

Západočeská univerzita v Plzni

Fakulta filozofická

Bakalářská práce

**Translation of a Czech literary text with a
commentary**

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Prohlašuji, že jsem práci zpracoval(a) samostatně a použil(a) jen uvedených pramenů a literatury.

Plzeň, duben 2015

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Vojtěch Ettler

Za odborné vedení, konzultace a rady patří poděkování vedoucí této bakalářské práce, paní PhDr. Evě Raisové.

Speciální poděkování také náleží autorovi překládané povídky, panu Zdeňkovi Svěrákovi, nejen za vytvoření samotné předlohy, ale také za milou odpověď na můj dopis ohledně tématu této práce (viz Appendix (Přílohy)).

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1.

1. Introduction

The principal objective of this Bachelor Thesis was to translate a literary text from Czech into English and subsequently comment on the individual translation solutions chosen by the author of this Thesis. For this purpose, it was first necessary to establish the theoretical basis of the literary translation grounded in the findings of a prominent Czech linguist and translator, Jiří Levý. This theoretical part of the Thesis includes a general introduction to the translation process, as well as a particular subchapter concerning translation of proper names because this phenomenon is dealt with later in connection with the translation itself.

The practical application of the theory follows, in a form of a translation of the story *Sraz naší třídy* taken from the book *Nové povídky* written by Zdeněk Svěrák. Consisting of approximately 12 standard pages, the translation had to deal with a rich vocabulary typical for Svěrák, as well as with various interesting translation issues: the above-mentioned dilemma regarding translation of proper names, a differentiation of language registers, a consideration of the cultural context or a necessity of re-stylizing. These aspects are among reasons why the author of this Thesis chose this short story for his translation, as further described in the chapter called Macroanalysis of the translation which also presents Zdeněk Svěrák and his work. This chapter is ensued by the Microanalysis of the translation where the mentioned issues are discussed more minutely in relation to the translation of the short story,

accompanied by concrete examples.

The Thesis is concluded by acknowledgment to the foreign consultants who contributed to the final version of the translation. Thanks to their evaluations and comments, it was possible to wrap up the translation in a form more familiar to a native speaker.

All the parts of the Thesis are written in the American English which was selected due to its less complicated spelling, resulting in a greater fluency of the text.

2. Theory of Translation

The translation of written language has accompanied the human society already since the beginnings of the written form of communication. This translation necessity logically arose from the need for transmitting ideas of a text to a group of people who used a different language system. Despite this being relevant first of all to diverse nations and ethnic groups, language specifics can be found within different social classes as well. During the period of antiquity, for instance, Greek served as a language of scholars, especially in the domain of philosophy; its privileged position later assumed by Latin which to a certain degree fulfills this function even today.

However, if we disregard ancient reflections and scattered translation essays, a "scientific" approach to the translation of literary texts began to appear many centuries later, more specifically in the second half of the 20th century¹. With the assistance of other philological branches, the so-called translatology has given rise to sundry theoretical views and practical methods, both striving to find the way how to produce the best, or more precisely the most faithful translation. Since, at that time, the focus of the translation sciences has begun splitting to deal with various types and styles of texts, with regard to the objective of this Thesis, we shall concentrate only on the field of the literary (artistic) translation.

The key issue in this field of the translation theory is the criteria of literary translation quality. Let us return to the above-mentioned faithfulness of the translation, which may be defined as the degree of the *addressee's equivalent reaction* to the source and target text². Just as other prominent Czech philologist Jiří Levý, Dagmar Knittlová claims that this faithfulness is the principal criterion for appraising the translation quality. Being a specialist in the domain of literary translation, Levý in this respect cites one of the co-founders of the Prague Linguistic Circle, Vilém Mathesius: "[...] the very essence of translating poetry is an endeavor to awaken the artistic effect, although by means of different literary devices than utilized in the original [...]"³ and on the following pages, he describes the tilt of the modern translation theory towards this opinion⁴. In yet other words, the authorial intent, i.e., what effect the author wishes his work to have, should be reproduced for the reader as accurately as possible, in respects of both semantics and formalness, by following specific (and more or less distinct from the source language) grammatical and structural standards of the target language and also considering the cultural context of the target language reader's background.

2.1. Process of Literary Translation

Let us focus on the literary translation process. At the beginning of his main chapter, Translation Process, Levý states three phases of this process⁵:

1. understanding of the original

2. interpreting the original

3. re-stylizing the original

2.1.1. Understanding of the Original

In connection with above-mentioned ideas, the translator first has to correctly understand the authorial intent, the primary and secondary ideas of the text, and let it have some effect on him or her to be capable of correctly interpreting the work so they can proceed to other steps of the translation process. At this moment, the translator is, above all, an attentive reader who represents every follow-up reader in the target language. As described by Levý, their task is to comprehend the text on three levels: first, on the **philological** level which basically includes a proper understanding of the meaning of individual words as well as grasping the general point of the story. If the translator fails to accomplish this, they considerably digress from the original intent. Although we can describe this phase as the least creative and thus the least demanding regarding the translator's talent, it is necessary to give it a sufficient amount of attention.

Provided the translator is sure of their philological understanding of the original text, they may move on to the second level, i.e., **ideologically-esthetic**. On this level, the translator aims at capturing the mood of the original, in other words, the emotional aspects of the whole story, as well as its parts.

Particularly, identifying irony in contrast to a bare statement can have a radical impact on the process of transferring the text into the target language.

The third level concerns understanding of **artistic elements**; it means attributes of individual characters, their mutual relationships, setting of the story and the overall author's message. Levý points out that the translator should not perceive the text atomistically but try seeing the whole picture which enables to transfer a coherent and credible conception of the above-mentioned into the target text. For example, it is necessary that all lines of one character's speech are based on a cohesive idea of their personality so they do not deviate from the unified style and are not in contradiction to the character's behavior outside its direct speeches.

2.1.2. Interpreting the Original

Provided that the translator correctly understood the original text, the phase of its interpreting follows. This phase is essential due to semantic and functional differences between the source and target text; according to Levý⁶, this, above all, refers to the need of concretization of word meanings because often it is not possible to find fully equivalent words in both languages. For this reason, it is not sufficient to "arbitrarily" translate, although grammatically right, instead, on the basis of the main idea of the text, its intended effect and last but not least the logical cohesion, it is necessary to *interpret* the text.

However, on the other hand, Levý advises against the "over-interpretation"⁷, i.e., the excessive subjectivism of the translator who tends to deform the text on the ground of their personal preferences, diverging from the appropriate translator's role: acting as a discreet intermediary between the author and the reader.

This having been stated, the interpreting phase becomes rather complicated. The translator has to find the right proportion between the objective and the subjective aspect of their translating approach and properly substantiate all derivative interventions into the original text so as to help transferring the authorial intent into the target language, not impede it.

2.1.3. Re-stylizing the Original

The final phase of the translation process involves the overall rewriting of the source text into a form natural as much as possible depending on the linguistic system of the target language. The translator is expected to correctly realize the strengths and weaknesses of the language they translate into, compare them with the features of the source language and, in case of difference, substitute the originally used methods by using the typical attributes of the target language.⁸ Since the translation, regarding literary texts in particular, is a very subjective matter, it is not possible to apply a generalized approach to all original texts; it is essential that the translator thoroughly consider when the equivalent reader's reaction can be achieved by keeping the

original form and when, on the contrary, the original text should be extensively re-stylized.

2.2. Translation of Proper Nouns

Since the chapter Microanalysis will minutely deal with the topic of translation of proper nouns used in the short story, let us now create the theoretical foundations which can be later referenced to. This phenomenon is coherently described by Jiří Levý in his book.⁹

As we have already shown above, the criterion for successful translation is a degree of preserving the authorial intent and adequate transmitting of reader's impression between the source text reader and the target text reader. The same principle is applied in this particular translation issue of modifying proper nouns. Despite the general practice being to keep proper nouns in their original wording (because we greatly risk distorting the reader's impression in this area), we have to correctly recognize the intention of an author concerning proper nouns. If proper nouns contain a significant semantic, characterizing or standardizing value, it is necessary, as Levý says, to use one of the three basic methods of modifying (not only) proper nouns: translation, substitution and transcription.

The method of translation as such can be used only in the case of the proper nouns containing solely the semantic value with no other, for example cultural, elements. This especially relates to historical texts such as medieval

allegories or *commedias dell'arte*. To give an example, the names of characters *Frater* and *Misericordia* were translated into Czech as *Mnich* and *Milosrdenství* respectively. In these cases, we need to explain to the reader the meaning of the proper noun because it very often personifies abstract terms or expresses and emphasizes certain typical attributes.

We use the substitution for a similar purpose but in a different situation, i.e., when it is necessary to take into consideration "[...] the dependence [of a proper noun] on national forms (each nation has its own register of name forms) [...]"¹⁰. This concerns satirical or comedy texts in particular; we aim to accentuate typical attributes of characters rather than call them believable names. Here, the translator is required to be the most imaginative as they have to precisely perceive the authorial intent regarding naming the characters. In some cases, they also have to decide whether to base their translation either on the formal or semantic aspect while the original name contains both at the same time. Levý comments on this by giving an example of two different translations of Shakespearean couple *Mr Ford* and *Mr Page* – *Josef Václav Sládek* followed the meaning in his substitution; therefore, he translated the names into Czech as *Brodský* – *Pacholík*. On the other hand, *Erik Adolf Saudek* based his translation on the name forms typical for the Czech cultural context, having translated the names as *Vodička* – *Hošek*¹¹.

Obviously, both of these methods are relevant only when the semantic value of a proper noun is related to the other content of a text. Therefore, we assess the validity of the semantic value in relation to the work as a whole.

The last of the above-mentioned methods is the so-called transcription. We resort to this translation device when the semantic value is completely absent which enables to keep the proper name in its original form, with possible adjustment on the basis of the standards and cultural context of the target language. For example, transcribed proper names are modified in such a way to comply with its grammatical system (noun declension, phone substitution regarding pronunciation, etc.)

3. The Practical Application

The translation of short story *Sraz naší třídy* from book *Nové povídky*
written by Zdeněk Svěrák.

The Reunion

To be honest, I don't really like my high school class reunions. I used to once. But when forty or fifty years passes since the school-leaving exams, these reunions should be banned by the Ministry of Education. Why should I voluntarily torment myself by looking at the girls I used to yearn for and at the boys whose shoulders and muscles I used to envy, and see how we have ended up? It's even worse than looking in the mirror with my glasses on. It's always giving me a fright.

But then this invitation letter from my classmate Billy Halflord arrives, saying that our B class is getting together again to think back on our beautiful years as students, and I can't resist. If only for the fact that lately we haven't been meeting in restaurants but instead at our class teacher Kolachie's house so that he doesn't have to trudge anywhere. And maybe it would have made Kolachie sad if I hadn't shown up.

His family house from late-fifties has a small entrance hall which wasn't expecting so many people and is full of our shoes now. We're taking them off and moving on to the living room, walking on a shabby Persian carpet in our stockinged feet.

