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**Faculty of Arts and Philosophy**

**Two Czech translations of Shelley's poem Prometheus Unbound**

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### **Z á s a d y   p r o   v y p r a c o v á n í :**

Po stručném úvodu o charakteru anglického romantického lyrického dramatu provede autor v hlavní části porovnání dvou překladů uvedené básně jak z estetického, tak jazykového hlediska. Svá pozorování shrne v závěru práce.

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P.B. Shelley: Odpoutaný Prométeus. Přel. J. Valja, 1962.  
P.B. Shelley: Poetical Works.  
Z. Vančura: Pohledy na anglickou a americkou literaturu, 1983.  
B. Mánek: První české překlady Byronovy poezie, 1991.  
Modern English Drama, 1963.  
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Souhlasím s prezenčním zpřístupněním mé práce v Univerzitní knihovně.

V Pardubicích dne

Jaromír Uhlíř

## **Annotation**

The aim of this bachelor paper is to perform a comparative analysis of two selected Czech translations of Shelley's poem Prometheus Unbound. The theoretical part of the paper presents all the information necessary for a translator to completely understand the ideology of Percy Bysshe Shelley and of the artistic movement Shelley was a part of. Jaroslav Vrchlický and Jiří Valja, the selected translators, are also discussed in the theoretical part. The analytical part presents the criteria according to which the translations are compared, performs the actual comparison, and summarizes the results of the comparison.

## **Keywords**

Comparative analysis, translation, Romanticism, Prometheus Unbound, Vrchlický, Valja

## **Abstrakt**

Cílem této bakalářské práce je provést srovnávací analýzu dvou vybraných českých překladů Shelleyho básně Odpoutaný Prométheus. Teoretická část práce prezentuje všechny informace nezbytné pro překladatelovo úplné pochopení smýšlení Shelleyho a celého uměleckého hnutí, jehož byl součástí. V teoretické části jsou také probráni Jaroslav Vrchlický a Jiří Valja, vybraní překladatelé. Analytická část práce předkládá kritéria, podle kterých jsou překlady porovnávány, provádí vlastní srovnání a shrnuje výsledky srovnání.

## **Klíčová slova**

Srovnávací analýza, překlad, romantismus, Odpoutaný Prométheus, Vrchlický, Valja

**Na tomto místě bych rád poděkoval panu prof. PhDr. Bohuslavu Mánkovi, CSc. za péči, kterou mi věnoval, když jsem tvořil tuto práci.**

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper is to perform a comparative analysis of two translations, rather than to decide which one is more successful. As the perception of literature and of literary science develops constantly, the aim of this paper is comparing different approaches used by individual translators, rather than deciding which translation is more suitable for the present day readers. The criteria according to which the translations are compared are presented in the research part of the paper. The analysis aims at *Prometheus Unbound* by Percy Bysshe Shelley, one of the most prominent dramatic poems of English Romanticism, and at two translations of the poem into Czech language. Namely the translation performed by Jaroslav Vrchlický in 1900 and the one performed by Jiří Valja in 1962. One translation, the one made by Josef Julius David in 1938, has been excluded from the analysis for being too close to the translation of Jaroslav Vrchlický both in temporal and ideological setting.

The paper is divided into six sections. The first one is this introductory section, where the aims of the paper are presented.

Then there are two sections discussing the theoretical background of the target work of this analysis and discussing the temporal setting of the work. The initial one, called "Towards Prometheus," introduces the Romantic movement and the Romantic dramatic genre with certain focus on the specific details and events which helped shaping the minds of the Romantic authors. The section enables the reader to create certain image of the literary movement the analyzed author was a part of, and to understand his ideology within the terms of his historical and artistic setting.

The third section of the paper, titled "Percy Bysshe Shelley," discusses the life and work of the author and refers back to the previous section to enable the reader to identify the tendencies of Percy Bysshe Shelley. Chapter "Prometheus Unbound" is a part of this section. The target work of the analysis is introduced in this chapter, and foundations are established for the upcoming comparison of the translations.

The fourth section of the paper, titled "Translation," introduces the selected translators, briefly discusses their lives and works, and most importantly, presents their



opinions and preferences towards translating, in order to prepare the reader for the upcoming comparison.

The fifth section of the paper is devoted to comparing the translations made by Jaroslav Vrchlický and Jiří Valja. This section uses expert opinions to establish the ground rules, the criteria according to which the two translations into Czech language are compared. Then the translations are compared in accordance with the selected formal and aesthetic criteria. Selected representative parts of the original version and of the translations are quoted to illustrate the differences adequately.

The sixth and final chapter is reserved for emphasizing the most important points discussed during the whole paper, as well as presenting and commenting on the results of the comparative analysis of the selected translations.

## 2 TOWARDS PROMETHEUS

It is essential for a translator to be aware of the specifics of the work he/she is about to translate. It is desired that a translator knew not only about occurrence of characteristic motives and use of certain forms in his model work, but he/she should also know why the original author used the features, and know how prominent the features were in the work of the original author. Jiří Levý emphasizes these facts in his book *Umění překlada* when he states that "a translation requires more conscious and profound knowledge of the translated work than knowledge obtained by simply reading it." (1983, p. 53)<sup>1</sup> Therefore our analysis shall establish certain basic data about the genre and historical setting of its target work *Prometheus Unbound* and the literary movement the drama took part in, and discuss certain details of life and work of Percy Bysshe Shelley before even touching the topic of translation.

Let us begin by setting forth the conditions in which Percy Bysshe Shelley wrote the target work of our analysis. The following subchapters shall discuss the Romantic movement from historical, political and literary point of view, and shall pay specific attention to details which helped form Shelley's view of the world or otherwise affected the author and the whole movement. Various points from the initial subchapters shall be referred to later, when discussing specifics of the play and of the translations.

### 2.1 Romanticism - Historical Outline

The beginning of the Romantic movement dates back to the second half of the eighteenth century in Great Britain. The early eighteenth century Europe was guided by reason. Philosophers of that age based their work on experience and rationality. Isaac Newton used purely scientific approach to systematically describe nature. Massive industrial progress took place during the Romantic period. Harold Bloom emphasizes the rapid progress of the industrial revolution using lives of Romantic poets in his book *Reading of English romantic poetry*. Bloom states that: "In 1770, when Wordsworth was born, England was still an agricultural society. When Blake died, in 1827, England was largely an industrial nation." (1971, p. xiii)

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<sup>1</sup> Translated by the author of the paper.

Industrial revolution gave birth to urbanization, city life, and more importantly to a new class of industrial workers. Bloom decides to call this new formed class "the numerous and tormented." Members of the tormented new class, empowered by the French revolution, decided to express their dissatisfaction. They expressed their dissatisfaction with the results of industrialization, dissatisfaction with the Classicistic, aristocratic order and dissatisfaction with the oppression of the Government.

## **2.2 Pre-romanticism**

Pre-romanticism as the last step towards Romanticism expresses gradual movement towards Romantic values.

Humanity was focused on. To be more exact, human goodness was subject to investigation of eighteenth century Philosophers. Jean Jacques Rousseau taught how to properly educate people, admonished to return to the beauty of nature and to escape from society which was, according to him, only capable of corrupting people. Rousseau's concept of natural and corrupted man is depicted in his *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality Among Men*. As nature, solitude, society and the connection between them is the most common theme for Romantic authors, Rousseau's figure of natural man shall be referred to several times during our analysis.

Rural people gained value over industrial workers. Countryside became more important for Pre-romantic minds.

Rationality was gradually replaced by sentimentality as the urgent need to escape from reasonable, accurate, Classicistic reality emerged. John Locke's empirical philosophy was taken into account. An important "Romantic" question was asked. Considering that all people were born equal as an empty container to be filled, Locke called that status "tabula rasa" in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), how was it possible that there were so great social differences in society?

The most important representatives of English Pre-romanticism were the Grave-yard poets. The Grave-yard poets shared dissatisfaction with development of the society. Such dissatisfaction resulted in pessimistic view of the world and very sad and gloomy tone of their poetry. Their works are often set in a countryside or, of course, graveyard. *Encyclopedia Britannica* characterizes the poetry of graveyard poets as "expressing sorrow, pain of bereavement and evoking the horror of death's physical

manifestations." (2010) Physical manifestations of death could be considered one of the first signs of vivid imagination, a quality which shall be mentioned later in this paper and is quite important when discussing Romantic poetry, especially poetry of Percy Bysshe Shelley.

## 2.3 Romanticism in Literature

Romanticism stands for conflict and escapism. Romantic authors, facing the rapid changes in society, used writing to escape from, and to declare their dissatisfaction with monotonous, controlled, industrialized reality and with the religious, aristocratic order of their country. Morse Peckham summarizes Romanticism in his article edited by Robert F. Gleckner and Gerald E. Enscoe.

"Romanticism is a revolution in art and ideas often considered to be an expression of general redirection of European life, which included also a political revolution, industrial revolution, and perhaps several others." (1975, p. 231)

The more revolutionary thinking authors were not afraid of changing the world order in their works. Shelley altered the original Greek theme in his *Prometheus unbound*, the primary subject of this analysis, so that he could properly express his dissatisfaction with the society. He defined his ideal conception clearly in preface of his work: "But, in truth, I was averse from a catastrophe so feeble as that of reconciling the Champion with the Oppressor of mankind." (1820, p. viii) Shelley's concept of revolution shall be discussed later in the chapter concerning his life and work.

