain extent adjust the dialogue along the way.

As for the comprehensibility and translation strategies, foreignisation was widely used in the play. Proper names of characters and cultural references are kept which should not pose problems for Czech audiences as they are acquainted with English settings relatively well. The extent of understanding depends, naturally, on each spectator's background knowledge and receptive skills; however, given the content and the actors' performance, everything should be deducible. As for the syntax, theory suggests using mainly coordinate structures and short sentences which is not always followed in *Ucpanej systém* as it contains several long utterances.

As was mentioned in the theoretical part of this work, an important feature of every staged play is the speakability of its play script. To retain it, a few rules were established, e.g. reducing the amount of sounds which are difficult to articulate and easily misheard, and limiting demanding consonant and sibilant clusters. This is not always fulfilled in the play script (an illustrative example being the tongue twister-like “*Co Skot, to cvok*” in excerpt (1b)). In these cases, it depends largely on how the actors handle such segments. Interestingly, long passages of the text were taken over from the short stories without change.

Secondly, changes of the characters and the story merging will be addressed. As was already mentioned, the content of the play is composed of parts of different short stories. To make the story compact, some main characters were kept while others were omitted and their role or lines were partly taken over by other characters, therefore the relationships blend differently.

The play was adapted from six short stories but the film script was also used in the process. How did it contribute to the final product? The fact is that both are based on a dialogue, so many play lines could have been easily borrowed from the film script. On the other hand, the film script could serve as an inspiration only in case of two stories, *The Granton Star Cause* and *Soft Touch*, thus its contribution to the creation of the final play is only partial.

Looking at all three versions, i.e. the short stories, the screenplay and the play script, how do they differ and what do they share? Naturally, the short stories and the film script use the same language, English, while the play script is written in Czech. This also correlates with the differing cultures of the recipients. Additionally, what is shared by the English versions is the explicit harshness (e.g. the sexual scenes or Boab killed by his own parents). This is not kept in the play for obvious reasons, although a high level of verbal vulgarity, though toned down in comparison to the original version as

was found through the analysis, is still present. The analysis showed that the Czech versions, i.e. the translated short stories and the play, are certainly more moderate in the use of vulgarisms. Textually, the Czech translation of *The Acid House* and *Ucpanej systém* are very similar. Many lines are copied from the short stories and they are only slightly adjusted as for the names and addressing. The language is not in any way adapted for its new mode.

### 3.5 Results of the Case Study

It is important to note that English and Czech have different language systems which encompass also the area of conveying expressivity. Analysing vulgarisms is a complicated matter because they can express different things and their usage and perception differs across cultures and languages. Knittlová (2010, 63) points out that Czech language, in contrast to English, “has many more morphological language means for expressing emotionality which are widely employed mainly in literary functional style” (author’s translation).<sup>15</sup> Thus, in translation, lexical vulgarity can be compensated for by using other means, and the rendering of vulgarisms also depends very much on the translator’s personality, sometimes on censoring or other influences. Because it is not possible to cover all the aspects and views on vulgarisms, one particular approach was defined which is based on analysing reviews.

The reviews were gathered and explored to find out what they were focused on (i.e. potentially what the reception was focused on). Table 1 in Section 3.3, depicting the presence of individual topics in the 14 reviews, showed that the most frequently mentioned points were the language (mainly its vulgarity) and the story. The acting was mentioned in half of the reviews. Only about one third of the reviews discussed the genesis and the scene. In accordance with the widespread issue of an invisible translator, only two reviews dealt with the translator or translation.

An overall impression of the reviews is a positive evaluation of the play which is contributed to by an excellent performance and cooperation of the actors. The vulgarity of the language is commented upon the most, which was also the reason why the strategies employed in translating the vulgarisms were chosen for the analysis in the second part of the case study.