We're saying hello to each other and our class teacher's eyes are watering. We have been calling him by his first name, Roman, already for a long time. His old dog's eyes are watering too, and besides, his fur stinks. Roman's wife, who passed away twenty years ago, is watching us from a large oil painting hanging above a couch. This suntanned beauty was something we all envied him. He loved her so much that he would sometimes take her to his lessons to show her his teaching.

This year's party started with a mystery that confused us all a little. There was a guy nobody knew. He was sitting among the girls, with a napkin on his knees, and stuffing himself with open sandwiches.

"Who's that?" I asked Halflord when we were smoking on the balcony.

"I don't know. A friend of Roman's perhaps. Or the husband of one of the girls."

Our classmate Cloddy was of the opinion that it could easily be Derfler who had been in our class for one term but then he had vanished. Anne Urban, who always had protuberant eyes but now they're almost touching her glasses, swore that it isn't Derfler and that it's not any of our girls' husband either.

"Roman says it's Sidel," someone said.

"Sidel!!! If he's Sidel, I'll eat my hat," said Halflord.

"Gentlemen, don't forget that we've changed. I can't even remember the last time Richie Sidel came to a reunion. All those years could have left marks like that on the poor fellow," said Cloddy watching the unfamiliar old-timer.

"Watch this," Halford raised his index finger and he shouted into the living room through a crack in the balcony door: "Richie!"

The old-timer didn't bat an eye so it wasn't Richie.

And so Knack downed his glass of white wine for courage and announced:

"I'll just go and ask him!" And all of us crowded into the room.

"Hey, excuse me," said Knack to the man, "but we're having a hard time remembering what your name is."

"Sidel," the old-timer replied. "I'm Richie Sidel's brother. He'd broken his leg so he sent me in his stead."

We gasped for breath. As nobody was expecting such an absurd answer, it immediately eased the atmosphere of the party. It was as if Sidel with his leg in plaster sent us proof, embodied by his brother, that the absurd is alive, of flesh and blood, drinking from our bottle and gulping down sandwiches.

"And how's Richie doing, has he retired yet?" asked our class teacher with interest.

"He broke his leg," said the brother with his mouth full and added nothing more.

I was watching this ingenuous stand-in, who hadn't gone through anything with us and yet he didn't hesitate to arrive here, was stroking the dog between his ears and feeling comfortable.

Stephanie Dew, who used to have such firm breasts that I relentlessly kept drawing them during lessons, brought hot sausages from the kitchen.

"Help yourselves, dear friends, before they get cold!" she said and licked her greasy finger.

I wanted to grab one but just then I realized that after petting the dog I couldn't so I made for the bathroom. There was a water closet with a cracked plastic toilet seat, plastered with shreds of band-aids, a dingy mirror and a sink with a flapjack of age-old rust. A fan rumbling in a loose bearing rippled a blackened cobweb. It was a widower's bathroom. When I was washing my hands with a cracky piece of soap, I suddenly realized that I must ask my class teacher a few things this very night. So as to learn about them before it's too late.

When Roman Kolachie became our class teacher, he was an inexperienced young man in a corduroy jacket. He had taught at elementary school before and we were his first high schoolers. A few lessons of Russian and civics were enough for us to realize that he wouldn't be difficult to deal with. For instance, as early as he told us that the Russian word for war is the same as the Czech one for the military service, my classmate Stephens was already putting his hand up:

"Comrade teacher, tell us another story from the time you were in the army, as you did last time."

"Yes!" the rest of us begged him.

And so Kolachie looked at his watch to check if he could afford an interlude like this, and he gladly dredged up a memory from his border guard service because it had been his most intense experience in life so far.

"After this really exhausting redeployment with full kits on, we assumed a firing position at the foot of the hill Stormer. Our company commander, first lieutenant Fellows - a great fellow by the way - wised us up about brand new binoculars which had just become a part of our arsenal. These binoculars were very special because when you assumed a prone position and looked through them, their optical system completely ignored grass blades in immediate proximity. As if there was no grass at all."

"It ain't possible!" said Stephens.

"I hadn't thought it was possible either but when First Lieutenant Fellows lent them to me and I focused through the grass lying prone, I saw just a clear panorama of Ore Mountains."

The whole of our treacherous class acted surprised, as if we were dying to try these wonderful binoculars out, and then Billy Halford raised his hand which always promised an unexpected point of view:

"Since we're talking about those binoculars, this summer we found binoculars in the attic at my grandma's, German ones, I mean left there by Germans, and these ones were in turn special because when you looked through them from one side, they made everything seem closer, as usual, but when you looked from the other side, everything was awfully far and terribly small."

Halford fulfilled our expectations.

Our class teacher helplessly looked at us and said:

"Now I don't know, Halford, if you're making fun of me or if you've never seen binoculars before."

"They were the very first binoculars I've ever held in my hands and they were this special," replied Halford with an explorer's enthusiasm and he wanted to go on but Cloddy, who sat behind him, made him sit down by tugging on his coat-tails and said: "Enough, dude."

Unlike our teacher Kolachie, we all knew that if it was Stephens talking about unusual German binoculars, it would be a well-faked naivety and a rather insolent test of the teacher's patience, whereas Billy Halford, he was pure innocence personified, with no ulterior motives.

Now, someone might get the impression from reading my memories that we didn't respect our class teacher. Well, we both did and didn't. As time passed, even the worst cynics in our B class realized that he was a good soul who was easily moved and that it's not necessary to needlessly hurt him. And he was also winning us over by putting in a good word for us.

"Hefton, I put in a good word for you with my fellow teacher Birch, so maybe, I repeat: m a y b e you won't fail in math," he said, for instance. And that was something because no one was able to mollify Birch, who I'm going to talk about again later.

He also interceded for us in the incident which went down in the history of our school as "tan your own comrade". It involved engineer Dullard who

taught us chemistry. This bald, pallid ghost, odorless and tasteless, who was nicknamed Goat's Fart for some reason, should have stayed in the chemical plant Litvínov instead of becoming a teacher because he had no talent for it. Dullard was hardly able to speak loud enough for the first row of desks, the rest of the class were out of luck and so they gravitated towards non-chemical amusements. And he was also kind of a jerk. While other teachers tolerated when we called them Mr. This or Mrs. That, Dullard called for a bad behavior mark for pupils who didn't address teachers as "Comrades".

The only thing I remember from his lessons was his statement that they who do not understand chemistry do not understand anything, because the whole world is just one big chemical process. That's probably why I still don't understand the world.

Well, this Mendeleev once came into the classroom all irritated because he had been cut out of the skiing course again, although his factory lungs would have surely deserved the fresh mountain air much more than any other lungs.

"Everyone will come back from the mountains tanned as Ashantis, only I will still be pale," he said. And he shouldn't have said that because that was just the sentence which gave Roughton the idea of giving him a tan.

The very next day, he replaced the lightbulb above the blackboard with a sunlamp. In order not to suffer from the radiation, some of us protected our eyes with transparent green rulers but it wasn't necessary because the lamp shone from above practically only on Dullard's bald head. It got a healthy color right after the first lesson of chemistry and by the second one, Dullard's head began to peel. Unfortunately, Roughton didn't manage to remove the sunlamp before the A class, with their female chemistry teacher Weiss, had their lesson there. And she recognized the radiation by its smell. She ordered the sunlamp to be unscrewed and then she brought it to Dullard in his room. She reportedly said: "Now it's clear why your head is like a ham hock." And when she was leaving, Ashanti Goat's Fart went out of the room and yelled out in the corridor: "And it's also damn clear that someone's goin' to be thrown out for this!"

And it was our class teacher Kolachie who swore to find the offender and who also saw to it that none was ever found. I very accurately remember what he told us back then:

"What you did to Comrade Dullard was deplorable and life-threatening, and your good intention to tan the comrade is no excuse either. The one who concocted this should feel ashamed and be very glad that nobody from this class, I repeat: n o b o d y knows whose idea it was, because one student can be expelled from school but the whole class cannot."

And thanks to these golden words, Roughton was able to finish his studies.

Now, he's sitting next to our hunched class teacher and he just borrowed a pair of glasses from him to examine a miniature black-and-white photo 6x6, which were common back then.

I need to get to Kolachie before he falls asleep because he usually lasts two hours and then he closes his eyes and we must go on talking without him.

One more memory has come back to me now but actually this one I could say aloud. What's curious about these reunions is that we tell stories we all know, we just refresh them. And so I join the conversation:

"Do you remember what Halford said when Stalin died?"

"Well, it's nice, tell it," someone agrees and so I'm telling the story about the year 1953 when one day newspapers came out with Iosif Vissarionovich in a black frame and Prague turned into a city covered in black cloth, as was usual in fairy tales when a princess got eaten by a dragon. Mourning music was streaming from the radios for many days while gloomy broadcasters were announcing that the body of the greatest leader of the proletariat would be embalmed and laid in a mausoleum on Red Square, right next to the body of Comrade Lenin. And just at that time of mourning of the whole socialist camp, an inspector came to our class during a civics lesson.

"Don't you even remind me of this, I couldn't sleep for three nights after," says our class teacher but apparently he'll gladly take a listen, too, because otherwise, he wouldn't have put his palm to his ear to hear everything well.

So I keep on telling the story, how the inspector with a black mourning tie around his neck and a solemn look of bereavement on his face sat for a while behind the teacher's desk and then he stood up and said: "If you let me, Comrade Kolachie, I'd like to ask a couple of things. We all know what a terrible loss has befallen us. Does anybody know how the body of deceased Comrade Stalin is going to be taken care of?"

There was a moment of silence while Kolachie was fixing his imploring eyes upon us. Then Halford's eager hand sprang up and our class teacher's eyes blinked in terror.

"Yes, go ahead," said the inspector.

"The body of deceased comrade Stalin isn't goin' to be buried in a normal grave, it's goin' to be stuffed an' displayed in that... in that panopticon on Red Square."

It's funny now but nobody laughed back then.

The inspector gulped and gave our class teacher a questioning look.

"You mean in a mausoleum," said Kolachie.

"Yes!" agreed Halford.

"But you said in a panopticon," the inspector raised his voice.

"I did say it but I didn't wanna," said Halford.

"What's your name?" the inspector took out of his breast pocket a black notepad provided with a little black pencil in a little black side tube.

"Halford William."

"What does your father do, boy?"

"My father is a painter," replied Billie.

"Look at that, a painter..." the inspector nodded his head as if this explained a lot, and he wrote something down.

"Of houses," added Halford, undermining the inspector's deduction.

“Comrade Inspector,” Kolachie ventured to step in, sweat bursting upon his forehead, “Halford suffered a severe concussion and as a consequence, he’s sometimes unable to recall the right words. His father is an exemplary worker of the Paintflat cooperative who painted our classroom on his own time during the holidays.”

This took us aback. We didn’t know that Billie had suffered a concussion or that his father had painted the classroom.

The inspector cast his eyes over the walls of the classroom and snapped his notepad shut.

“These are serious times,” he said, not to us but to Teacher Kolachie. “And it’s advisable to weigh one’s words carefully. Not being serious in serious times may result in serious consequences.”