Those of less revolutionary thinking Romantic authors resolved their dissatisfaction by escaping. They used their works as an escape to wild nature. Seventeenth century was the century of the great sea voyages and the discoveries brought people to various places, revealing the true beauty of exotic nature.

Authors also escaped to the past. Numerous medieval settings occurred in Romantic literature. Ancient Greek and Roman motives were often used. All those non-traditional places were depicted with certain focus on mystery, mythology and the aforementioned admiration of nature. "A Romantic writer loved strange adventure, and sought it in the middle age." (Enscoe, Gleckner, 1975, p. 20) All those described qualities were those missing in the lately forming society. Bloom accurately depicts the whole movement by describing the shift in the meaning of the word *romantic*: "By the

middle of the eighteenth century in England, "romantic" had become an adjective meaning wild or strange or picturesque." (1971, p. xiii)

Individualism became prominent during the Romantic period. Sensual, independent and emotive Romantic character points out the clear contrast between him or her and the whole new class of average, oppressed people, people formed by the circumstances, which were described in the previous chapter. "Romantic individualism stresses the unique and incomparable character of each personality." (Lowy, Saire, 2001, p. 25) Equally, Romantic character is an outlaw. He/she is a prisoner, a beggar, a Gipsy, a crippled person. He/she is a person in one way or another not acceptable for the society. Naturally the clash of idealized world and reality brings dissatisfaction.

Not only do Romantic authors put intense feelings into mouths of their characters, on numerous occasions they also enter their own plots and become characters of their own books. The first example, which comes to mind of a Czech reader is, in its geographical setting, greatly distant from England, yet unforgettable for readers throughout the whole social class system. Every Czech reader knows how Karel Hynek Mácha enters the plot of his *Máj*, one of the most prominent works of Czech Romanticism, and closes the poem by exclaiming: "Hynku! Viléme!! Jarmilo!!!"

The following subchapter shall discuss Romantic drama as a whole, and present the closet drama, a significant genre within the terms of this paper.

## **2.4 English Romantic Drama**

Let us open this chapter by quoting an author outside of our regular scope of investigation. Victor Hugo stated certain thoughts in the preface of his *Cromwell* the play which is nowadays considered the manifest of Romantic drama, thoughts expressing the clash of the Classicistic values with the new formed Romantic drama. "There are neither rules nor models, or rather, there are no other rules than the general laws that embrace all art." (Pellisier, 1971, p.216) Since the rejection of traditional values was to a great degree the aim of every Romantic artist, the playwrights did not differ. Daniel P. Watkins states this fact in the following way in his *Materialist Critique of English Romantic Drama*. "Romantic drama is inextricably and peculiarly entangled in the radical, disruptive changes of the period. Displaying at various levels extreme

anxiety." (1993, p. 8) Romantic drama disobeyed the classical unities. The new formed audience's desire for traditional verse plays decreased. Drama had been simplified, brought closer to the prominent working class.

New "light"<sup>2</sup> forms had found their way into the theatres. The parodic humour of *Burlesques*, the exaggeration of *Melodramas* and the undemanding music of *Operettas* had become popular. Watkins also comments on the events of the discussed period. "Literary drama had become a marginal form by the early nineteenth century in England." (1993, p. 9)

Simultaneously there were authors not willing to lose touch with the traditional "worthy dramas" completely. (Thrall, Hibbard, 1960, p. 92) A genre of drama had been re-discovered by sheer will, in case of those authors who did not wish to perform their plays, or by rejection by the audience. Two longer quotations shall be used to describe the genre, and to depict properly the circumstances of its re-birth. J. A. Cuddon describes the genre using the term *Closet Drama* in his *Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*.

**"Closet drama** A play (sometimes also called a dramatic poem) designed to be read rather than performed. The term may also apply to a play which was intended to be performed but hardly ever is, and yet has survived as a piece of worthwhile literature." (Cuddon, 1990, p. 153)

William Thrall and Addison Hibbard depict the state of the nineteenth century English drama in their *Handbook to literature*.

"In English literature the nineteenth century was noted for the production of closet drama, perhaps because the actual stage was so monopolized by *Burlesque*, *Melodrama*, *Operetta*, and such light forms that literary men were stimulated either to attempt to provide more worthy dramas for the contemporary stage or at least to preserve the tradition of literary drama by imitating earlier masterpieces." (Holman, 1960, p. 92)

Thrall, Hibbard and Cuddon notice the most prominent closet dramas. They point out *The Cenci* by Shelley, *Manfred* by Byron, *Otho The Great* by Keats and, of course, *Prometheus Unbound* Within the Romantic movement.

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<sup>2</sup> (Thrall, Hibbard, 1960, p. 92)

The next chapter shall discuss life and work of Percy Bysshe Shelley as well as the target work of this analysis. Again, the chapter shall pay specific attention to details which helped form Shelley's view of the world or otherwise affected his work.

### 3 PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

*I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,  
From the seas and the streams;  
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid  
In their noon-day dreams.*

*(The Cloud , 1820)*

#### 3.1 Life and Work

The life and work of Percy Bysshe Shelley shall be presented with specific focus on his work. Particular attention shall be paid to his technique, to the forms he uses and to themes and central thoughts of his individual writings, for those aspects help establish foundations for later translators and assist the main objective of this paper, which is comparing Shelley's translators. As the specific biographical information have no or very limited value for the purpose of this analysis, it shall not be depicted in detail in this chapter or in this paper as such.

Percy Bysshe Shelley was born on 4 August 1792 in Sussex. Sir Timothy Shelley, Percy's father, a Whig Parliament member, an influential aristocrat and an autocrat in his own household, planted a seed of antipathy against any kind of sovereign rule in his sentimental son. Zdeněk Vančura in his epilogue to Valja's translation of Prometheus Unbound states that: "His relatives did not understand Percy. He was growing up to be a fierce and hasty fighter against all that is unjust." (1962, p. 163)<sup>3</sup> Shelley's struggle against tyranny continued when he entered the Eton college in 1804, for he was subject to violence from his classmates.

The first published work of the young author was *Zastrozzi*, a novel revealing his atheism and dealing with revenge and violence. "Shelley saw Churches and

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<sup>3</sup> Translated by the author of the paper.

monarchies as the source of all oppression." (Vančura, 1962, p. 163)<sup>4</sup> The novel was probably inspired by author's college experience and published in 1810, when Shelley entered the University of Oxford.

Shelley also published his first poetical work during the Oxford period. The *Posthumous Fragments of Margaret Nicholson* were first published in 1810. Donald H. Reimann and Neil Fraistat, the two editors of the book *Complete Poetry of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, comment on the reception of the volume of poems by the contemporary criticism, labeling it "half-mad but well worthy of the subject." (2000, p. 235)

Shelley's next work would draw negative attention to his person for obvious reasons. It was a pamphlet printed in 1811, revised in 1813 and called *The necessity of Atheism*.. Let us quote the introductory part of the pamphlet.

"A close examination of the validity of the proofs adduced to support any proposition is the only secure way of attaining truth, on the advantages of which it is unnecessary to descant: our knowledge of the existence, of a Deity is a subject of such importance that it cannot be too minutely investigated; in consequence of this conviction we proceed briefly and impartially to examine the proofs which have been adduced."

The whole work could be quoted to illustrate the mindset of the young author. His disbelief in presence of a creative deity was purely rational and in compliance with the rational philosophical thinking which was described earlier in this analysis. Such obvious denial of religion resulted in angry reaction of the authorities. Shelley was asked to deny the authorship, refused and was expelled from the University of Oxford .

"Shelley dreamed of setting the whole mankind free." (Vančura, 1962, p. 164)<sup>5</sup> After getting expelled and marrying Harriet Westbrook, in 1811, Shelley visited Ireland to pursue his Romantic ideals. Ireland was struggling to break free from the British oppression at that time. He wrote his *Address to the Irish People*, "a pamphlet on the Irish condition,"<sup>6</sup> during the mentioned visit. Such political activity inevitably brought attention of the British Government.

*Queen Mab*, Shelley's first larger philosophical poem, published two years after the marriage with Harriet, was inspired by empirically based philosophy of William Godwin. Shelley, as it is clearly stated in the initial stanzas, and despite

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<sup>4</sup> Translated by the author of the paper.

<sup>5</sup> Translated by the author of the paper.

<sup>6</sup> (Sandy, 2004)



the fact that he was about to abandon her and their children, dedicated this work to his wife.

In 1815, after moving away to the continental Europe only to come back in a short period of time, and more importantly, after meeting his second wife Mary, Shelley published his poem *Alastor*. Let us characterize this poem using a quotation of Donald H. Reiman. Reiman summarizes the life and work of Percy Bysshe Shelley in his article in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

"Alastor. A blank-verse poem, published with shorter poems in 1816, that warns idealists (like Shelley himself) not to abandon "sweet human love" and social improvement for the vain pursuit of evanescent dreams." (2010)

The summer of 1816 was quite important in the life of the young poet. Shelley met George Gordon Byron during his second visit of the continental Europe. *Encyclopedia Britannica* refers to this period as to "the memorable summer for Shelley." (2010) Poems *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty* and *Mont Blanc* were composed during the memorable summer.