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<sup>15</sup> „Naproti tomu čeština má pro vyjadřování emocionality mnohem více morfologických jazykových prostředků, kterých zejména v uměleckém funkčním stylu bohatě využívá.“

The vulgarisms constitute a specific feature of the play. The chosen method was to compare the two language versions of the short stories (English and Czech) since an analysis of the translation of the appearing vulgarisms was more feasible when working with the same types of text. This approach was possible because the play *Ucpanej systém* largely takes the coarse words over from the short stories (or more precisely, it takes over long sections of the text which contain the vulgarisms). Only those sections which simultaneously occur in the play were selected. The analysis aimed to find out how the vulgarisms were handled in the process of translation. Attention was paid mainly to the question of how the strength of vulgarisms changes between the two language versions and what their repertoire is.

The results showed that the two most used strategies were translating a vulgarism by a vulgarism and translating a vulgarism by an expression with a lower level of expressivity. Cases when a non-vulgar expression is translated by a vulgar one were rare. Out of 117 analysed expressions, the most frequent was the word *fuck* and its forms (especially  *fucking*) with 46 cases, and *cunt* with 22 instances. These also represent the strongest vulgarisms used. The repertoire of vulgarisms in Version 2 was wider and generally toned down.

## 4. Summary

This diploma thesis focuses on the neglected area of drama translation, discusses its history and important aspects, and in the analytical part provides a case study of *Ucpanej systém*, a play based on the Czech translation of Irvine Welsh's short stories.

The work is divided into two main parts. The first, theoretical, part familiarises the reader with the field of theatre, drama and various scholars' views on the subject. These cover topics such as multimodality of drama, types of communication and relationships in the theatre, the role of the audience, etc. Subsequently, the topic is narrowed down to drama translation. This had been an unheeded area for decades but the situation started to change in the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The main areas of interest have been the differences in comparison with other literary texts, speakability and other –abilities, the page and stage dilemma and others. All in all, drama translation is an interesting realm which deserves more attention in the future.

The comparative part firstly contextualises the play which the case study is focused on. The play has gone a long way from its original source to the staged version and this is documented together with the information about the author and the reception of his work. An overview of reviews and their analysis is provided to find out what topics are noticed by the audience. Since one of the most discussed areas was shown to be the vulgarity of the language in the play, a subsequent translation analysis of the original short stories and their Czech version was conducted to find out how this was dealt with in the process of creation the play. Since the play contains vast parts of the text identical with the translated short stories, it was not necessary to compare these two versions. The analysis showed that the vulgarity in the Czech versions is toned down which was partly achieved by omitting some of the coarse words.

## Shrnutí

Divadlo tvoří neoddělitelnou část lidské historie. Divadelní hry vznikají a mají důležitou roli v různých kulturách a jazycích, a proto je zapotřebí i jejich kvalitního překladu. Tato diplomová práce se zabývá oblastí dramatického překladu a seznamuje se vznikem české divadelní hry *Ucpanej systém*, její recepcí a procesem převodu vulgarismů, jakožto silného aspektu jejího scénáře. Obsah práce je rozdělen do dvou hlavních částí.

Teoretická část nabízí stručný přehled vývoje divadla a různých jeho aspektů, a soustřeďuje se zejména na jeho roli v oblasti překladu, ve které bylo často opomíjeno. Dramatický překlad byl často zkoumán pouze v rámci literárního překladu a bez ohledu na svou multimodalitu, což se začalo měnit až v posledních desetiletích 20. století. Pro českou a slovenskou translatologii byl významnou osobností Jiří Levý, který se mimo další aspekty překladu zabýval důkladně právě divadelním překladem. Práce pojednávající o tomto tématu se velmi často věnují oblastem jako je divadelní dialog, mluvnost a srozumitelnost, publikum apod. Zejména publikum je důležitým faktorem při překladu divadelních her. Ačkoli hlavní, mezi teoretiky uznávanou, formou divadelní hry je ta vytvořena pro jeviště, a tedy pro návštěvníky divadla, některá díla jsou naopak publikována a určena čtenářům. Nedílnou složkou teoretické části je přehled různých pohledů a aspektů dramatu, např. kapitola 2.1.5 shrnuje vzájemné vztahy jednotlivých entit v divadelním prostředí a kapitola 2.1.6 se zabývá funkcí komunikace v tomto prostředí.