Our teacher gestured us to stand up as the inspector left the classroom at a gloomy pace.

“That’s a good story!” laughed Sidel’s brother, the only one who wasn’t there, and he tipsily asked when the next reunion would be because he would hate to miss it.

After this recollection of Stalin’s demise, Kev Hefton made a telling wordless gesture at me and so we went to the balcony to smoke a cigarette. And this was where we finally talked about our teacher of math and descriptive geometry, Robert Birch. Chess players might be familiar with his name because he excelled in this sport.

This silent, always smartly-dressed slim man had the gift of creating an atmosphere of unease in the class in a way which has remained puzzling to me. During his lessons, the dread thickened to a point where you couldn’t breathe. And all this despite the fact that the man never raised his voice and you could say he was shy. He never looked girls in the eye. He was able to look us in the eye but when he examined a girl in math, he was looking at the ceiling or the floor. He had stern brown eyes in which not a single spark of a smile ever glistened. The silence during his math lessons was absolute. Someone dared to whisper only when he was writing on the blackboard with his back to us, but even then it only took Birch just to silently turn his head round and the whispering would die away.

It happened just once, the only time that he laughed. And we’re not even sure about that.

Hefton was being examined in front of the blackboard. He was being deprived of his logical reasoning by the fear he would fail in math and it was making him tremble. Birch was paralyzing him like a cobra paralyzes a mouse. Hefton broke the chalk while writing, he was wiping off what he wrote with a rag and his sweaty hand, and then he gave up and fixed his helpless eyes on the teacher.

“Sit down,” said Birch drily.

And Hefton – not because he wanted to be funny but because he was a hypnotized mouse – sat down on the dais.

After that we weren’t able to hold it in anymore and burst out laughing. And in that moment, Birch turned his back to us, looked out from a window,

and some say they weren't, but I swear that his shoulders were slightly shaking with stifled laughter.

This was one human moment in the behavior of this ice-cold man. I noticed the second one during my oral school-leaving exam when I was solving an equation and Birch was sitting on the chair next to me. I was moving 2a from one side of the equation to the other and I forgot to change the sign. And suddenly I felt pressure on my right shoe. I thought it very unlikely but it was true: Birch trod on my foot under the table so that I would add a minus.

These two instances make me believe that Robert Birch wasn't a tyrant but rather that his horrible strictness was perfectly pretended.

There was one more trifle concerning Birch which was making us all wonder. A single, mysterious word. Sometimes it happened that our class teacher came to our math lesson to tell us something urgent about the parent-teacher association or about a hops-picking or hay-raking voluntary job. These occasional visits always ended by Kolachie's apology for interrupting the lesson and, as he was leaving, he hardly audibly said to Birch with a smile: "Old ways!" And Birch also said in his dry voice "Old ways!" and something subtly crossed his face at that, something that almost looked like a smile.

We always kept arguing about this little word. Some thought that it wasn't "old ways" but "hallways". That didn't make sense. Birch always carried old set squares and ancient pointed sticks to his lessons of descriptive geometry in order to give us an idea of how flat lines look in three-dimensional space. And of course, this wasn't among the most recent teaching methods.

Hefton and I have just finished smoking and wanted to leave the balcony when the old dog slipped in through the door and in a shroud of his smell emerged our class teacher Kolachie.

"What are you up to, smokers?"

"Birch is what we're talkin' about. Roman, what was he like? Was he fun sometimes?" I say.

"Robert? That guy was great. But you weren't supposed to know that. Do you know what he used to say? That for teachers, a classroom is a stage and a school staffroom a dressing room. That's where teachers remove their make-up and stop acting. He was a sex maniac for instance."

"Birch? A sex maniac?" Hefton gasped for breath.

"You bet. It was an ordeal for him to teach at a high school. I remember what he said when he got back from one lesson and threw his briefcase on a table: Why must Stephanie Dew sit in the front row with such a name and such protruding breasts? Why don't you reseat her? Who can stand this? This is not teaching, this is heroism!"

"Are you talking 'bout me?" asked Dew from the room, now married to Yeast, who has just been passing around photos of her six grandchildren.

"Nope!" said Hefton and he closed the door.

"And what about that greeting of yours, Roman? Did you use to say old ways or hallways?" I asked.

Our teacher smiled and hesitated a little:

"Well, we're men and Robert is in Olšany cemetery anyway... Once, when we celebrated the Teacher's day, he got into a talkative mood and he told me about his most intense erotic experience. As you know, he was a great chess player and attended many tournaments. And once he was invited to a championship in some mansion in the Krč district of Prague. He was supposed to ring the doorbell and say the password: Queen's gambit. Robert went there and when they let him in and locked the door, he found himself at a get-together where there were more women chess players than men and that these ladies had no clue what a gambit is because they were not at all chess players. Robert simply ended up at a sexual party."

"Orgy!" Hefton exclaimed it in astonishment.

"Yup. And one of those 'female participants' bewitched him. And while they were making love at the party, Robert whispered to her if she would like to meet him some other time and somewhere else, just the two of them. And she said: You? Always!"

"As 'anytime'?" I made sure.

"Yeah. Robert couldn't forget about that. And that is why we kept greeting each other that way," our class teacher smiled and yawned.

We returned to the room because the floor tiles on the balcony had already gotten cold and they chilled us in our stockinged feet. Roman sank into his armchair and fell asleep.

I was happy that I hadn't skipped this reunion. We carefully woke up our class teacher at midnight and said goodbye.

Outside, it was a starlit night. Our class teacher stood in front of the door and he watched us leaving. We had no idea that this would be the last time we'd ever see him.

"So next year at your place again, Roman!" shouted Billy Halford.

"Always!" replied our class teacher and waved goodbye.

4. Macroanalysis of the Translation

In order to meet the translation topic of this Thesis, its author chose short story *Sraz naší třídy* from book *Nové povídky* written by scenarist, actor and writer Zdeněk Svěrák. The choice of the original literary text was made on the ground of two main criteria: first, the original had to be written in an interesting language and based on an interesting plot which would offer various translation issues to deal with, e.g., translation of proper names, distinguishing between language registers, wordplays, etc. Second, it was necessary that the official translation of the original had not existed up to the date of writing this Thesis, as this might have raised questions about the authenticity of the translation presented in the Thesis. The chosen short story fulfilled both of these conditions and, in addition, it created an opportunity to translate the text in a less usual direction, i.e., from mother tongue into a foreign language.

Let us introduce the author of the original short story in more detail. Zdeněk Svěrák, nationally renowned especially for his work in Žižkovské divadlo Jára Cimrmana, was born on March 28, 1936 in Prague¹². After having graduated from the Faculty of Education, he worked as a teacher for several years before he became established in the field of filmmaking and theater. Among popular Czech films he contributed to, be it as an actor or as a screenwriter, there are for example *Marečku, podejte mi pero*, *Obecná škola* or *Kolja* (in 1996, this film became the only Czech motion picture awarded famous Oscar prize)¹³. His unmistakable sense of humor and world view, often described as

kind, poetic and intelligent, indisputably ranks him among prominent Czech filmmakers and writers.

Being already Svěrák's second collection of short stories, *Nové povídky* follows its successful predecessor simply titled *Povídky*. Illustrated by a longtime fellow of Svěrák from the already mentioned theater company, Jaroslav Weigel, *Nové povídky* was published in 2011 by Fragment publishing house¹⁴. It contains nine short stories of ten pages each in average. Narrated in first person about a reunion of former classmates after several decades, the short story *Sraz naší třídy* gently depicts, with a pleasant combination of nostalgia and humor, the course of a fictional evening, which mainly consists of recalling stories from the school years past.

As well as the whole book, this short story is intended for adult readers – especially for older generations as these are most able to identify with the atmosphere of the story and its characters. Moreover, the story contains references to the events and the whole ambiance of the socialistic Czechoslovakia, which again may be more appreciated by older readers thanks to their own life experiences. To give an example, we can mention the episode of the school inspector coming into class during the time of mourning for Stalin¹⁵, an allusion to hops-picking or hay-raking voluntary jobs¹⁶ or addressing teachers "Comrades". Another proof of the Svěrák's target readers being adults are wordplays; the final episode in the short story is based on a paronymic pun¹⁷ and the author generally uses a rather original vocabulary

which might not be familiar to a child: "[...] a shabby Persian carpet [...]"¹⁸, "[...] such an absurd answer [...]"¹⁹, "[...] panopticon [...] mausoleum [...]"²⁰ and more. Finally, obvious targeting on the adult readers is demonstrated by an erotic topic at the end of the story.

Among other topics Svěrák deal with in his book there are, for instance, musing on the contrast between a child's innocent worldview and a socially-burdened perception of an adult (short story *Betlémské světlo*²¹), a humorous story about an occasional need to use vulgar language (*O slušném taxikáři*²²) or despairing at single, never-repeated encounter with an unknown beauty in the streets (*Ujetá láska*²³). In addition, several short stories are interconnected by the Svěrák's specific weakness for women (e.g., short stories *Nákup*²⁴, *Lázně Mokřady*²⁵, *Ujetá láska*²⁶), which, for example, can be also seen in his most recent screenwriting endeavor *Vratné láhve* (translated into English as "Empties"); Svěrák himself plays the lead role of an elderly man with a youthful zest for life in all areas.

5. Microanalysis of the Translation

In this chapter, we will focus on the analysis of the translation itself and chosen translation solutions. The translation microanalysis will be divided into several subchapters: first, we will analyze the text as a whole and then we will discuss individual thematic sections associated with the particular translation solutions.

Among these issues there are grammatical perspective, especially concerning verb tenses, reflections on proper names and their translation, comparison of the formal and informal language register and re-stylizing the original in order to aptly express the authorial intent. Finally, we will mention a helpful assistance of several people of different nationalities and their contribution to the translation outcome.

Since this chapter describes the personal translation solutions of the author of this Thesis, we will use the first person in order to avoid awkward impersonal constructions.

5.1. General Description of the Translation Process

As mentioned above, the original text was chosen on the grounds of the language variety, interesting episodic themes and appropriate length of the story as well – the original extends to approximately 10 pages of A5 format. I made the translation in several phases: first, I attentively read the original,

carefully thought about its plot and characters and estimated difficult or creatively interesting passages of the text. Subsequently, searching for the particular solutions for these and other translation issues (such as translation of proper names, re-stylizing, etc.) was a running process.

In the next phase, I drew up the first, "rough" translation of the short story. Considering it more flowing and natural, I decided to use the American English. Afterward, I set the draft aside for several weeks in order to acquire more objective perspective for the text revision. This revision helped me correct various mistakes, often of carelessness, and awkward wording or formulations. At the same time, I looked into the individual translation solutions of mine in more detail and tried to find the optimal ones. Thanks to this, I was able to create the second, presentable version of the translation.

This very version was sent to several English speaking consultants, including three native speakers, who were disposed to read my translation and comment on the text in general, alternatively suggesting minor changes to the text. These remarks (see Foreign consultants) were taken into consideration for the final version of the translation.