*The Hymn to Intellectual Beauty* is a poem, an ode taking inspiration from William Wordsworth's ode *Intimations of Immortality*, "approaching the nature differently, via imagination." (Bloom, 1993, p. 290)

A quest through the French Alps with Gordon Byron inspired Shelley to write the poem *Mont Blanc*. Frances Ferguson characterizes *Mont Blanc* in the book *Romantic poetry: recent revisionary criticism*. Ferguson states that: "Critics seem to have agreed on one thing about Mont Blanc - That it is a poem about the relationship of human mind and the external world." (1993, p. 335)

*Laon and Cynthia*, an epic romance consisting of twelve cantos, was written in 1817, back in England. The reception of the writing is accurately depicted by Reiman in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. The reception of the romance represents the foreshadowed conflict between our revolutionary thinking author and the British Government. The conflict that was about to escalate.

"In November, *Laon and Cynthia* was suppressed by its printer and publisher, who feared that Shelley's idealized tale of a peaceful national revolution, bloodily suppressed by a league of king and priests, violated the laws against blasphemous libel. After revisions, it was reissued in 1818 as *The Revolt of Islam*." (2010)

The inevitable conflict between the revolutionary Romanticist Shelley and the British Government escalated in the year 1818. Harriet, his former wife, committed suicide and Shelley requested custody of his motherless children. Zdeněk Vančura shall be quoted twice in order to depict the events of Shelley's year 1818.

"The court of Lord Chancellor refused to grant Shelley's request for custody of his children from the first marriage. The court considered Shelley a well know rebel and proclaimer of subversive thoughts." (1962, p. 164)<sup>7</sup>

Shelley's reaction was understandable. "Shelley was outraged and decided to leave his mother land. In 1818 he would take his family and set out for Italy:" (1962, p. 165)<sup>8</sup>

Shelley renewed his contact with George Gordon Byron in Italy. Such contact with a fellow poet had always been vital for him. Frequent trips with Byron and into the nature inspired the poet to write *Jullian and Manddalo*, a poem "in which Byron ("Manddalo") and Shelley debate human nature and destiny." (Reiman, 2010) He also started working on *Prometheus Unbound*. For this drama is the primary subject of this analysis, *Prometheus Unbound* shall not be discussed together with Shelley's life and work. Instead, it shall be discussed in a separate chapter.

*The Cenci*, a tragedy inspired by the history of an Italian family, describing most vividly the horrific events human being can come across, is, considering the chronological order in which Shelley's works have been presented, the next to be discussed. James E. Barcus presented an edition of critical reviews of writings of Percy Bysshe Shelley called *The Critical Heritage* in 1996. There is a review in this book revealing how the contemporary *Monthly Magazine of British Register* appreciated the play. The mentioned magazine had shown great admiration for Shelley's work, which had been called "the production of no ordinary merit." (Barcus, 1996, p. 164) Nevertheless, the critical reception of this particular play, vividly describing its atmosphere, was following.

"There are crimes so beastly and demoniac, in which The Cenci riots and luxuriates, that no feelings can be excited by their obtrusion but those of detestation at the choice, and horror at the elaboration. We protest most solemnly, that when we reached the last page of this play, our minds were so impressed with its odious and infernal character, that we could not believe it to

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<sup>7</sup> Translated by the author of the paper.

<sup>8</sup> Translated by the author of the paper.

be written by a mortal being for the gratification of his fellow creatures on this earth: it seemed to be the production of a fiend, and calculated for the entertainment of devils in hell." ( 1996, p. 164)

Shelley also wrote several shorter hopeful poems which were, for "he began to fear that he had failed to reach an audience,"<sup>9</sup> published together with *Prometheus Unbound*. Let us list and further characterize some of the poems. The order of the poems is, again, taken from Reiman's article. *Ode to Liberty, Ode to the West Wind, The Cloud, and To a Sky-Lark*. (2010)

Harold Bloom characterizes the ode *To a Skylark* in his book. He states that: "The beautiful ode *To a Skylark* can be taken as Shelley's lyrical farewell to the theme of the power hidden behind nature and the poet's relation to that power." (1971, p. 302) Bloom's characterization could be broadened to almost every lyrical work of Percy Bysshe Shelley and shall be spoken of several more times during this analysis, as we are about to explore the ways that Czech translators coped with Shelley's lyricism.

Poem *The Cloud* is properly depicted by yet another author. Even though Allan H. MacLaine does not concentrate solely on analyzing this particular poem in his article called *Shelley's "The Cloud" and Pope's "Rape of the Lock: An Unsuspected Link*, rather he compares it to Pope's *Rape of the Lock*, quotation of a part of his article can serve our purpose. McLaine grasps the content of the poem in its entirety, and states the obvious thoughts about the position of nature in Shelley's work. Thoughts which have been used by several literary experts. Thoughts which have been quoted several times in this paper, concerning different lyrical pieces, and shall definitely be strengthened by even more expert opinions during the rest of our analysis.

"We must note that this poem (*The Cloud*) is centered on one of Shelley's favourite themes -the idea of a great cyclical changes in nature, the pattern of growth to maturity, followed by decline and apparent death, followed by rebirth and perpetual repetition of the cycle:" (1959, p. 14)

The Peterloo Massacre of August 1819 did not escape Shelley's attention and affected his work.

"(Aug. 16, 1819), in English history, the brutal dispersal by cavalry of a radical meeting held on St. Peter's Fields in Manchester. The "massacre" (likened to Waterloo) attests to the profound fears of the privileged classes of

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<sup>9</sup> (Reiman, 2010)

the imminence of violent Jacobin revolution in England in the years after the Napoleonic Wars. To radicals and reformers Peterloo came to symbolize Tory callousness and tyranny." (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2010)

Shelley's admiration of nature was nowhere to be found. His vivid imaginative voice was once again used to express strong dissatisfaction with the conduct of British Government. He wrote several radical songs, none of which was published during his lifetime.

In the *The Masque of anarchy* dissatisfaction even seems as too mild a term for the feelings which Shelley expressed. Leigh Hunt, Shelley's friend, who would eventually accompany him during his last year in Italy and the editor of *The Examiner*, a weekly published newspaper, called Shelley "too angry to be published." (1832, p. vi) Of course, there is the question of how free a medium this *Examiner* was. Nevertheless, the anger is present throughout the whole poem.

*A Philosophical View of Reform*, a prose explaining Shelley's reformative yet non-violent way of thinking about contemporary society, was not published until the year 1920.

In 1820 Shelley used the form of ottava rima, consisting of eight eleven-syllable lines per stanza, to write *The Witch of Atlas*. Reiman characterizes the poem as "a combination of the mythopoeic mode of *Prometheus Unbound* with the urbane self-irony and awareness that Shelley's ideals might seem naive to others." (2010)

Shelley's relationship with the authorities of his own mother land remained conflictive up until the poet's death. Perhaps for a good reason. Yet another political satire was written in 1820. *Oedipus Tyrannus; or Swellfoot the Tyrant*, a dramatical satire touching the issue of the King of England having his wife tried for adultery, was too bold to be signed by the rightful author and was suppressed almost immediately.

"In 1821, however, Shelley reasserted his uncompromising idealism." (Reiman, 2010) *Epipsychidion*, an autobiographical poem, was addressed to one of Shelley's affairs. Namely Emilia V, where "V" stands for Viviani. Among the traditional theme of search for beauty, in this case in human beings, especially ladies, the poem expresses the author's feelings towards traditional marriage. The poet calls it "the dreariest and longest journey." (1821, p. 12)

Our attention shall now be addressed to another prosaic work of the Romantic poet, *A defence of Poetry*. This essay was written as a response to Thomas Love Peacock's article *The Four Ages of Poetry*. Let us quote what Shelley himself found offensive about the article. Roger Ingpen's collection called *Letters Of Percy Bysshe Shelley, Containing Material Never Before Collected* served as the source for the quotation of Shelley's letter addressed to Peacock.

"The whose critical gall is not stirred up by such ottava rimas as Barry Cornwall's, may safely be conjectured to possess no gall at all. The world is pale with sickness of such stuff. At the same time, your anathemas against poetry itself excited me to a sacred rage. i had the greatest possible desire to break a lance with you, within the lists of a magazine, in honour of my mistress Urania." (2008, p. 847)

*A defence of poetry* "eloquently declares that the poet creates humane values and imagines the forms that shape the social order." (Reiman, 2010)

Year 1821 was affected by the death of John Keats. Inspired by this event, Shelley wrote a pastoral elegy called *Adonais*. The form of spenserian stanza was used for this melancholic poem. W.M. Rossetti characterizes the work, in the preface of the 2009 edition, as "elevated in sentiment, classical in form, classical in substance, biographical in relation to Keats, and in some minor degree autobiographical for Shelley himself." (2009, p. 9) There is another thought which deserves to be mentioned in our analysis, in Rossetti's preface. Rossetti declares that. "Leaving out of count some of the short poems, *Adonais* is the one by this author which approaches nearest to being popular." (2009, p. 9) This quotation illustrates how popular an author Shelley was during his lifetime.