Druhou částí práce je část praktická. Ta poskytuje informace o metodologii a zkoumaných datech. Jako materiál případové studie bylo zvoleno dílo Irvina Welshe, sbírka povídek *The Acid House*, její český překlad, a zejména pak na jejím základě vytvořená hra *Ucpanej systém*. Kapitola 3.2 v rámci praktické části nabízí kontextualizaci jednotlivých děl od původní



sbírky povídek až po konečnou českou divadelní hru. V případech, kde to dostupnost dat umožnila, jsou zahrnuty informace o recepci jednotlivých děl. Samotná analýza se pak, s ohledem na důležitost publika, ve své první části věnuje 14 profesionálním recenzím hry *Ucpanej systém*. Tyto byly analyzovány s cílem zjistit, čím se nejčastěji zabývají, a co a jakým způsobem hodnotí. Výsledky ukázaly, že často uváděnými oblastmi byly samotný děj a vystoupení herců, méně často pak vznik hry a scéna. Dejvické divadlo jakožto domácí scéna nebylo specificky zmíněno ani v jedné recenzi a překladu se věnovaly pouze dvě z nich. Jednoznačně nejfrekventovanějším tématem recenzí byla mluva, jazyk, či styl vyjadřování postav ve hře. Specifikem hry *Ucpanej systém* je totiž její značná vulgarita. Druhá část analýzy se proto zabývala převodem vulgarismů mezi originálem a cílovým textem. Pro snazší realizovatelnost a přehlednost této analýzy byly použity texty originálních povídek a jejich českého překladu. Toto bylo možné, protože divadelní hra z velké části přebírá nezměněné repliky z této české verze. Analýza textových vzorků ukázala, že značná část vulgarismů z originálu je do české verze převedena opět jako vulgarismy nebo je použita strategie, kdy je vulgarismus převeden jako výraz s nižší expresivitou. Případy, kdy by výraz v překladu měl vyšší míru expresivity než v originálu, byly vzácné.

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## Anotace

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**Klíčová slova v ČJ:** Divadelní překlad  
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Irvine Welsh  
Ucpanej systém

**Klíčová slova v AJ:** Drama translation  
Comparative analysis  
Case study  
Vulgarisms  
Irvine Welsh  
Ucpanej systém

**Anotace v ČJ:**

Tato diplomová práce se zabývá základními aspekty dramatického překladu a v praktické části nabízí případovou studii hry *Ucpanej systém*. Teoretická část uvádí nejdříve obecné poznatky týkající se divadelních textů, publika a dalších oblastí, které jsou dále zkoumány v kontextu překladu. Druhá část práce je zaměřena analyticky a poskytuje informace o vzniku zkoumané hry *Ucpanej systém*, jejím autorovi a specifikách. Součástí případové studie je analýza obsahu recenzí této hry, po které následuje analýza vulgarismů, jakožto výrazného prvku hry, ve vybraných textových vzorcích. V závěru jsou zjištěné výsledky okomentovány.

**Anotace v AJ:**

This diploma thesis deals with basic aspects of drama translation and in its analytical part offers a case study of the play *Ucpanej systém*. Firstly, the theoretical part introduces general knowledge regarding theatre texts, audience and other areas which are examined further in the context of translation. The second part of the work is analytical and provides information about the genesis of the explored play *Ucpanej systém*, its author and specifics. The case study comprises an analysis of reviews of this play which is followed by a comparative analysis of vulgarisms, as a distinctive feature of the play, in selected text samples. Finally, the results are commented upon.