5.2. Grammatical Issues

The previous subchapter describes two phases of making my translation. Especially during the second one, I minutely examined the individual language phenomena, using reliable online sources dealing with English (including

linguistic discussion forum WordReference.com, where native speakers answer various language issues, or question & answer site StackExchange.com, which regularly publishes erudite articles on language) as well as English grammar textbook *Advanced Grammar in Use* written by Martin Hewings and published by Cambridge University Press (see Sources). On the basis of this research on the more complicated language phenomena occurring in the draft, I chose at my discretion the most appropriate translation solutions.

Let us now give several examples which illustrate choosing between two or more variants of solutions, together with commentary and references to sources:

[...] pohledem na holky, po kterých jsem toužil [...]²⁷

-

[...] looking at the girls I used to **yearn** for [...]²⁸

Despite its potentially archaic vibe, the verb "to yearn for" is quite commonly used in English, and unlike "to long for" it means a wish, a desire for something the speaker never had.²⁹

To se vždycky leknu.³⁰

-

It's always **giving me a fright**.³¹

The chosen variant of more colloquial sound "to give sb a fright" adequately projected the narrator's tone in the original. Although the action denoted by the

verb is repeated, I used the present progressive tense to emphasize negative feelings of the narrator about the action. This is particularly typical in combination with the adverb "always".³²

Asi Romanův kamarád.³³

-

A friend of Roman's perhaps.³⁴

Between the variants "a Roman's friend" and "a friend of Roman's", I ultimately chose the latter because it implies "one of many". The former indicates a very strong relationship between two people and even might suggest intimacy.³⁵

[...] zbytek třídy měl smůlu [...]³⁶

-

[...] so the rest of the class **were** out of luck [...]³⁷

The verb "to be" is used here in the plural form to emphasize individuals in a collective.³⁸

5.3. Language Registers

The narrating style Svěrák chose for this short story is a direct involvement of a subjective narrator who speaks to the reader in first person and describes the story from his point of view, evoking a feeling of the author talking about his own experiences. This is supported by the used language

register – even descriptive passages with no direct speech are written in an informal, almost colloquial language. In order to preserve this style of an elderly person telling their memoirs, I tried to choose suitable lexicon and use linguistic structural elements typical for English. Among these elements there are words with colloquial sound on the one hand, on the other hand, it includes contractions, which are very typical for the spoken English because they impart natural character to the speech and make it more fluent at the cost of shifting it to a lower language register. Another proof of the colloquial character of the narration is starting sentences with conjunctions and linking words. Let us demonstrate this with the following examples:

[...] nabyl jsem jistoty, že se musím svého třídního zeptat na pár věcí. Aby se nestalo, že se je nikdy nedovím.³⁹

-

[...] I suddenly realized that I must ask my class teacher a few things this very night. **So as to** learn about them before **it's** too late.⁴⁰

[...] a my jsme byli jeho první středoškoláci.⁴¹

-

[...] and we were his first **high schoolers**.⁴²

Z mých vzpomínek by někdo mohl mít dojem, že jsme si svého třídního nevážili. Nevážili i vážili.⁴³

-

Now, someone might get the impression from reading my memories that we **didn't** respect our class teacher. **Well**, we both did and **didn't**.⁴⁴

Tento holohlavý, bledý duch bez chuti a zápachu, kterému se bůhvíproč přezdívalo Kozí prd [...] ⁴⁵

-

This bald, pallid ghost, odorless and tasteless, who was nicknamed Goat's Fart for some reason [...] ⁴⁶

A tehdy se profesor Habr obrátil zády k nám [...] ⁴⁷

-

And in that moment, Birch turned his back to us [...] ⁴⁸

Byl jsem rád, že jsem tenhle sraz nevynechal. ⁴⁹

-

I was happy that **I hadn't** skipped this reunion. ⁵⁰

Also, it was necessary to adequately translate a number of very colloquial expressions figuring in the direct speeches. In order to keep a contrast between the narration and the direct speeches, I presumed to use slang Americanisms, very informal contractions and relaxed pronunciation. Examples of these phenomena:

„Sajdl!!! Tohle jestli je Sajdl, tak já jsem papež,“ řekl Půlpán.⁵¹

-

“Sidel!!! If **he’s** Sidel, **I’ll eat my hat**,” said Halflord.⁵²

„Já se ho normálně zeptám!“⁵³

-

“**I’ll** just go and ask him!”⁵⁴

„To není možný!“ řekl Štefánek.⁵⁵

-

“It **ain’t** possible!” said Stephens.⁵⁶

[...] ale když jste se koukli z druhé strany, tak bylo všechno strašně daleko a strašně malinký.“⁵⁷

-

[...] but when you looked from the other side, everything was **awfully** far and **terribly** small.“⁵⁸

„To stačí, vole.“⁵⁹

-

“Enough, **dude**.”⁶⁰

„A už je taky jasný, že za to někdo vyletí ze školy!“⁶¹

-

“And **it’s** also **damn** clear that **someone’s goin’** to be thrown out for this!”⁶²

„Ano, ale nerad,“ řekl Půlpán.⁶³

-

“I did say it but I **didn’t wanna**,” said Halflord.⁶⁴

„O Habrovi si povídáme. Romane, jakej on byl? Byla s ním někdy sranda?“
povídám.⁶⁵

-

“Birch is what **we’re talkin’** about. Roman, what was he like? Was he fun
sometimes?” I say.⁶⁶

„Jo. [...]

„Jo. [...]⁶⁷

-

“Yup. [...]

“Yeah. [...]⁶⁸

5.4. Re-stylizing the Original

As well as his other stories, Svěrák bases this short story on the word plays. Strictly speaking, these word plays obviously cannot be transferred literally into the target language. In reference to the above-mentioned theoretical principles of translation – the criterion of keeping the authorial intent – it was necessary to aptly re-stylize the original.

I had to resort to this particular translation solution, for example, at the beginning of the story where Svěrák originally writes "že vojna znamená rusky válka [...]"⁶⁹. This subtle language comment needed to be explained in more detail for the English speaking reader:

For instance, as early as he told us that the Russian word for war is the same as the Czech one for the military service [...]⁷⁰

I also opted for re-stylizing another of the plot episodes which tells a story about a school inspector coming into the classroom during the time of mourning for deceased Stalin and asking the students where the Comrade's body will be buried. In the Czech original, the ridiculousness of the situation is based on mistaking the words "mauzoleum" and "panoptikum" which might be for their foreign language origin difficult to understand for a high school student, making the whole confusion believable. However, while the first word can be translated directly as "a mausoleum", the second exists in English as 'a freak show' or 'a collection of curiosities'. As a result, such dissimilar

formulations render the mistaking extremely unlikely. Therefore, I abandon efforts of translating the second word faithfully and used the word "a panopticon" (meaning "a circular jailhouse with an inspection house at its center and cells around") instead, which made it possible to preserve the word play more adequately.⁷¹

A more extensive re-stylizing was needed at the end of the story – the final episode concerning mathematics teacher Birch is based on the resemblance of the Czech words "dycinky", "tyčinky" a "tři činky". Since the narrator gives reasons for mistaking these words on the grounds of their meaning (Birch carries to his lessons "[...] tyčinky s hrotem na jednom konci, kterým se zabodly do tabule, abychom viděli, jak přímky narýsované křídou na černou plochu vypadají v trojrozměrném prostoru."⁷²), I needed to modify the original text and re-stylize the whole above cited paragraph in such a way to keep the intended word play. In order to achieve this, I used the English words "always, "old ways" and "hallways" and accordingly adjusted the text as follows:

We always kept arguing about this little word. Some thought that it wasn't "old ways" but "hallways". That didn't make sense. Birch always carried old set squares and ancient pointed sticks to his lessons of descriptive geometry in order to give us an idea of how flat lines look in three-dimensional space. And of course, this wasn't among the most recent teaching methods.⁷³

5.5. Proper names

More or less important to the plot, a great number of characters were introduced in the Svěrák's short story. In the majority, their names contain a certain degree of peculiarity or semantic value. For this reason, after my own consideration and with taking Jiří Levý's advice (see above) into account, I eventually decided to transfer the proper names into English in order to preserve the impressions of individual characters in association with their names for the readers of the target text.

In these cases, concerning especially the characters' surnames, I strived to grasp a notional word serving as a root of the name or a substantial impression that the name gave. Following this method, I then created several variants of English sounding surnames for each of the characters and subsequently selected the best one considering the real occurrence of the names in the United States of America or United Kingdom. For this purpose, I consulted the on-line surname databases AmericanLastNames.us and AmericanSurnames.us (see Sources).

Also, to keep the translation consistent throughout the whole text, it was necessary to translate even the proper names the semanticity of which was not that evident because keeping them in their original forms might have been too disruptive. The characters' first names indisputably fall into this category. Those used in the story mostly did not have direct equivalents among English names; therefore, I based my translations on the etymology. Searching the Internet, I learned the original meaning of the first name in Czech and then

looked it up in an etymological list of English names, e.g., on the websites BehindTheName.com or 20000-Names.com (see Sources). Again, I took into consideration the name frequency, which I verified for example using the website BabyNames.AllParenting.com (see Sources).

One exception to the above-mentioned procedure were the proper names of municipalities or their parts whose names did not contain any characterizing elements and there do not exist an official translation into English (compare Praha → Prague x Krč, Litvínov). Although the Czech diacritical marks may be confusing to English readers, I decided to keep them so that the text remained more authentic.

The concrete examples and commentary:

Ladislav/Láďa Půlpán – William/Billy Halford

This character gave me the impression of being good-natured or even naive but also endowed with a great enthusiasm and indisputable organizational abilities. As described in the short story, the reunions take place mainly thanks to Halford. On the other hand, the recollections of the school years depicted him as a confused boy who spoke before he thought. Altogether – with regard to his name – Halford may be characterized as an even nobly benign person, although of uncomplicated nature.

Initially, I took into consideration the etymological roots of the name. Ladislav is a variant of another Czech first name, Vladislav, meaning "famous

for his reign". Looking for a similar attribute in English names, I was able to find only the name "Basil/Bas"; being clearly of a French origin, this variant was contrary to the traditional character of the original name.⁷⁴

Based on the general knowledge, I derived that first name Ladislav was quite frequent in the period when this persona was born, also thanks to its Czech traditional character. On the other hand, it became sounding tedious as a result, with an undertow of flatness or lack of intellect. For these reasons, I finally opted for English first name William and its diminutive form Billy.

The surname was translated almost literally, with intent to preserve its apt semantic value in Czech as well as its euphony. I also considered Halfaman or Halfman; however, these do not contain the trace of the character's nobility and, on the contrary, sound too pejorative. The variant Semisir was ruled out because of its apparent unnaturalness.⁷⁵

Roman Koláček – Roman Kolachie

The character of an old class teacher was portrayed as kind, peaceful and safe. In my opinion, these attributes were intensified by the diminutive surname meaning a sweet bakery product, that is why I wanted to keep this aspect in the translation, too, taking into account the phonetic quality of the original. Therefore, I translated the surname as Kolachie which is derived from the existing English word "kolach", an accurate equivalent of the Czech word

"koláč". The suffix -ie transforms the surname into a diminutive form while providing euphonic prolongation in pronunciation.