Events of the year 1822 have already been discussed in this paper. As it is the year of Lord Byron's death in Greece. Not that the death of a friend was the inspiration for play *Hellas*. Rather the uprising of the oppressed Greeks represented an opportunity for Shelley to manifest his idealism once again.

"*Hellas* celebrates the Greek revolution against Turkish rule and reiterates the political message of *Laon and Cythna*—that the struggle for human liberty can be neither totally defeated nor fully realized, since the ideal is greater than its earthly embodiments." (Reiman, 2010)

The importance of *Hellas* is even greater within the terms of this analysis, for the play is a closet drama, the genre which was depicted in the previous chapter, and shall be referred to in the following one, where *Prometheus Unbound* is analyzed.

The circumstances of Shelley's death on 8 July 1822 have been heavily disputed. For investigating into this event would not serve the purpose of our analysis, we shall not speculate or make any assumptions, and close this chapter by quoting Zdeněk Vančura. "The poet's death by drowning was sudden and tragical." (1962, p. 165)<sup>10</sup>

The following chapter shall discuss specifics of the target work of this analysis and bring us closer to discussing the specifics of the selected translations.

## 3.2 Prometheus Unbound

Being the central dramatic poem<sup>11</sup> of this analysis, even the original English version of *Prometheus Unbound* needs to be discussed thoroughly. Several aspects of the drama shall be described in this chapter in order to provide us with the opportunity to refer back to them in the research part of the paper. We shall contrast the translations of the drama with focus on specific details. Thus our focus on the English original needs to be adequate. Let us provide a list of aspects of the drama to be discussed and the order in which they shall appear in this chapter. Items of the list are following: the background of the play; the position of the play in Shelley's life and work; brief overview of the plot; list and analysis of the most prominent characters; motifs, symbolism; and the form of the play.

As our analysis has already presented certain amount of literary and historical facts, we are able to refer to what we have already discussed. Shelley's inspiration by the original Greek drama *Prometheus Bound* has already been mentioned. Aside from the evident and thoroughly discussed revolutionary desires, Shelley explains his adaptation of the theme subsequently.

“They (Greek tragic writers) by no means conceived themselves bound to adhere to the common interpretation or to imitate in story as in title their rivals and predecessors. Such a system would have amounted to a

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<sup>10</sup> Translated by the author of the paper

<sup>11</sup> (Cuddon, 1990, p. 153)

resignation of those claims to preference over their competitors which incited the composition.“ (Prometheus Unbound, 1820, p. vii)

John Todhunter depicts the play in his study. Todhunter’s publication is called *A Study of Shelley*. He also includes notes by Shelley himself. These notes properly describe what Shelley thought of the position of *Prometheus Unbound* within his entire work. Let us quote Todhunter together with Shelley.

“Prometheus Unbound is the sublimated essence of Shelley’s lyrical genius. In it we have the ripe fruit of his early manhood. ‘My prometheus,’ he says himself ‘is in my judgement of a higher character than anything I have yet attempted, and is perhaps less of an imitation of anything that has gone before it.’“(2009, p. 134)

Judging from Shelley’s words, we can safely assume that he considered his dramatic poem just as prominent among his works as we do in the present day.

For it is almost the definition of a closet drama, *Prometheus Unbound* does not even try to achieve amazement of the reader in any sense when it comes to the plot. However, when we wish to compare how successful the translations of this play are, even the minor aspects need to be mentioned, and later their depiction by the translators needs to be commented on. The plot relies entirely on the reversal of the original order of events. The titan Prometheus, "the champion of mankind,"<sup>12</sup> and the mischievous deity Jupiter, "the oppressor,"<sup>13</sup> are not reconciled, but rather the deity is overthrown in our modern adaptation. As the summary of the plot, leaving out only the events of pilgrimages of both Asia towards freeing and joining her lover and of Jupiter towards oblivion, took us precisely three lines, we can easily imagine why the play has failed to reach the stage.

The characters of our play carry heavy symbolism. Thus our discussions over the list of characters and over the symbolism of Shelley’s drama shall overlap to a great degree.

**Jupiter**, the highest being, the deity, "symbolizes the ruling social order."<sup>14</sup> **Prometheus**, the restrained titan, "embodies the moral will"<sup>15</sup> to struggle against oppression. **Asia** is the lover of Prometheus and "a spiritual ideal transcending

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<sup>12</sup> (Shelley, 1820, p. viii)

<sup>13</sup> (Shelley, 1820, p. viii)

<sup>14</sup> (Vančura, 1962, p. 165) Translated by the author of the paper.

<sup>15</sup> (Reiman, 2010)

humanity."<sup>16</sup> **Demogorgon** represents the solution of Shelley's ideological problem. We have already mentioned Shelley's ideal of non-violent revolution earlier in our analysis. Now the author faces a situation where his ideal of moral will, Prometheus, needs to be set free, and his own raw force cannot serve this purpose. Shelley decides to solve the problem by depicting Demogorgon as the embodiment of "necessity and inevitability of justice and love."<sup>17</sup> Justice and love are to inevitably defeat the evil of the world which is, according to Shelley's philosophy, "accidental rather than inherent."<sup>18</sup> For other characters of the play have limited value for retracing Shelley's philosophy, us discussing them into details would serve no purpose for our analysis. However, they shall be important later, when contrasting particular parts of the play with the translations. Namely the way that individual translators treat the proper names. Thus we shall provide the complete list of characters of the play at this point.

**Prometheus, Jupiter, Demogorgon, The so called Oceanides - Asia, Panthea, Ione; Hercules, The Earth, Ocean, Apollo, Mercury, The Phantasm of Jupiter, The Spirit of Earth, Spirits of the Hours, Spirits, Echoes, Furies and Fawns.**

Zdeněk Vančura presents another theme in his epilogue to Valja's translation. Adaptation of the philosophy of Jean Jacques Rousseau. (1962, p. 162) A keen reader should immediately recognize a familiar theme. We have touched Rousseau's work in the very beginning of our analysis. Shelley's characters Prometheus and Jupiter are clear impersonations of Rousseau's philosophy of innocence of man and corruption of society.

Another theme of the play is presented by Shelley himself. He Compares his Prometheus with Satan, the rebellious character of Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

"The only imaginary being, resembling in any degree Prometheus, is Satan; and Prometheus is, in my judgment, a more poetical character than Satan, because, in addition to courage, and majesty, and firm and patient opposition to omnipotent force, he is susceptible of being described as exempt from the taints of ambition, envy, revenge, and a desire for personal aggrandizement, which, in the hero of *Paradise Lost*, interfere with the interest.

The character of Satan engenders in the mind a pernicious casuistry which leads us to weigh his faults with his wrongs, and to excuse the former because the latter exceed all measure. In the minds of those who consider that

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<sup>16</sup> (Reiman, 2010)

<sup>17</sup> (Vančura, 1962, p. 168) Translated by the author of the paper.

<sup>18</sup> (Salt, 2009, p. 64)



magnificent fiction with a religious feeling it engenders something worse. But Prometheus is, as it were, the type of the highest perfection of moral and intellectual nature, impelled by the purest and the truest motives to the best and noblest ends" (1820, pp. viii, ix)

Once again, we need to acknowledge Shelley's concept of revolution as a non-violent act based on patience and endurance.

Shelley's approach to nature is the last motive to be discussed. We have already touched his view of nature, when we talked about his *Mont Blanc* for instance. Nevertheless, the most prominent work calls for repetition of the most prominent motives. Jonh Todhunter provides us with a suitable expert opinion once again when he compares Shelley to Goethe.

"Shelley more nearly approaches the Greek method of using natural phenomena as symbols of vital forces underlying nature and analogous to the powers of the human mind, and, conversely of personifying the vital forces of nature, than Goethe does in his Faust." (2009, p. 138)

Prometheus Unbound is written in the form of blank verse combined with complex rhymed lyrical passages with alternating patterns. Czech translators found it significantly easier to cope with Shelley's blank verse than with the rest of the play, where his poetry due to the rapid run and accuracy of the diction often becomes almost musical. We shall continue our discussion about the form when setting the theoretical background for translating a closet drama, and when discussing the particular executions thereof.

We have reached the end of chapter three. The fourth chapter shall discuss the translators chosen for the comparative analysis, and present their approaches to translating poetry. Thus completing the theoretical background necessary to perform the actual comparison of translations in chapter five.

## **4 TRANSLATION**

Our analysis shall start heading towards the actual execution of its primary objective. We shall briefly discuss Jaroslav Vrchlický and Jiří Valja, and mention how they approached their translations. This particular chapter should also justify our choice of translations. Prometheus Unbound has been translated three times into Czech

language. By Jaroslav Vrchlický in 1900, by Josef Julius David in 1938, and by Jiří Valja in 1962. As the time is an important factor in literature, capable of changing ideologies, altering the perception and use of different literary techniques, we have decided to only compare the two translations separated by the longer period of time. Equally, approaches of Vrchlický and Valja to translation were significantly different, whereas David obeyed rules, established earlier by Vrchlický, to a great degree.<sup>19</sup> The topic of approaches of individual translators shall be fully enrolled in separate subchapters.