Being common in English speaking countries, too, I kept the first name Roman in the same form as appearing in the original. Analyzing the name etymology, I learned that its meaning is indeed "Roman", which gave me the idea of using first name Julian because this name is even more frequent; nevertheless, it deviates from the original and, in my view, harms the consonance of the first and last name.⁷⁶

Hrouda - Cloddy

I derived this surname on the basis of semantics, which brought me to the English word "clod" (literally meaning "hrouda" in Czech). Using the online database of surnames, I found several variants of real surnames with the same root, among which Cloddy and Clodder were the most acceptable. However, since Hrouda was introduced in the same sentence as another character with a surname of no semantic value, Derfler, I chose Cloddy in order to avoid repetition of the same suffix.⁷⁷

Libuše Urbánková – Anne Urban

On the basis of etymology and traditional character, I replaced Libuše by English first name Anne – both names originally mean "lovely" and their historic tradition is provable.

In my opinion, surname Urbánková does not imply any meaning relevant to the story or the character. To meet the orthographic and pronunciation aspect of the word, I chose the translation Urban which can be considered as common in the USA.⁷⁸

Slávek Sajdl – Richie Sidel

In this case, I again used the etymological method and discovered that the Czech full first name Jaroslav means "important" or "famous for his power". A similar meaning is contained in the English variant Richard, the diminutive of which, Richie, I used in the story.

Concerning the surname, I focused on the pronunciation because I had not found any important semantic aspect in the name. Because of the Sidel's brother who acts as a gourmand in the story, the surname gave me the impression of suggesting food or lard; however, basing the translation on this unsupported impression would have accentuated it to an excessive degree. Surname Sidel really exists in the USA and I assessed its Jewish origin as not disturbing.⁷⁹

Antoušek - Knack

Since this character was mentioned in the story only once, the translation of this character's name was not essential. However, it was necessary to hold to the chosen methodology; therefore, I translated the name as follows:

According to the below mentioned article published on the website *Naše řeč*, surname Antoušek became a synonym for the Czech words "ras, pohodný" in some regions of the Czech lands in the past (thanks to a historical figure of this name who performed this function). Next, I looked up these words in a dictionary and found "a knacker". Finally, I browsed through the on-line surname database and selected surname Knack for this character.⁸⁰

Štěpánka Rosová - Stephanie Dew

Czech first name Štěpánka has a direct equivalent among English names - Stephanie - which matches the original on the etymological level (both names mean "crowned, wreathed"), sounds similar and is similarly long.

The surname was translated on the basis of the Czech word "rosa" (meaning "dew" in English) which is evidently recognizable in the original name. This word implies freshness or exuberance, which corresponds to the attractive look of this character in her youth. Besides, surname Dew really exists in the United States.⁸¹

Štefánek - Stephens

Translating this surname, I followed a similar method as above because Štefan is one of the male variants of first name Štěpánka (therefore, Stephanie → Stephen). The on-line surname database confirmed that a usual form of the surname based on Stephen is Stephens so I used this variant.⁸²

vrch Bouřňák - Stormer

This hill really existing in the Ore Mountains (Czech mountain range "Krušné hory") and not being just a fictitious name based on a semantic value, I considered leaving the original form of the name even in the translation. Eventually, I decided to translate the name because the original form would have been disruptive to the consistency of translation - I kept the original forms of names in two rare cases only. Furthermore, the pronunciation would have been difficult for the target readers, even if the diacritics had been removed. Therefore, I took into account an official German translation, Stürmer, and chose the translation solution Stormer, among other variants Stormy Hill and Storman.⁸³

Moník - Fellows

Officer Moník appears in the story only tangentially within a memory of class teacher Kolachie so I presumed to approach the translation more freely. As a matter of fact, the name resembles a paronym "maník" (meaning "a guy, fellow, dude" in English) which served as a basis for my translation. In addition, surname Fellows really occurs in the USA according to the on-line surname database. Another variant was Tommy, meaning both "a guy" and "a private", which would have corresponded with the military role of the character; however, Fellows had a better sound quality and, in addition, this solution made it possible to create a subtle word play in the sentence introducing this character: "Our company commander, first lieutenant Fellows - a great fellow by the way [...]".⁸⁴

Krušné Hory - Ore Mountains

The mountain range "Krušné hory" has an official translation into English, the Ore Mountains, so I did not hesitate to use this variant in order to stay as consistent concerning the proper names as possible throughout the whole translation.⁸⁵

Míla Musil – Kev Hefton

Lacking an accurate English equivalent, this character's first name required greater efforts in order to be translated adequately. Again, I relied on the name etymology: Czech name Miloslav originally means "famous for his mercy", which led me to a popular English first name, Kevin, meaning "merciful, beloved, gentle". Then I found a diminutive form of the name, Kev, which corresponded to the original.

Although surname Musil does not contain any semantic value relevant to the story, I took as a basis of my translation a similarly sounding Czech verb "muset/musit" which had undoubtedly served as an etymological foundation of this Czech surname. As regards English, I preferred the equivalent verb "have to" to "must", creating two variants of the surname as a result: Haveman and Hefton. Both of these surnames really exist; however, the onomatopoeic value of full name Kev Hefton convinced me of using the latter variant, despite it being less frequent than the former.⁸⁶

Robert Habr – Robert Birch

The character of Robert Habr is described in the story as being cold, reserved and stern, which is strongly supported by his name containing hard consonants "r" and "b" and guttural "h". I intended to keep this aspect in the translation as well so I used first name Robert unmodified (being popular in the

English speaking world). As for the surname, I thought of the direct translation "hornbeam" (meaning "habr" in Czech) at first – it has the sound of the original but its length might have weakened the force of the one-syllable original. Since I did not regard the denotative meaning of the word as important to the story, I began looking for the desired result in other English names of trees. This decision brought me to three surname variants - Alder, Birch a Fir. In the end, I brushed away the first variant because of it being two-syllable and the last one for not being pronounced in the desired way. Therefore, I selected the second variant which in connection with the first name – Robert Birch – most fittingly fulfilled the above-mentioned requirements.

Ďurič – Dullard

It was complicated to translate this character's name. In the story, Ďurič is depicted as a sickly, dull, pedantic and even mean character. For the purpose of expressing these negative qualities by the character's name as well, Svěrák thought up a very apt surname which makes the character seem unpleasant at first sight. This feeling is created by the contrast between consonants with háček (a typically Czech diacritical mark also called a caron or a wedge) and the hard alveolar "r". In addition, soft "d'" is rarely used in Czech, especially at the initial position of a word.

Initially, I strived to translate the name on the basis of an assumed root of the original, "díra" (meaning "a hole" in English). However, I did not succeed to

find a sufficiently suitable equivalent in English which would not excessively emphasize the denotative meaning of this word. Therefore, I focused on translating the name considering its sound. Original "Ďurič" contains a cacophonous cluster of phones, which inspired me to search for cacophonous words in English. I browsed through the below-mentioned Internet forum and chose the words which were in some way related to the original name; semantically or impressionally. However, such words either concerned the name too marginally (such as "a gash" - trhlina, průrva, šrám or "a dollop" - kydanec, plesknout) or there does not exist real surnames derived from them (e.g., Vapid - nijaký, nemastný neslaný).

The last example eventually led me to base the translation on the most peculiar quality to the character: dullness (or indistinctiveness, grayness). Therefore, I eventually used the English adjective "dull" as a base for my translation. Having consulted the on-line surname database, I selected derivation "Dullard" which is really used in the USA.⁸⁷

Kvasilová - Yeast

This surname was assumed by Štěpánka Rosová after marriage. In my opinion, Svěrák, using a kind irony, intended to point out a change in the character's appearance over the course of years. For this reason, I chose to translate this surname on the basis of the Czech verb "kvasit" which is clearly reflected in the original. In addition, American surname Yeast really exists.⁸⁸

Krč - ...in the Krč district of Prague

Litvínov - the chemical plant Litvinov

Olšany - Olšany cemetery

These toponyms are the only exception from my translation solution of transferring all proper names into English; they do not have any official English translations and in these cases, basing the translation on the German expressions seemed unwieldy. However, in order to ensure a clarity of these names, I added explanatory general expressions.

Hrubeš - Roughton

I again chose the method of taking into consideration the root of the surname - Czech adjective "hrubý" (meaning "rough, coarse" in English) in this case - and follow-up searching for an existing American surname of the same root. The on-line surname database suggested surname Roughton which I ultimately used in the translation.⁸⁹

Malbyt - Paintflat

Acronym Malbyt is a representative of word blending typical for the period of socialism in the past century, not only in Czechoslovakia. Therefore, it

was necessary to try transferring this phenomenon into English translation as well. To do this, I needed to find as short and as percussive English translation equivalents as possible. On the basis of this method, I created the English acronym version, Paintflat.

5.6. Foreign consultants

With the intention to create a translation as successful as possible, I asked six willing friends of foreign origins to assume a role of external consultants, read my translation and send it back with an evaluation and commentary. Among these consultants there are:

Devika Krnad, a native of Mumbai, India, who studies English literature at the University of Mumbai. Her feedback was very elaborate and helpful, she pointed out a great number of grammatical mistakes and suggested several stylistic adjustments. Apart from her objection to the excessive American slang words in direct speeches, Devika writes in her summarizing commentary: "I absolutely love this short story; I finished it in the train this morning because it was so interesting! I really like a lot of the vocabulary you have used, they capture the story perfectly."

Rosalia Maier-Katkin, a native speaker living in Washington, D.C. and working as Research Assistant at Georgetown University. Her insight helped

me structure certain sentences more naturally, choose more appropriate synonyms and correct grammatical issues. Rosalia sums the translation up as follows: "[...] I actually enjoyed reading the story. It definitely has that sverak voice. I used track changes, let me know if you have trouble seeing my edits. Also don't be discouraged by all of the corrections I made. They were mostly just small tense changes and questions about word choice. It was overall really well done!"

Tutuwaa Sarpong, of Ghana origin, who studied foreign languages at Západočeská univerzita (ZČU) and now works as a Customer Care Specialist for an international company. Tutuwaa drew my attention to several mistakes in the translation and suggested alternative solutions.

David Eugene Franklin, B. A., coming from the USA and being a member of the academic staff at ZČU. In addition to an overall evaluation of the translation, David helped me with language registers in direct speeches and pointed out mistakes concerning verb tenses. In his words: "[...] it's very good. The verb tenses do not need to be 100% correct if they appear in a direct quotation -- it sounds colloquial in the correct way. I would say in general you have a very good feel of what colloquial spoken English should sound like."

Christine Cutajar, being of Malta origin and working as a freelance English teacher. Thanks to her commentary, I was able to find and avoid several ambiguities in the plot. I received the following response, in points:

"- great introduction!