## 4.1 Jaroslav Vrchlický

Emil Bohuslav Frída was born in 1853, and died in 1912. One of the most prominent Czech poets, playwrights and translators published his works using the pseudonym Jaroslav Vrchlický. He was nominated for the Nobel Prize for literature twice during his lifetime, and *Lumírovci*, the literary formation he founded, represents a significant contribution to Czech literature and equally to Czech translation.

The poetical heritage of Jaroslav Vrchlický is vast and greatly admired. Namely the collections of poems *Dědictví Tantalovo*, *Má vlast*, *Meč Damoklův*, *Zlomky Epopeje*, *Epické Básně* and many others.

The fact that Vrchlický translated mostly poetical works from eighteen different languages suggests that the heritage of his translations may be even greater than the one of his own writings. Lumírovci and Vrchlický himself tried to elevate Czech literature, and reach the European level. They translated some of the finest works of European literature with one specific aim. An aim which greatly affected the translations of Vrchlický, and is quite important for our analysis. Lumírovci tried to prove that any piece of information expressed in a foreign language could be equally expressed by the Czech language.

If any of the representatives was still alive, he/she would probably be quite surprised how greatly their effort has deteriorated in a hundred years. Jaroslav Vrchlický would probably be very pleased, if he could hear teenagers of the present day using such expressions as "čekovat, phounovat" and other expression in regular Czech structures.

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<sup>19</sup> (Levý, 1996, p. 171)

In addition, both Bohuslav Mánek and Jiří Levý agree about one basic principle which is hardly ever violated in translations of Jaroslav Vrchlický. Vrchlický himself states this important rule in his commentary on a translation of Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. Publication *České Teorie Překlada 2*, by Jiří Levý, is used as the source for this quotation. "We have reached the primary requirement of a modern translation. It is the absolute adhesion to the form of the original." (1996, p. 42)<sup>20</sup> This approach of Vrchlický shall be commented on in the comparative analysis.

## 4.2 Jiří Valja

Josef Bubeník was born in 1914 and died in 1967. He used his pseudonym Jiří Valja throughout the entire literary career. The pseudonym shall be used to refer to him in this paper as well. Despite being a law school graduate Valja tried several professions, usually related to writing in one way or another, to eventually become a professional writer. Despite his debut as a poet and critic of poetry, the main body of Valja's own literary production lies on psychological prose. Namely "*Zbraně Bezbranných, Zahradní ulice 70, Cestující se Zavazadly*, and other psychological prosaic works." (Blažíček, 1998)<sup>21</sup>

We should, however, be more concerned with Valja as a translator. *Slovník české literatury po roce 1945* provides the complete list of Valja's translations. Translations of major works and from four languages appear on the list. What could be considered surprising, or even useful, for our analysis, is the fact that the list consists of greater number of prosaic works than poetical.

The points about Valja being a prose writer, and having translated great amount of prosaic works have not been enrolled by coincidence. There is a point that needs to be mentioned on account of our comparative analysis. Jaroslav Vrchlický states the subsequent thought in the commentary which has been already mentioned in this chapter.

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<sup>20</sup> Translated by the author of the paper.

<sup>21</sup> Translated by the author of the paper.

"I wouldn't even dream of the necessity of proving the fact that a poet can only be translated by another poet. The fact is so obvious that only a narrow mind could doubt it." (1996, p. 42)<sup>22</sup>

This controversial point made by Vrchlický shall be put to the test in our analysis. The aforementioned *Slovník české literatury po roce 1945* states that Jiří Valja was "a translator and a prose writer,"<sup>23</sup> thus, according to Vrchlický, a person incapable of translating poetry.

To foreshadow what we are about to deal with in the actual comparison of the two selected translations. We have here Jaroslav Vrchlický, a poet who is enormously keen on the form of the original. Nevertheless, considering the language and overall artistic value, he, as a poet, tries to be a rival of the original author, and significantly enough, he can be. We have here a translator, who tries to draw attention to his own person, and almost tries to create his own work within the formal structure of the original, rather than trying to fade to the background and trying not to be of a competition to the original author. On the other side we have Jiří Valja who cannot match the poetic qualities of Jaroslav Vrchlický, who is not considered a successful poet, not even predominantly a translator of poetry, and does not try to compete with the original author. Such contrast between the two translators guarantees an interesting comparison.

## **5 COMPARISON OF THE SELECTED TRANSLATIONS**

We shall compare the translations by Jaroslav Vrchlický and Jiří Valja at this point. We only state the pages from which the representative parts can be retrieved and their authors. Once again, the quoted works are the original version of *Prometheus Unbound*, published in 1820; the translation by Jaroslav Vrchlický, published in 1900; and the translation by Jiří Valja, published in 1962. The translations shall be compared in accordance with several criteria, each of which shall be discussed in a separate chapter. Our comments on the differences shall be presented in each chapter, and

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<sup>22</sup> Translated by the author of the paper.

<sup>23</sup> (Blažíček, 1998)

summarized in the following concluding section. Jaroslav Vrchlický states an important thought in the preface of his translation.

"Here (in a translation) it is more than anywhere else possible to hang on every word and swiftly consider every translation inadequate. I have, however, always been searching for the spirit rather than for the words." (1900, p. 3)<sup>24</sup>

Honouring his words we shall not decide which translation is more successful, but rather compare the translations, comment on the differences, and let the reader decide which approach he/she finds more attractive.

## **5.1 Lexical Point of View**

The word choice of individual translators shall be compared in this chapter. Special emphasis shall be put on the use of proper nouns and the overall word choice. The overall word choice shall be examined from various points of view.

### **5.1.1 Proper Nouns**

Proper nouns have been an issue since the very beginning of translating. Not even Jiří Levý feels entitled to utter definite guidelines for transferring proper nouns from one language to another. "No overall theory can be of help in this case (the case of proper nouns). A translator has to search for the most tolerable solution for every occurrence." (1983, p. 94).<sup>25</sup> Let us take a look at how Vrchlický and Valja treat Shelley's proper nouns.

Shelley provides a list of characters before opening the first act of his play. Let us quote the list and the translations thereof.

Prometheus.  
Demogorgon.  
Jupiter.  
The Earth.  
Ocean.  
Apollo.  
Mercury.

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<sup>24</sup> Translated by the author of the paper.

<sup>25</sup> Translated by the author of the paper.

Hercules.  
 Asia  
 Panthea } Oceanides.  
 Ione  
 The Phantasm of Jupiter.  
 The Spirit of the Earth.  
 Spirits of the Hours.  
 Spirits. Echoes. Fawns.  
 Furies.

(Shelley, p. 22)

Prometheus  
 Demogorgon  
 Joviš  
 Země  
 Ocean  
 Apollo  
 Merkur  
 Herakles  
 Asia  
 Panthea } Okeanidky  
 Ione  
 Přelud Joviše  
 Duch Země  
 Duchové hodin  
 Duchové, Echa, Fauni  
 Furie.

(Vrchlický, p. 13)

Prométheus  
 Demogorgón  
 Jupiter  
 Země  
 Oceán  
 Apolón  
 Merkur  
 Herkules  
 Asia  
 Panthea } Oceánidky  
 Iona  
 Přízrak Joviše  
 Duch země  
 Duchové hodin  
 Duchové, Ozvěny, Faunové  
 Fúrie

(Valja, p. 15)

The first difference which meets the eye is the Czech masculine ending "-ón" used by Jiří Valja for the character of "Demogorgon". He treats "Apollo" the same way, making him "Apolón". Vrchlický does not add Czech masculine endings to the characters of "Apollo" and "Demogorgon", thus keeping them closer to the original version. However, Jaroslav Vrchlický adds feminine ending to "Oceanides", and more importantly, he seems to have developed particular desire for choosing lofty alternatives of the proper nouns. Out of two possibilities Vrchlický seems to like the more distant from the original name frequently. He substitutes "Joviš" for "Jupiter" as well as "Okeánidky" for the "Oceanides". Both "Joviš" and "Okeánidky" are legitimate alternatives. None of them was, however, used by the original author.

Both translators seem to be unsure whether they want to satisfy the needs of the target language, or to cherish the original language. They both violate Levý's principle of unified approach towards translating.<sup>26</sup> Both translators use equally unbalanced proper nouns, with both translated and substituted proper names. Nevertheless, the only alarming discovery of this chapter is Jiří Valja translating "Jupiter" and "The Phantasm of Jupiter" as "Jupiter" and "Přízrak **Joviše**". The intention of the original author was to emphasize the ideological connection between the two characters. Valja devaluates the connection by using substitute name "Joviš" for the second character, whereas Vrchlický uses "Joviš" for both characters.

At this point we shall use a part of the second act of the play to illustrate how significant a misuse of a proper name can be. Panthea is talking to her sister. Jiří Valja translates. Jaroslav Vrchlický confuses the reader.

Both love and woe familiar to my heart  
As they had grown to thine: erewhile I slept  
Under the glaucous caverns of old Ocean  
Within dim bowers of green and purple moss,

(Shelley, p. 68)

S Láskou a hořem, až jim přivyklo  
jako tvé srdce. Dřív jsem spávala  
v modravých slujích starce Oceánu,  
v besídkách ze zelených, rudých mechů

(Valja, p. 67)

Tož soucitem a zvykem bolu lásky,  
jak ty's mu zvykla. Dosud dřímala jsem  
ve modrých slujích starce Okeana,  
v besídkách mechů zelených a rudých;

(Vrchlický, p. 61)

Let us discuss the words "Oceánu" and "Okeána". "The Ocean" is of neuter gender in both Czech and English language. Valja's use of neuter gender nominative ending is thus justified. Vrchlický would often go as far as inventing new words in his

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<sup>26</sup> (1983, p. 95)

translations. He uses masculine nominative ending with word that requires neuter ending, and makes the whole message unclear for the reader.