- very descriptive, imaginative, original stories, and expressions all make it interesting to read:)

- a lot of minute detail and short stories change very fast which made it difficult to follow at times"

Dmitry Bogomolov, living in Ryazan, Russia and working as an IT specialist. In his opinion, the translation was well-done, he complimented the word play with surname Fellows and pointed out the potentially unclear expression "socialist peace camp".

Thanks to this significant assistance, I was able to finish the translation in a form more natural to a native speaker. This version is included in this Thesis as well. This way, I want to sincerely thank all the above-mentioned consultants.

6. Conclusion

As already mentioned in the Introduction, the principal aim of this Thesis was to create a translation of a literary text. Considering the character of the chosen original short story, which does not limit itself to an uncomplicated plot or a plain language, the attempt to achieve the determined objective involved certain demands and a need of an insight into the field of translation. Therefore, it was necessary to read up on the theory of literary translation in order to provide a methodical basis for choosing adequate translation solutions, as well as to enable the author of this Thesis to understand better the interlingual translation.

Thus, the benefit of the practical application – the translation itself – is evident; thanks to this, it was possible to try creatively solving the individual translation issues, which required a correct comprehension of the authorial intent. This piece of experience was a valuable practical initiation into the field of translation which the author of this Thesis plans to pursue further.

Among other experience acquired by working on this Thesis, there is indisputably a contact with experts such as the supervisor of this Thesis, with the foreign consultants who willingly contributed to finalizing the translation, and, last but not least, with the author of the short story, Zdeněk Svěrák. Mr Svěrák nearly without delay responded to a letter sent by the author of this Thesis; this letter described the Thesis topic together with reasons for choosing such an original and included the complete translation. In his reply, Mr Svěrák

expressed, in a short comment written in his own hand, his delight over choosing his very short story for the purpose of this Thesis (see Appendix).

As far as the overall merit of this Thesis is concerned, the theoretical groundwork and the description of the individual translation issues may help those interested in literary translation orientate in this area and choose their own translation solutions. Being the only existing one up to the date of writing this Thesis, this translation of the short story *Sraz naší třídy* into English may offer an interesting comparison with the original or, as the case may be, with a future official translation. Last but not least, the gained knowledge and experience may later serve as foundations for a Master Thesis oriented on a translation topic whose greater demands on an extent of an original text, a thoroughness of the microanalysis, etc. would motivate the author of this Thesis to study the domain of translation even further.

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English Language & Usage Stack Exchange, 2011.

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³⁶ Svěrák, 2011, p. 20

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³⁹ Svěrák, 2011, p. 18

⁴⁰ Thesis – translation, p. 12

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⁴² Thesis – translation, p. 12

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⁴⁴ Thesis – translation, p. 13

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⁴⁶ Thesis – translation, p. 13

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⁴⁸ Thesis – translation, p. 16

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9. Abstract

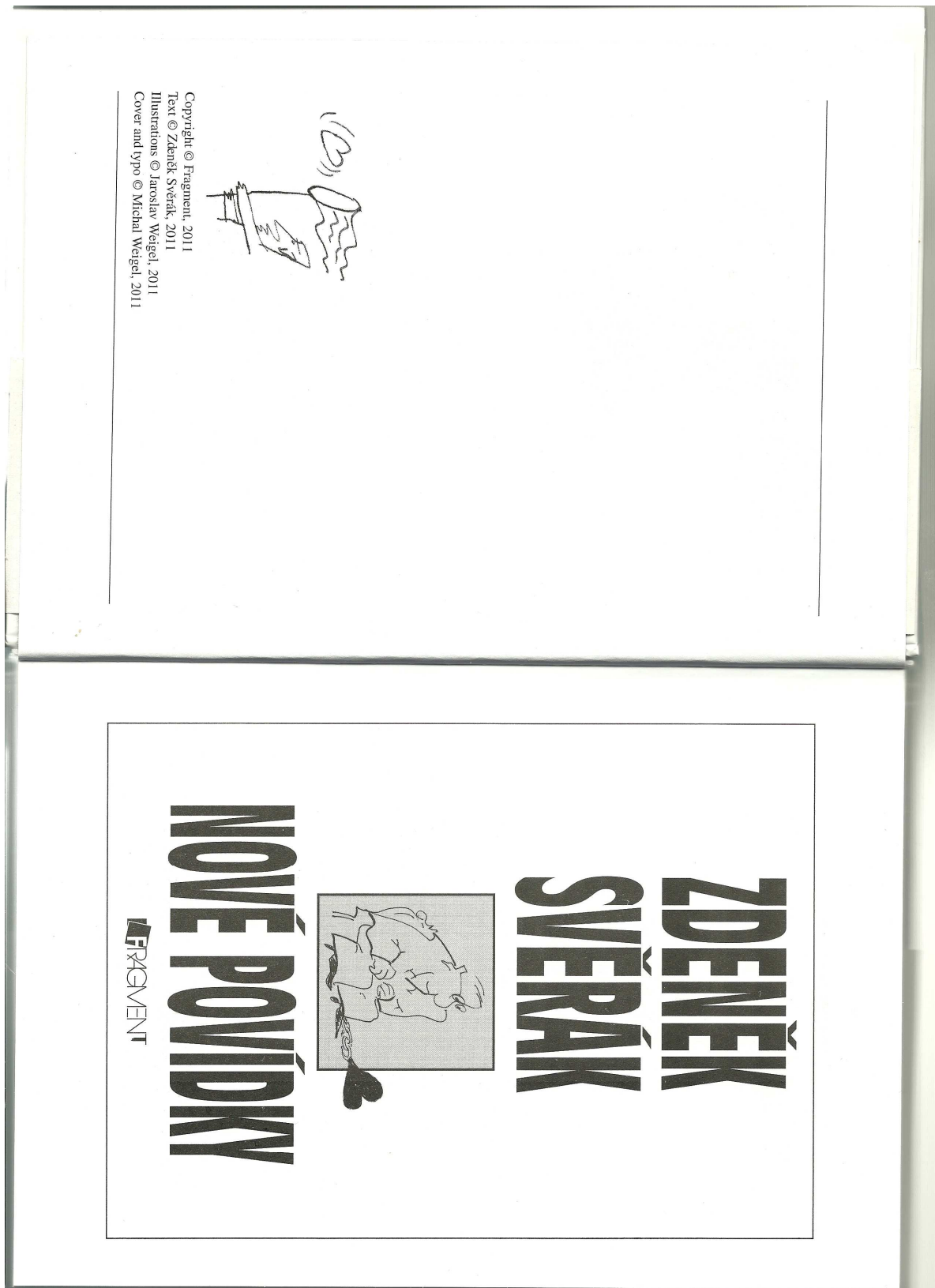
The objective of this Bachelor Thesis is to create a translation of a literary text and comment on the chosen translation solutions. Revolving around the translation of the short story *Sraz naší třídy* written by Zdeněk Svěrák, the Thesis consists of several main parts: first, it explains the basics of the general theory of literary translation with an excursion into a topic of proper name translation. The translation itself follows, accompanied by the chapter of Macroanalysis – presenting the author of the original story and his work – as well as the Microanalysis of the translation. The latter deals with the individual translation issues, gives reasons for chosen solutions and shows them on concrete examples. Moreover, the original story and its author's response to the translation can be found in the Appendix of this Thesis.

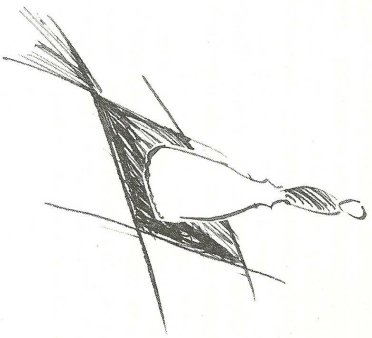
10. Resumé

Cílem této bakalářské práce bylo vytvořit překlad uměleckého textu s komentářem k vybraným překladatelským řešením. Celá práce je založena na překladu povídky *Sraz naší třídy* napsané Zdeňkem Svěrákem a rozdělena do několika hlavních částí. Nejprve jsou uvedeny základy obecné teorie překladu společně s podkapitolou věnující se konkrétnímu tématu překladu vlastních jmen. Dále následuje samotný překlad, ke kterému se vztahuje jak kapitola Makroanalýza překladu, která představuje autora povídky a jeho dílo, tak kapitola Mikroanalýza překladu. Tato kapitola se věnuje jednotlivým překladatelským tématům, uvádí důvody pro vybraná řešení a dokazuje je na konkrétních příkladech. K práci je v závěru přiložen oskenovaný text předlohy společně s reakcí Zdeňka Svěráka na téma této práce.

11. Appendix

Appendix n. 1: *Nové povídky* by Zdeněk Svěrák, the short story *Sraz naší třídy* (see Sources)





Sraz naší třídy

Abych se přiznal, srazy spolužáků z gymnázia nemiluju. Kdyby jsem chodil rád. Ale když uplyne od maturit čtyřicet nebo padesát let, měly by se nějakou vyhláškou ministerstva školství zakázat. Proč se mám dobrovolně drásat pohledem na holky, po kterých jsem toužil, a na kluky, kterým jsem záviděl svaly a ramena, a vidět, jak jsme dopadli? Je to horší zážitek, než podívat se do zrcadla v břejlích. To se vždycky leknu.

Jenže pak přijde od spolužáka Ládi Půlpána ten jeho zvací dopis, že se naše béčko opět sejde a zavzpomíná na krásná studentská léta, a já nemám sílu vzdorovat. Už proto, že se v poslední době nescházíme po restauracích, ale u našeho třidního Količka, aby se nemusel nikam tmat. A Količka by možná mrzelo, kdybych se nedostavil.

Jeho vilka z konce padesátých let má malou předsiňku, která nepočítala s tolika lidmi a je plná našich bot. Přezouváme se a v obyvačím pokoji chodíme po olýsalém perském koberci v ponožkách.

Vítáme se a našemu třidnímu slzí oči. Už dávno si s mím tykáme

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a říkáme mu Romane. Také jeho starému psu slzí oči a navíc mu páchne srst. Z velké olejomalby nad gaučem se na nás dívá Romano-va žena Květa, která zemřela před dvaceti lety. Tu opalenou krasavici jsme mu záviděli. Měl ji tak rád, že ji někdy zval i do hodín, aby se pochlubil, jak už.

Letošní večírek začal záhadou, která nás všechny trochu rozhodila. Byl tam chlap, kterého nikdo neznal. Seděl mezi holkama, na kolenu ubrousek, a opal se chlebičkama.

„Kdo to je?“ ptal jsem se Půlpána, když jsme kouřili na balkóně.

„Nevím. Asi Romanův kamarád. Nebo manžel některý holky.“

Spolužák Hrouda byl toho názoru, že by to klidně mohl být Derfler, co s námi chodil jedno pololeť a pak zmizel. Libuše Urbánková, která měla vždycky vyvalené oči, ale teď se jí skoro dočkájí břejlí, se dušovala, že to Derfler není a že to není ani manžel žádné z našich holek.

„Roman tvrdí, že to je Sajdl,“ řekl někdo.

„Sajdl!!! Tohle jestli je Sajdl, tak já jsem papež,“ řekl Půlpán.