We have explored one feature of our selected translations, and we have already discovered virtues and vices in both translators. More differences shall be discovered in the following parts of the analysis.

### **5.1.2 Overall Word Choice**

Word choice is an important factor of a translation, and it deserves to be mentioned in our analysis. Both Bohuslav Mánek and Jiří Levý discuss the choice of words in their studies of translations. Levý criticizes the translators who use words with more general, broader meanings than the original author intended.<sup>27</sup> Such broadening of meaning is of major prominence for the purpose of our analysis. The theoretical part of the paper has established the fact that we compare translations of work of revolutionary Romanticism. Certain accuracy of diction is thus desired, and the revolutionary acuteness needs to be apparent in the translations as well.

Bohuslav Mánek, on the other hand, criticizes the opposite approach. We have already discussed the general features of translations of Jaroslav Vrchlický, and his certitude that Czech language is capable of expressing any thought of a foreign language. Mánek, using opinions of numerous literary experts, considers such effort too "artificial and distortive". (1991, p. 106) Words of Jaroslav Vrchlický are often considered vague and obscure. "Metaplasm (deliberate change of spelling) is too frequent in translations made by Jaroslav Vrchlický." (1991, p. 106)

We can see that Vrchlický is heavily disputed by the authorities of our science. Let us quote some of Valja's verses, and see which words he chooses. Since we wish to comment on the revolutionary spirit of the words used by the translators, we need to find a piece of the play with revolution in the air. We shall use the opening Speech of Prometheus, the character we have described as an embodiment of revolution. The speech also uses strong imaginative words to depict the position of nature. Let us see how strong the words of our translators are.

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<sup>27</sup> (1983, p. 137)



No change, no pause, no hope! Yet I endure.  
I ask the Earth, have not the mountains felt?  
I ask yon Heaven, the all-beholding Sun,  
Has it not seen? The Sea, in storm or calm,  
Heaven's ever-changing Shadow, spread below,  
Have its deaf waves not heard my agony?  
Ah me! alas, pain, pain ever, for ever!

(Shelley, p. 20)

Ni naděje, ni oddechu, ni změny!  
Však snesu to. Já ptám se Země. její  
zda hory necítily moji bolest ?  
Já ptám se Nebe, vše zřícího Slunce,  
zda nezřely jí ? Moře v bouři, v klidu  
ten nad ním měnící se vždy Stín Nebes,  
zda hluché proudy zhyn můj neslyšely  
Ach, běda! Muka, muka, věčná muka!

(Vrchlický, p. 16)

Bez nadějí, změn ! Ale neklesám.  
Země se ptám, zda necítí to hory.  
Nebe se ptám, zda vševidoucí Slunce  
to nevidí. A moře vbouři, klidu  
tam dole jak Stín mihotavých Nebes  
neslyší hluchou vlnou moje muka ?  
Ach běda, věčná, věčná moje muka !

(Valja, p. 18)

Both translators deal with the natural symbolism with dignity. The "all-beholding sun" becomes "vše zřící Slunce" and "vševidoucí Slunce". "Heaven's ever-changing shadow" becomes "měnící se Stín nebes" in Vrchlický's translation, and is slightly misinterpreted by Valja as "Stín mihotavých Nebes". Valja attributes the ability of changing to the heaven, when the shadow is in fact what changes. None of the words carrying heavy symbolism is, however, dramatically weakened by the translators. This part of their mission can be considered a success.

Let us refer back to the chapter where we discussed the poets in minds of certain translators standing in the way of clarity of their expression. Shelley uses the word "agony" to symbolize struggle of humanity against oppression. It is a major theme, and a major word used to express it. Valja translates "agony" as "muka", and the message of the word remains unchanged. Vrchlický, on the other hand, decides to

translate "agony" as "zhyn". "Zhyn" is an elevated word representing dying in the Czech language. People got inspired by Shelley's revolutionary Romanticism, because it stood for enduring the agony of oppression. We cannot help to wonder, if they would not change their minds, being presented with dying as the solution of struggle against oppression.

To be fair, the translators reversed their roles when translating the phrase " Yet I endure," another strong word choice representing Shelley's concept of revolution. We have mentioned the endurance when discussing the themes of the drama. Vrchlický translates the phrase as "Ale snesu to," keeping its prominence. Valja decided to use phrase "Však neklesám," weakening the expression, and changing the intention of the original author.

The point of Vrchlický being a poet and Valja being a prose writer, presented in the previous section of the paper, can be supported by the above quoted passages. Vrchlický tries for more elevated style both in choice of expressions and in word order of Czech structures.

This subchapter has discovered obedience of the presented principles of translation, as well as violations by both selected translators. The following chapter shall analyze the translations from the aesthetic point of view.

## **5.2 Aesthetic Point of View**

The aesthetic and lexical points of view overlap to a great degree. We may easily reach a point in this chapter, where use of individual words shall be discussed. Even if we did discuss the lexical aspects of the selected translations in this chapter, we would analyze their relation to the aesthetic qualities of the translations. The rhymed parts of the play shall start rising to prominence in this chapter. We shall analyze the ways by which Czech translators transfer the thoughts and figures of speech of Percy Bysshe Shelley into Czech language. We shall observe how our translators deal with Shelley's rhymes, and which words they use in rhyme positions. The general aesthetic qualities of language of both translators shall be commented on in the last subchapter.

## 5.2.1 Transfer of Thoughts Between the English Poet and the Czech Translator

A thought may require different ways of expressing in different language systems. Such thought represents a problem for a translator, who wants to adhere to the form of the original and keep the meaning of his translation as close to the original text as possible. Jiří Levý describes this frequent phenomenon, and calls its most common treatment by translators "sketching the thoughts" (1983, p. 146)<sup>28</sup> Sketching stands for enrolling the thoughts or explaining the metaphors of the original author in the translation.

Levý also discusses "points of prominence," the ideological centres of lines of poetry. Levý suggests that, due to the general use of shorter words in English, an English poet has got more space for more ideological centres in his/her lines, whereas Czech translator needs to omit or condense points of ideological prominence. (1983. pp. 232, 233)

Let us put this hypothesis to the test, and reveal how Jaroslav Vrchlický and Jiří Valja deal with Shelley's figurative language and with the points of higher prominence. The passage is taken from the fourth act, and represents Demogorgon's praise of Prometheus.

1                      2                      3                      4  
Man, who wert once a despot and a slave  
A dupe and a deceiver! a decay,  
A traveler from the cradle to the grave  
Through the dim night of this immortal day:

(Shelley, p. 151)

1                      2                      3  
Ty člověče, jenž otrok byl's a tyran,  
jenž podvodník byl a podveden spolu,  
jenž od kolébky bloudil's až v hrob svíráán  
až v nesmrtný den tento v noci, v bolu

(Vrchlický, p. 142)

1                      2                      3  
Člověče, jenž si pán i otrok byl,  
podvodník, který je sám podveden,  
z kolébky k hrobu život probudil,  
tou temnou nocí, nežli vzešel den.

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<sup>28</sup> Translated by the author of the paper.

(Valja, p. 159)

Both translators perform decent interpretation of Shelley's figures in the first two lines of the stanza. The third and fourth line is blurry in both translations. The "traveler" metaphor disappears completely in both translations. The immortality (endlessness) of the day is expressed with a different meaning. The necessity of rhyme words is greatly responsible for the meaning shift. We shall use this stanza once again in the following subchapter when analyzing the words in rhyme positions.

We have numbered the points of prominence in the first lines of all three versions to prove the point of Jiří Levý. The three syllable word "člověče," used by both translators, forces them to either violate the form, or omit an important piece of information. Both translators choose the omission.

Concerning the aim of this particular subchapter, we can state that Jaroslav Vrchlický and Jiří Valja do not crave for enrolling and explaining the figures of Percy Bysshe Shelley. They both rather narrow or alter the meaning for the needs of the original form.

## 5.2.2 Translating Rhyming Couplets

It is almost impossible to find rhyming words with similar meanings in two different language systems. A compromise between rhyme and meaning needs to be found in most cases. Levý reveals two possible scenarios for such cases. Either the translator finds appropriate rhyming words to at least preserve the meaning of the lines, or he/she uses an "emergency" word, and takes the risk of creating lines with completely different meaning. Levý calls such words "rhyme pads." (1983, p. 229)

Let us use the stanza from the previous subchapter, and pay attention to the words in rhyme positions.

Man, who wert once a despot and a slave  
A dupe and a deceiver! a decay,  
A traveler from the cradle to the grave  
Through the dim night of this immortal day:

(Shelley, p. 151)

Ty člověče, jenž otrok byl's a tyran,

jenž podvodník byl a podveden spolu,  
jenž od kolébky bloudil's až v hrob svírán  
až v nesmrtný den tento v noci, v bolu

(Vrchlický, p. 142)

Člověče, jenž si pán i otrok byl,  
podvodník, který je sám podveden,  
z kolébky k hrobu život probudil,  
tou temnou nocí, nežli vzešel den.

(Valja, p. 159)

Shelley rhymes "slave" with "grave" in the original version. Vrchlický uses "tyran" and "svírán." "Tyran" corresponds with the original theme, "svírán" adds an alternative meaning to the third line of the stanza. Valja rhymes "byl" in the first line with "probudil" in the third line. Again, "probudil" represents a meaning which was not intended by the original author, and "byl" is a rhyme pad of general meaning. Levý suggests that frequent use of rhyme pads indicates incompetence of a translator. (1983, p. 230) The overall occurrence of rhyme pads is not what we would call frequent in both analyzed translations. Thus, even though the analyzed stanza reveals certain deficiencies, we consider both of the translators skilled in finding appropriate rhyming couplets.

### 5.2.3 Language of Vrchlický versus Language of Valja

Approaches of the translators have been discussed in section four of the paper. We have established that Vrchlický, as a poet, does use elevated language, and in fact deliberately tries to make his translation hard to read, whereas Valja, as a prose writer, should try to do the opposite.

Let us illustrate this point. Panthea's speech from the third act of the play is used for this purpose.

It is the delicate spirit  
That guides the earth through heaven. From afar  
The populous constellations call that light  
The loveliest of the planets; and sometimes  
It floats along the spray of the salt sea,  
Or makes its chariot of a foggy cloud,

(Shelley, pp. 111, 112)

Tot' jest onen jemný duch,

jenž zemi nebem vodí. Z dálky zovou  
jej lidé planetou hvězd nějluznější.  
On proudí kolem hnědé sláně moře  
neb robí povoz z hustého si mraku.

(Vrchlický, p. 111)

Vím, je to křehký duch,  
jenž vede Zemi nebem. Daleká  
souhvězdí ono světlo nazývají  
nebeskou kráskou. Někdy vznáší se  
v pěnlivé tříšti slzných mořských vln  
nebo si zvolí za vůz mlžný mrak.

(Valja, p. 119)

There is no doubt that our assumption was right. Language of Jaroslav Vrchlický is extraordinary in every aspect. He uses metaplasm ("zovou"), reverses the word order of Czech structures ("robí povoz z hustého si mraku") and even invents new words for the purpose of formal harmony with the original text ("robí"). Jiří Valja uses plain language, regular word order and ordinary expressions.

At this point it is only appropriate to restate the aim of our analysis. The aim is to present the reader with the virtues and vices of individual translations and translators, rather than to judge which translation is more successful. Again we have discovered several vices and several virtues in both translations in this chapter.

We have already compared the translations in accordance with several criteria. There are only two steps ahead of us. We shall add several formal criteria to our analysis in the following chapter, and comment on the results in the concluding section.

### 5.3 Formal Point of View

Section four of our analysis quotes a guideline to translating written by Jaroslav Vrchlický. Let us use his words once again. "We have reached the primary requirement of a modern translation. It is the absolute adhesion to the form of the original." (1996, p. 42)<sup>29</sup>

Jiří Levý emphasizes the fact that expressing the same amount of information takes twenty percent more text in Czech prose than in English prose. It is caused by the

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<sup>29</sup> Translated by the author of the paper.

average length of Czech prose word being almost twice as long as the average English prose word, and partially reduced by English being an analytic language. (1983, p. 233) Even though we have discussed several ways of conforming the message to the needs of form in the previous chapters, finding out which one of the translators is more dedicated to following the formal structure of the original text should not be a difficult task.

We have suggested, and proved several times during this analysis, that Vrchlický is more interested in the form, whereas Valja in the message of the translated text. Let us examine this point for the last time, using adhesion to the metre of the original text as the formal criterion. A stanza shall be used for illustration once again. The stanza is taken from the beginning of the fourth act of the play. The stanza does not use the traditional blank verse metre. Blank verse passages are quoted in the previous chapters, and they are, from the formal point of view, translated properly both by Jaroslav Vrchlický and Jiří Valja. This observation makes their use limited at this point of our analysis.

Strew, oh, strew  
Hair, not yew!  
Wet the dusty pall with tears, not dew!  
Be the faded flowers  
Of Death's bare bowers  
Spread on the corpse of the King of Hours!

(Shelley, p. 122)

Nad přikrovem  
vlas rozprostřen.  
Ne rosou, slzou pokropíme zem.  
Květy jež v zlý  
Čas uvadly,  
tělo krále hodin zahalí.

(Valja, p. 130)

Sem kštice jen !  
Ne jívy kmen,  
buď rubáš slzami, ne rosou pokropen,  
buď sladký květ  
na máry set,  
Kde smrtí Hodin král pro vždycky zbled'.

(Vrchlický, p. 117)

This stanza with rhyme pattern of *aaabbb* and alternating length of verse proves that Vrchlický is willing to distort the original message completely in order to keep up with the formal criteria. Valja keeps the rhyme pattern, and modifies the length of rhymes in order to convey the message of the original text properly.

The last reference of the analytical part of the paper aims backwards to the section titled "TRANSLATION." At that point of the analysis, we promised to examine certain thought of Jaroslav Vrchlický. To be specific, it was the following thought.

"I wouldn't even dream of the necessity of proving the fact that a poet can only be translated by another poet. The fact is so obvious that only a narrow mind could doubt it." (1996. p. 42)<sup>30</sup>

We have proved in the analytical part of this paper that in certain aspects of translating Jiří Valja, despite not being a successful poet, can be a competition for Jaroslav Vrchlický. This outcome shall be fully described in the following section of the paper, the concluding section.

## 6 CONCLUSION

This paper compares two translations of Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*, one of the most prominent works of English Romanticism. The theoretical part of the paper sets forth all the information necessary for a translator to fully understand the author whom he/she is about to translate within his historical and ideological setting.

The part titled "TRANSLATION" serves as a bridge between the most prominent parts of the paper. The selected translators are discussed in this part, and firm ground is established for the upcoming comparison.

The extent of the paper is not adequate to provide us with the opportunity to compare large parts, or even the entirety, of the selected translations. Quoting hundreds of pages of poetry is not even the ambition of this paper. The primary objective of this analysis is to properly examine and compare the approaches of Jaroslav Vrchlický and Jiří Valja towards translating a complex piece of poetry and literary history. This

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<sup>30</sup> Translated by the author of the paper.



objective has been fulfilled, and several aspects of the selected translations have been compared. We could not decide which translation was more successful, even if we wanted. For each translation has its distinctive features, and most importantly, for we are, as the literary critics were fifty years ago, "capable of finding flaws in translations, but incapable of providing satisfactory substitutes."<sup>31</sup>

To mention the results of the comparison. The distinctive feature of the translation made by Jaroslav Vrchlický is obedience to the form of the original work. This obedience affects his translation in almost every aspect analyzed in this paper. His word choice is affected by the needs of the form. He frequently distorts the message of the original work. Aesthetic qualities of his translation are undisputable, even though they are also often conformed to the formal needs. Jaroslav Vrchlický is flawless from the formal point of view.

Jiří Valja presents a translation written in plain, understandable language. He is consistent in the word choice, and does not distort the message of the original text as often as Vrchlický does. On the other hand, the quality of Valja's expression is conformed to the needs of delivering the message, thus both from the formal and aesthetic point of view, Vrchlický should be considered the more successful translator.

If we were to draw a conclusion from the analytical part of the paper, it would suggest that Jiří Valja, despite not being generally considered a successful poet, has done an exceptional job creating a translation which is to a great degree capable of competing with the translation of Jaroslav Vrchlický, one of the most prominent Czech translators.

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<sup>31</sup> (Mánek, 1991, p. 116) Translated by the author of the paper.

## 7 RESUMÉ

Tato bakalářská práce si klade smělý cíl porovnat dva vybrané překlady básně Opoutaný Prométheus od anglického romantického básníka a dramatika Percy Bysshe Shelleyho. Práce volí pro porovnání překlady Jaroslava Vrchlického, z roku 1900, a překlad, který vypracoval Jiří Valja v roce 1962. Překlad Davidův, z roku 1938, je záměrně vynechán pro přílišnou časovou a ideologickou spjatost s překladem Vrchlického. Porovnání je provedeno s cílem přiblížit charakteristické rysy překladů obou překladatelů a jejich vypořádání se s milníkem světové literatury, spíše než s cílem rozhodnutí, který z překladů je úspěšnějším.

Teoretická část práce, nazvaná „TOWARDS PROMETHEUS," si klade za úkol seznámit čtenáře s charakteristikami romantického hnutí, uvést jej do dobové problematiky a představit mu žánr romantického dramatu. Pochopení zmíněných skutečností má zásadní vliv na pochopení ideologie rozebíraného autora a následně i ideologie celé jeho doby.

Kapitola „Romanticism - historical outline" představuje shrnutí historických faktů, které vedly ke zformování romantického hnutí ve Velké Británii, stejně tak jako shrnutí hlavních filozofických myšlenek, které určovaly smýšlení probíraného autora i jeho vrstevníků. Kapitola prezentuje útržky z britské historie, právě tak jako cituje hlavní filozofická díla zmíněné doby.