„Nezapomeňte, pánové, že jsme se změnili.“ Slávek Sajdlů nebyl na srazu ani nepamatuji. Ty roky ho mohly chudáka takhle poznamenanat,“ řekl s pohledem na neznámého dědka Hrouda.

„Dávejte bacha,“ zvedl Půlpán ukazovák a škvírou balkónových dveří zavolal do obyváku: „Slávku!“

Dědek nepohnul brvou, takže to Slávek nebyl.

Nato Antoušek dopil na kuráž svou dvoudečku bláho a prohlásil:

„Já se ho normálně zepám!“ A všichni jsme se nahnuli do pokoje.

„Ty, promiň,“ povídá Antoušek tomu člověku, „ale my se nemůžeme upamatovat, jak se jmenuješ.“

„Sajdl,“ řekl dědek. „Já jsem bratr Slávka Sajdla. On si zlomil nohu, tak mě poslal za sebe.“

Zalopali jsme po dechu. Takovou nebetýčnou blbost nikdo nečekal a náhoda večírku se tím okamžitě uvolnila. Jako by nám Sajdl s nohou v sádře poslal v osobě svého bratra důkaz, že absurdno je živé, je z masa a kostí, pije z naší flašky a žere chlebičky.

„A jak se Slávek má, je už v důchodu?“ zajímal se náš třidní.

„Zlomil si nohu,“ řekl bratr s plnou pusou a víc nedodal.

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Pozoroval jsem toho bezelstného náhradníka, který s námi nic nezazlil, a přesto sem vážil cestu, hladil jsem psa mezi ušima a bylo mi dobře.

Stěpánka Rosová, která mývala tak pevná hřátka, že jsem si je při hodinách neúnavně kreslil, přinesla z kuchyně horlé pátky.

„Přátelé, jezte, než vystydnou!“ řekla a olízla si masný prst.

Chtěl jsem si pro jeden sáhnout, ale vzápětí jsem si uvědomil, že s rukama od psa nemůžu, a tak jsem zamřel do koupelny. Byl tam záchod s prasklým umělohmotným sedátkem, přelepeným leukoplastif, bylo tam zašlé zrcadlo a umyvadlo s lívancem letité rzi. Větrák nachotící v rozpadlém ložisku rozvínil zčernalou pavoučí síť. Byla to koupelna starého vdovce. Když jsem si myl ruce rozpuštěným plátkem mydla, nabyl jsem jistoty, že se musím svého třídního zepřít na pár věcí právě dnes. Aby se nestalo, že se je nikdy nedovím.

Když se Roman Koláček stal našim třídním, byl to nezkušený mladík v manšestrovém sáčku. Předtím učil na nižším stupni a my jsme byli jeho první středoškolační. Po několika hodinách ruštiny a občanské nauky nám bylo jasné, že s ním nebude těžká práce. Stačilo například, aby řekl, že vojna znamená ruský válka, a spolužák Štefánek už zvedal ruku:

„Soudrnu profesore, vypravuje nám zase nějakou příhodu z vojny jako minule.“

„Ano!“ zažadonili jsme my ostatní.

A Koláček se podíval na hodinky, jestli si může takovou vložku dovořit, a rád vylovil vzpomínku ze své služby v pohraniční stráži, protože to byla zatím jeho nejsilnější životní zkušenost:

„Po jednom skutečně náročném přesunu s plnou polní jsme zaujali palebné postavení na úpatí vrchu Bouřák. A velitel roty nadporučík Moník, mimochodem skvělý chlap, nás obeznámil s úplně novým dalekohledem, který právě přišel do výzbroje naší armády. Ten dalekohled měl tu zvláštnost, že když jste byli v poloze ležícího střelce a přiložili jste ho k očím, ta jeho optika úplně ignorovala stěbla trávy v bezprostřední blízkosti. Jako by tam žádná tráva nebyla.“

„To není možný!“ řekl Štefánek.

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„Také jsem si myslel, že to není možné, ale když mi ho nadporučík Moník půjčil a já vleze mezi trsy trávy zaostřil, viděl jsem čisté panorama Krávných hor.“

Celá naše proraďná třída zahrála údiv a touhu takový dalekohled si někdy vyzkoušet a do toho se hlásil Láďa Půlpán, což vždycky slibovalo očekávaný úhel pohledu:

„Když už mluvíme o tom dalekohledu, my jsme v létě našli u babičky na pídě dalekohled, německej, teda po Němcích, a ten měl zase tu zvláštnost, že když jste se do něj koukli z jedny strany, tak normálně přiblížoval, ale když jste se koukli z druhé strany, tak bylo všechno strasně daleko a strasně malinký.“

Půlpán nezklamal očekávání.

Náš třídní se po nás bezradně rozhlédl a řekl:

„Tud nevím, Půlpáne, jestli si ze mě děláš legraci, nebo jestli jsi nikdy předtím neměl v ruce dalekohled.“

„To byl první dalekohled, kterej se mi dostal do ruky, a zrovna měl tuhle tu zvláštnost“, odpověděl Půlpán s nadšením objevitele a chtěl ještě pokračovat, ale Hrouda, který seděl za ním, ho škrbnutím za šosy posadil a řekl: „To stačí vole.“

Na rozdíl od profesora Koláčka jsme všichni věděli, že kdyžby o neobyčejném německém dalekohledu promluvil Štefánek, byla by to dobře zahrnaná navísta a poněkud drzá zkuška kantorovy tpeřlivosti, zatímco Láďa Půlpán, to byla chodící čirá nevinmost bez postranních úmyslů.

Z mých vzpomínek by někdo mohl mít dojem, že jsme si svého třídního nevážili. Nevážili i vážili. Postupem času i největší cynici v našem běčku pochopili, že to je dobrák, který se snadno dojme, a že není třeba mu zbytečně ubližovat. Body získával také tím, že se za nás přimlouval.

„Musíte, přimluvil jsem se za tebe u kolegy Habra, takže možná, opakují: m o ž n á nepropadneš z matematiky.“ řekl třeba. A to bylo něco, protože obměkčil profesora Habra, o kterem tu ještě bude řeč, nedokázal nikdy.

Nebo se za nás přimluvil v případu, který vešel do dějin školy pod

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názvem „opalujieme si soudruhů“. Týkal se inženýra Ďurice, kterého jsme měli na chemii. Tento holohlavý, bledý duch bez chuti a zápachu, kterému se blhvíproč přezdívalo Kozí prd, měl zůstat v Chemických závodoch Livínov, a ne jít učít, protože k tomu neměl nadání. Ďurice bylo slyšet jen do prvních lavic, zbytek třídy měl smůlu, a tak se věnoval mimochemické zábavě. A byl to taky hajzlík. Zatímco ostatní kantoni tolerovali, když jsme je oslovili pane profesore nebo paní profesorko, Ďuric navrhoval za nesoudružské oslovení dvojky z mravů.

Jediné, co si z jeho hodin pamatuji, byl jeho výrok, že ten, kdo nechápe chemii, nechápe nic, protože celý svět je jeden chemický proces. Asi proto dodneška nerozumím svět.

Nuže tento Mendělejev přišel jednou do třídy popuzen, že ho opět vyškrtli z lyžařského zájezdu, ačkoli jeho livínovské plíce by si zasloužily horský vzduch daleko víc než jiné plíce.

„Všichni se vrátí z hor opálení jako ašanti, jen já budu holt bledý,“ řekl. A to neměl říkat, protože právě tato věta přivedla spolužáka Hruběše na nápad, že si ho opálíme.

Hned příštího dne vymění žárovku nad tabulí za lampu horského slunce. Abychom netrpěli účinky záření, někteří jsme si chránili oči pruhleďnými zelenými pravítky, ale nebylo to ani nutné, protože lampy svítla shora prakticky pouze na Ďuricovu pleš. Hned po první hodině chemie dostala zdravotnou barvu a po druhé hodině už se nám Ďuric loupal. Jenže Hruběš nestačil opalovací lampu odstranit a po nás přišlo do chemické učebny áčko s chemikáříkou Weissovou. A ta to záření poznala po tichu. Přikázala lampu vystroubovat a přinesla jí Ďuricovi do kabiny. Údajně řekla: „Teď je jasný, proč máš hlavu jako uzený koleno.“ A když odcházela, ašanti Kozí prd vyšel ven a vykřikl na celou chodbu: „A už je taky jasný, že za to někdo vyletí ze školy!“

A byl to náš třídní Koliáček, který se zaručil, že viníka zjistí, a který se také postaral o to, aby nikdy zjištěn nebyl. Pamatuji si velice přesně, co nám tehdy řekl:

„To, co jste soudruhů Ďuricovi provedli, bylo hanebné a zdravotně nebezpečné, a neomlouvá vás ani dobrý úmysl soudruhů opálit. Ten,

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kdo to zosnoval, by se měl stydět a měl by být rád, že nikdo ze třídy, opakují: n i k d o neví, čí to byl nápad, protože jednoho studenta vytloučit ze školy lze, ale celou třídu nikoli.“

A díky těmto zlatým slovům Hruběš odmaturoval.

Teď sedí vedle našeho srhbeného třídního a právě si od něho půjčil bytyle, aby viděl na miniaturní černobílou fotku 6x6, jaké se tenkrát dělaly.

Musím se ke Koliáčkovi dostat, než nám usne, protože zpravidla vydrží jen dvě hodiny a pak zavře oči a my si povídáme sami.

Jště jedna vzpomínka mi teď vyranula, ale tu bych vlastně mohl říct nahlas. Na těch třídních strážech je zvláštní to, že si vyprávíme, co všichni víme, jenom si to osvěžujeme. A tak se vmiším do debaty:

„Pamatuji se si, co prohlásil Půlpán, když umřel Stalin?“

„No, to je krásný, to řekl,“ schválně to někdo, a tak vyprávím o tom roce 1953, kdy jednoho dne vyšly noviny s Josifem Vissarionovičem v černém rámečku a Praha se proměnila v město potažené černým sukrem, jak to bylo zvykem v pohádkách, když drak sežral princeznu. Z rádií se celé dny válila smuteční hudba a do ní sklíčení hlasatelé oznamovali, že této největšího vědce proletariátu bude nabalzamováno a uloženo do mauzolea na Rudém náměstí vedle těla soudruha Lenina. A právě v té době truchlení celého tábora míru přišel k nám do hodiny občanské nauky inspektor:

„To mi ani nepřipomínej, z toho jsem tři noci nespal,“ ozve se náš pan profesor, ale zřejmě si to taky rád poslechně, jinak by neměl dlan u ucha, aby mu nic neuniklo.

A tak vyprávím dál, jak inspektor s černou smuteční kravatou u krku a s vážným výrazem pozustalého chvilí poseděl za katedrou a potom vstal a řekl: „Jestli dovolíš, soudruhů Koliáčku, rád bych se zeptal na pár věcí. Všichni víme, jaká ztráta nás potkala. Ví někdo, jak bude ošetřeno tělo zesnulého soudruha Stalina?“

Chvilí bylo ticho a v tom tichu na nás Koliáček upínal své prosebné oči. Pak se vymrštila Půlpánova dýchavka a oči našeho třídního zamžikaly děsem.

„No prosím?“ řekl inspektor.

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„Tělo zesnulého soudruha Stalina nebude uloženo do normálního hrobu, ale bude vycpáno a vystaveno v tom... v panoptiku na Rudém náměstí.“

Ted' je nám to k smíchu, ale tenkrát se nikdo nezasmál.

Inspektor polkl naprázdno a obrátil se tázavě na třídního.

„Chceš říci v mauzoleu,“ řekl Koláčček.

„Ano!“ souhlasil Půlpán.

„Ale řekls v panoptiku,“ zvýšil inspektor hlas.

„Ano, ale nerad,“ řekl Půlpán.

„Jak se jmenuješ?“ vyzval inspektor z nápisní kapsy černý zápisník opatřený černou tužičkou v černé boční trubice.

„Půlpán Ladislav.“

„Čím je tvůj otec, chlapče?“

„Otec je malíř,“ odpověděl Ládlík.

„To se podívejme, malíř...“ pokýval inspektor hlavou, jako by se tím leccos vysvětlovalo, a něco si zapsal.

„Pokoju,“ dodal Půlpán, čímž jeho deducei podkopal.

„Soudruhu inspektore,“ osmělil se Koláčček, jemuž vyrazil na čele pot, „Půlpán prodělal silný ořes mozku a stává se mu v důsledku toho, že si nevybavuje správná slova. Jeho otec je vzorný pracovník družstva Malbyť a ve svém volném čase nám o prázdninách vymaloval třídu.“

To nás šokovalo. Nevěděli jsme, že Ládlík prodělal ořes mozku ani že nám otec vymaloval.

Inspektor přešel očima stěny třídy a sklapl notes.

„Je vážná doba,“ řekl, ale ne nám, nýbrž profesorovi Koláččkovi.

„A je třeba vážít slova. Znevažovat ve vážné době může mít vážné následky.“

Na pokyn třídního jsme vstali a inspektor pohřbením krokem opustil učebnu.

„To je dobrý!“ zasmál se Sajtův bratr, který jediný u toho nebyl, a ztěžklým jazykem projevili zájem, kdy bude příst sraz, že by to nerad prosvíh.

Po vzpomínce na Stalinův skon jsem vyslyšel mimickou výzvu Míty

Musil. abychom si dali na balkóně cigaretu. A tam přišla konečně řeč na profesora matematiky a deskriptivní geometrie Roberta Habra. Jeho jméno možná něco řekne šachistům, neboť v tomto sportu vynikal.

Tento tichý, vždycky dobře oblečený štíhlý muž měl dar nastolit ve třídě atmosféru úzkosti způsobem, který mi zůstává záhadou.

V jeho hodinách se strach zahušťoval do nedýchatele. A přitom ten člověk nikdy nezvyšil hlas a dá se říci, že byl plachý. Holčkám se nikdy nepodíval do očí. Nám ano, ale když zkoušel holku, díval se po stropě nebo do podlahy. Měl neúprosné hnědé oči, v nichž se nikdy nezaleskla jiskra úsměvu. Ticho v jeho hodinách matematiky bylo absolutní. Jen když psal na tabuli a byl k nám zády, odvážíl se někdo šepotu, ale Habrovi stačilo beze slova otočit hlavu a šepot zahynul.

Jen jednou, jedinkrát se stalo, že se zasmál, ale to nevíme jistě.

U tabule byl Musil. Strach, že propadne z matematiky, ho zbavoval logického uvažování a způsoboval mu třas. Habr ho ochromoval jako kobra myš. Musil při psaní zlomil křídlo, mazal hadrem i zpocenou dlaní, co napsal, a pak to vzdal a upřel na profesora bezradný pohled.

„Sedněte si,“ řekl suše Habr.

A Musil – ne že by chtěl udělat humor, ale protože byl hypnotizovaná myš – si sedl na stůpínek.

To jsme nevydrželi a vyprskli jsme smíchy. A tehdy se profesor Habr obrátil zády k nám, díval se z okna ven, a někdo tvrdí, že ne, ale já přisahám na to, že se mu ramena mírně ořásala potlačovaným smíchem.

To byl jeden lidský moment v chování tohoto mrazivého muže. Druhý jsem zaznamenal při ústní maturitní zkoušce, když jsem řešil rovnici a Habr seděl na židli vedle mě. Převáděl jsem 2a z jedné strany rovnice na druhou a zapomněl jsem změnit znaménko. A tu jsem pocítil na své pravé botě tlak. Nechtělo se tomu věřit, ale bylo to tak: Habr mi pod stolem šlápl na nohu, abych tam dal minus.

Z těchto dvou úkazů usuzuju, že Robert Habr nebyl nelida, ale že svou odpornou přisnosit dokonale hrál.

A ještě jedna maličkost s Habrem nám všem vrtala hlavou. Jedno záhadné slovo. Stávalo se, že náš třídní přišel do hodiny matematiky,

aby nám sdělili něco neodkladného o rodičovském sdrúžení nebo o chmelové či semné brigádě. Tyhle občasné návštěvy končily tím, že se Koláček omluvil za narušení hodiny a na odchodu mu s úsměvem a sotva slyšitelně řekl: „Tyčinky!“ A Habr svým suchým hlasem řekl také: „Tyčinky!“ a při tom mu po tváři lehoučce přeběhlo něco, co vypadalo jako úsměv.

O tom slovíčku jsme se přeli. Někdo byl toho názoru, že to nejsou tyčinky, ale tři činky. To nedávalo smysl. Do hodin deskriptivny nosil Habr kromě trojúhelníků i tyčinky s hrotem na jednom konci, kterým se zabodly do tabule, abychom viděli, jak přímký narysované křídou na černou plochu vypadají v trojrozměrném prostoru.

Zrovna jsme s Musilem dokouřili a chtěli opustit balkon, když se k nám dveřmi protáhl starý pes a v závoji jeho pachu i pan profesor Koláček.

„Co tady řešíte, kuřáci?“

„O Habrovi si povídáme. Romane, jakej on byl? Byla s ním někdy sranda?“ povídám.

„Robert? Ten byl bezvadnej. To vy jste ovšem nesměli vědět. Víte, co říkal? Pro učitele je třída scéna a sborovna je herecká šama. Tam se kantor odličí a přestane hrát. On byl například erotoman.“

„Habr? Erotoman?“ zalapal po dechu Musil.

„No jo. Učit na gymnáziu byla pro něj těžká zkouška odolnosti. Pamatuju, co říkal, když se vracel z hodiny a hodil ve sborovně aktovku na stůl: Proč sedí Štěpánka Rosová s takovým jménem a s takovým vyhroceným poprsím v první lavici? Proč ji nepřesadíš? Kdo to má vydržet? To není vyučování, to je hrdinství.“

„Nemluvíte o mně?“ ozvala se z pokoje Rosová, nyní Kvasilová, která právě dávala kolovat fotografie svých šesti vnoučat.

„Ne!“ řekl Musil a přivřel dveře.

„A co ten váš pozdrav, Romane? Říkali jste tyčinky, nebo tři činky?“ zeptal jsem se.

Pan profesor se usmál a krátce zaváhal:

„No, jsme chlapi a Robert už je na Olšanech... Jednou při oslavě Dne učitelů dostal sdílnou náladu a vyprávěl mi svůj nejsilnější ero-

tický zážitek. On, jak víte, byl skvělý šachista a jezdil po turnajích. A dostal taky pozvání na přebor do nějaké vily v Krči. Měl zavazont a říct heslo Dámský gambit. Robert tam šel, a když ho vpusťili a zamkli za ním, zjistil, že se ocitnul na akci, kde bylo víc šachistek než šachistů a že ty dámy neměly ponětí, co je gambit, protože to ani nebyly šachistky. Robert se prostě ocitnul na sexuálním večírku.“

„Grupáči!“ pojmenoval to Musil užasle.

„Jo. A tam mu účarovala jedna učasnice. A když se spolu v tom kolektivu mluvali, Robert jí pošepal, jestli by se s ním nesešla někdy jindy a jinde, kde by byli spolu jen sami dva. A ona odpověděla: S tebou? Dycinky!“

„Jako že vzdycky,“ ujistil jsem se.

„Jo. Na to Robert nemoh zapomenout. A proto jsme se takhle zdravili,“ usmál se pan profesor a zivnul.

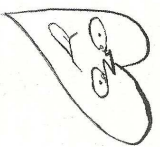
Vrátili jsme se do pokoje, protože dlaždice balkonů už ztratily náboj slunce a v ponožkách nás studily. Roman se usadil do svého křesla a usnul.

Byl jsem rád, že jsem tenthle sraz nevynechal. O půlnoci jsme svého třídniho šetrně probudili a rozloučili jsme se.

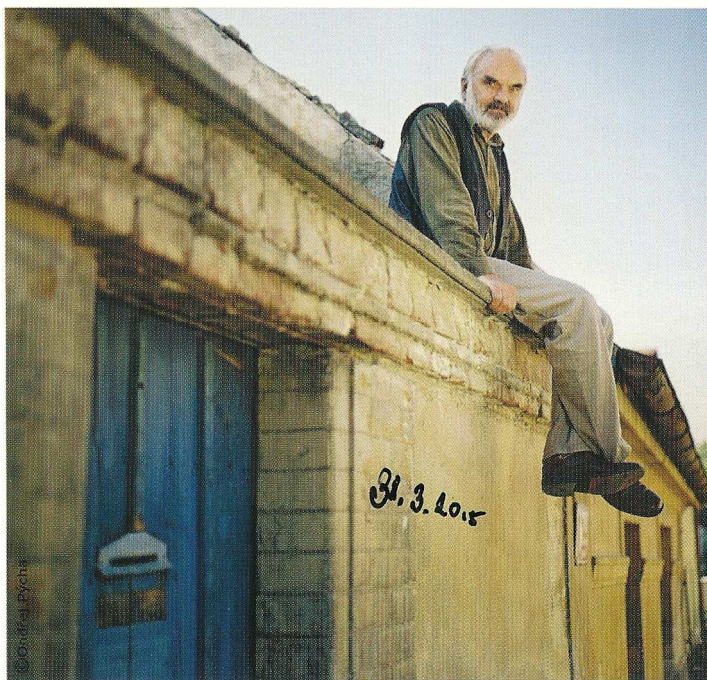
Venku byla hvězdná noc. Náš třídní stál přede dveřmi a díval se za námi. Neušli jsme, že ho vidíme naposlědy.

„Tak zase za rok u tebe, Romane!“ zakřičel ještě Láda Pulpán.

„Dycinky!“ odpověděl pan profesor a zamával nám.



Appendix n. 2: Zdeněk Svěrák's reply to the letter sent by the author of this Thesis



Milý Vojtěchu,
nemůžu tak dobře anglicky jako ty,
abych mohl váš příklad reprodukovat,
ale jsem rád, že jsi si vybral právě
mou povídku.

Ještě a z drápu váš přeasí
Zdeněk Svěrák