Kapitola nazvaná „Pre-romanticism" představuje smýšlení uměleckého hnutí, které bezprostředně předcházelo romantickému hnutí.

Kapitola "Romanticism in literature" představuje prvky literárního romantizmu. Představuje ideologii romantických autorů, kterou bude později možno vystopovat jak v originální verzi Odpoutaného Prométhea, tak bude třeba ji nalézt i v obou překladech do jazyka českého.

Kapitola nazvaná „English Romantic Drama" představuje nejdůležitější odvětví anglického romantického dramatu, rozebírá příčiny jejich vzestupu a s použitím názorů literárních expertů vymezuje termín "closet drama," který vyjadřuje hru, která se nedokázala prosadit na jeviště divadel, nýbrž byla, ať už dobrovolně, či nedobrovolně, spíše recitována a dochovala se tedy jako důstojný kus literární tvorby. Closet drama je žánr pro tuto práci jaksi zásadní, neboť báseň, jejíž překlady chce práce porovnávat,

spadá do tohoto žánru. Je sice vysvětleno, že Percy Bysshe Shelley svou práci jistě nezamýšlel uložit do skříně, nicméně již při jejím vydávání měl jisté pochybnosti o případném publiku pro svou hru.

Oddíl práce nazvaný „PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY" si klade za úkol seznámit čtenáře se životem a dílem autora tak zásadního pro tuto analýzu. Důkladné poznání autorova života a díla je pro pochopení jeho ideologie stejně zásadní, jako pochopení celého romantického hnutí a romantického dramatu jako celku.

Život Percy Bysshe Shelleyho byl veskrze romantický. Autor procestoval nejrůznější kouty své vlasti i evropského kontinentu, zapletl se s několika ženami, vytvořil několik potomků, kvůli kterým se mohl rozkmotřit s vedením své rodné země a rozezlen odejít do dobrovolného italského vyhnanství, kde se pod vlivem George Gordona Byrona, jeho básnického přítele, naplno mohl rozvinout jeho básnický génius, který byl však záhy ukončen básnickovou náhlou smrtí utonutím. Percy Bysshe Shelley zemřel mlád, avšak stihnul zanechat úctyhodnou sbírku literárních děl, která je poměrně podrobně vyobrazena náležitým oddílem této práce.

Kapitola nesoucí název „Prometheus Unbound" se zabývá dílem Odpoutaný Prométheus. Nikoli však v českých překladech, nýbrž zkoumá jeho originální podobu. Nejrůznější aspekty této dramatické básně jsou prezentovány s jasným záměrem vytvořit důstojný podklad pro nadcházející porovnání dvou českých překladů tohoto díla.

Dílo je popsáno jako adaptace původního řeckého motivu, báje o spoutaném Prométheovi, který popudil proti sobě bohy tím, že daroval lidstvu oheň. Náš revoluční romantik Shelley nemohl však připustit, aby události jeho adaptace odpovídaly událostem původního dramatu. Jeho revoluční přesvědčení nesneslo myšlenku, že utiskovatel a zastánce lidstva by měli být nakonec smířeni, a vytvořil tak hru zcela odlišnou od předlohy. Shelleyho koncept revoluce formou trpělivosti a lásky prostupuje celým dílem a naráží pouze na drobnou dramatickou obtíž. Jak osvobodit titána, který je jaksi materiálně připoután ke kavkazským horám, láskou a trpělivostí? Shelley zde zapojuje svoji výjimečnou představivost a ukazuje další fragment své ideologie, když vytváří postavu Demogorgona, ztělesnění nevyhnutelnosti, spravedlnosti a pořádku, který může špinavou práci vykonat namísto spoutaného titána. Oba antagonisté nejsou tedy v naší verzi dramatu smířeni, nýbrž Jupiter, ztělesnění utiskovatelského řádu, jest

svržen a vydán na cestu k zapomnění. Utiskovaný lid, v podobě Prométhea, se tedy může probudit k radosti a je oslavován všemi živly a smysly. Příroda mu zpívá v Shelleyho neopakovatelných imaginativních vyobrazeních, tématu, které je taktéž představeno, aby mohlo později, během srovnání jednotlivých překladů, být zohledněno.

V kapitole jsou dále rozebrány ústřední postavy dramatu a jejich vztah k symbolice celého díla a zohledněna je i formální stránka dramatu, která taktéž znamená zásadní veličinu pro případného překladatele.

Sekce nazvaná příhodně „TRANSLATION“ tvoří pomyslný můstek mezi teoretickou a praktickou částí práce. V této kapitole jsou nastoleny pevné základy pro pozdější porovnání vlastních překladů. Velmi stručně jsou prezentováni jednotliví překladatelé Jaroslav Vrchlický a Jiří Valja. Jejich životy a díla jsou shrnuty v několika řádcích, protože jejich osoby nejsou pro pochopení ani interpretaci překládaného díla nikterak zásadní. Zásadní jsou však jejich individuální přístupy k překládání jako takovému. V této sekci jsou prezentovány základní překladatelské tendence obou překladatelů, díla, která běžně měli ve zvyku překládat a postavení překladatelů v rámci celku českého překladu. Jsou položeny některé otázky, které bude třeba v analýze zohlednit, a později jsou k nim dodány odpovědi. Je diskutováno postavení Jiřího Valjy vůči "překladatelskému monopolu," který ve své době představoval Jaroslav Vrchlický. Je položena zásadní otázka, kterou se zabýval už Vrchlický ve své době. A to, zda je možné, aby básnické dílo důstojně přeložil člověk, který se svou tvorbou a překladatelským zaměřením zcela jako básník neprezentuje. Nyní, když jsou nám výsledky analýzy známy, můžeme předeslat, že možné to je.

Nejdůležitější sekce celé práce je nazvána „COMPARISON OF THE SELECTED TRANSLATIONS“ a předkládá vlastní srovnávací analýzu dvou vybraných překladů dramatické básně *Odpoutaný Prométheus*. Tato sekce cituje význačné pasáže původního Shelleyho díla, právě tak jako pozdějších překladů a nabízí tak jejich bezprostřední porovnání. Sekce několikrát znovu připomíná, že není jejím účelem natolik zhodnotit, který překlad je vydařenější, jako spíše prezentovat zásadní rozdíly v přístupech jednotlivých překladatelů a nechat na čtenáři, který z překladů se na základě porovnaných kritérií rozhodne zvolit.

Srovnávací sekce je rozdělena na dílčí části, které, za výrazného přispění odborných názorů specialistů v oboru teorie překladu, pánů Bohuslava Mánka a Jiřího

Levého, prezentují jednotlivé náhledy na porovnání překladů, prezentují jednotlivé překladatelské problémy a nabízí jejich případná řešení.

Kapitola nazvaná „Lexical point of view“ zkoumá volbu slov jednotlivých překladatelů, která je zásadním měřítkem při porovnávání překladů.

Kapitola je rozdělena do dvou dílčích částí, z nichž první část zkoumá, jak jednotliví překladatelé nakládají s Vlastními jmény užitými v originálním díle. První podčást shledává oba autory nekonzistentní v nakládání s vlastními jmény.

Druhá část zkoumá celkovou volbu slov, která je opět pro překladatele zásadní. Kapitola se pozastavuje nad vyobrazením Shelleyho typických ideologických znaků, jako jsou barvitá vyobrazení přírody a revoluční naléhavost v básnickově výrazu. Kapitola shledává oba překladatele důstojnými tlumočníky Shelleyho přírodních motivů a má pouze některé drobnější výhrady k tlumočení revolučních výrazových prvků.

Kapitola nazvaná „Aesthetic point of view“ rozebírá oba překlady jaksi z estetického hlediska. Zkoumá, jak jednotliví autoři přenáší některé delší úseky Shelleyho poezie, zda správně interpretují významy jeho obrazných vyjádření. Kapitola dále zkoumá užití slov v rýmových pozicích a celkové vzezření výsledného jazyka Valjova i Vrchlického. Oba autoři jsou v této kapitole hodnoceni v podstatě rovnocenně, s malým množstvím výhrad. Vrchlického jazyk je v této kapitole shledán občasně přílišně uměleckým a na některých místech nejasným a komolícím výraz předlohy. Jazyk Valjův je shledán jasným a zřetelným, nicméně na úkor estetických kvalit.

Poslední kapitola, nazvaná „Formal point of view,“ zkoumá přilnutí jednotlivých překladatelů k formě originálu. V této kapitole je podle předpokladů výše hodnocen překlad Vrchlického, který si zakládá především na formální korespondenci s originálem, nicméně opět za cenu komolení výrazu předlohy. Valja předlohu tlumočí obsahově věrněji, formálně je však jeho překlad vzdálenější, než ten Vrchlického.

V závěrečné, hodnotící sekci práce je opětovně popsáno poslání celé práce a jeho postupné uskutečnění. Jsou zde prezentovány výsledky srovnávací části práce a zodpovězeny některé dříve položené otázky. Oba překlady jsou zhodnoceny jako dostatečné, přičemž ten Valjův je z výše zmíněných důvodů označen za důstojného protivníka překladu Vrchlického. Takovéto hodnocení překladu lze v kontextu českého překladatelství považovat za nemalý úspěch.

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