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**H. D. Thoreau's Prose in Czech Translations**  
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Jana Strašková

## ABSTRACT

The bachelor paper deals with the topic of Transcendentalism and Thoreau, as he was its representative. His famous book *Walden*, precisely only one chapter, was chosen in order to be analyzed. This writing was translated by Seifert (1933), Franta (1949) and Schwarz (1991). These three translations are compared in the practical part where the author evaluates and comments on the differences. The main sources for evaluation are the books written by Levý who deals with the art of translation. The finding will be summarised in a relevant conclusion.

## KEY WORDS

America, Thoreau, Transcendentalism, nature, translation, comparison, analysis

## ABSTRAKT

Následující bakalářská práce je zaměřena na H. D. Thoreaua a Transcendentalismus, jehož je představitelem. K analýze byla vybrána jeho slavná kniha *Walden*, respektive jedna jeho kapitola. Toto dílo bylo mimo jiné přeloženo Milošem Seifertem (1933), Zdeňkem Frantou (1949) a Josefem Schwarzem (1991). Právě tyto tři překlady jsou v praktické části porovnávány. Autor také hodnotí a komentuje rozdíly především na základě knih od Jiřího Levého, které se týkají umění překladu. V závěru bakalářské práce jsou shrnuty poznatky a zjištění, následované relevantním závěrem.

## KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

Amerika, Thoreau, Transcendentalismus, příroda, překlad, porovnání, analýza

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# Introduction

This bachelor paper deals with the comparison of three translations of *Walden* by Henry David Thoreau. The chapter called “Reading” was chosen for the practical part which is analyzed in great detail.

Firstly, some basic information about the period of the beginning of the nineteenth century is given.

The second part provides a reader with the idea of Transcendentalism and gives more information about the biography of Thoreau, his writings and influence on other people, especially writers.

The third part focuses on *Walden* and the style it was written in.

The next part contains a few words about the three translators whose translations of *Walden* will be discussed further on.

The following section offers general information on translating.

Finally, there is a practical part where the translations are compared. The main aim of this paper is to introduce many ways how the original can be translated and how they differ according to the time when the translation was made and the knowledge of both languages that the translator possesses. The specific examples are chosen in order to prove translators’ creativity, or on the contrary, literally translation which disregards rules of the language a work is translated into. The principal method used in the practical part is the method of comparison and analysis. All findings will be summarized in the conclusion.

The author worked also with some secondary sources which are either books or internet sources. In order to make the text easy to go through and well-arranged, the square brackets are used when citing the internet sources. The particular number in the brackets refers to the bibliography which is situated at the end of the bachelor paper. All the needed information can be found there.



# **1. Time implementation, current circumstances**

American literature in the first half of the nineteenth century is associated with Romanticism, culminating in the writings of Edgar Allan Poe who influenced American as well as world literature. In this period, there were also other famous writers such as Washington Irving and James Fenimore Cooper. They focused on European literature but found topics typical of American culture. Romantic prose was developed by Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nathaniel Hawthorne and Henry David Thoreau. However, Thoreau was mainly famous for Transcendentalism which is a part of Romanticism as well.

Before Thoreau was born, there was a period of territorial expansion westwards, and colonization of the whole continent from the Atlantic to the Pacific. As Thoreau was growing up, cotton industry was increasing in its importance especially after the war with Britain in the second decade of the nineteenth century when U. S. Defeated British at the Battle of the Thames. Santa Fe Trail was opened in 1821. [19] Thoreau experienced all these changes in mentality and people values, began spending his time in nature and shaped his views. He could see a great increase in materialism and hunt for money and later on he tried to warn people in his writings. His prophetic ability was fulfilled by Jackson's "Bank War" in 1833 and also a Gold Rush in 1848. [19] Thoreau had a great relationship towards Indians so he suffered when Cherokees were forcibly removed from Georgia to Indian Territory in 1838 called "Trail of Tears". [19] When the Mexican-American War began in 1846, Thoreau had already stayed at Walden Pond. Anyway, he disapproved with the war in Mexico and it was also the reason why he refused to pay taxes and was imprisoned because of that.

# **2. Transcendentalism**

American Transcendentalism can be defined as a complex religious, philosophical, literary, and social movement. (MÁNEK: 138) It can be considered as the first conscious effort to the cultural self-determination of Americans as a nation. The term was derived from a German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). [22] His philosophy was based on the statement that some notions cannot be directly experienced. According to Kant, notions such as morality and divinity have a higher

order of existence than what people experience directly in the physical world. Transcendentalism was generally influenced by German idealism and it is concerned not with objects but with one's mode of knowing objects.

A so called Transcendental Club was established in Concord where "The Dial" magazine was regularly issued since 1840. The other representatives were its founder Emerson, Margaret Fuller who fought for the women's rights, Alcott, and Whitman who was not in fact a Transcendentalist but his writing was sometimes discussed in this context, in particularly in Czech writings. (MÁNEK: 138) The key topics they were focused on were individuality, self-reliance, self-confidence, patriotism, and democracy. The typical features which were highlighted were self-improvement as well as the desire for originality. In addition, all these writers fought in order to abolish slavery and they sympathized with the ideas of European utopian socialists.

Ethical and humanistic transcendentalist' ideals considerably influenced the development of American philosophy and culture. The writers had many similar issues they were rebelling against. In the words of Ralph Waldo Emerson: "We will walk on our own feet; we will work with our own hands; we will speak our own minds...A nation of men will for the first time exist, because each believes himself inspired by the Divine Soul which also inspires all men." [25]

### **3. Henry David Thoreau**

Thoreau was a rebellious poet, moralist and philosopher of the nineteenth century who was born 12<sup>th</sup> July 1817 in Concord, a close city to Boston, Massachusetts. Less familiar is the fact that he also spent some time reading, annotating, and drawing maps. (HESSLER 2010: 1) Thoreau spent most of his time in nature since his early age being fascinated by the beauty of woods, meadows, ponds and rivers. He studied Science at Harvard University and became familiar with great knowledge of English literature. When he finished his studies, he was a teacher by profession. However, he terminated after two weeks because he was not willing to punish his students physically. Thoreau never did what he had already done before because he thought it would be a waste of time. His dad was a pencil maker so when Thoreau managed to create high quality pencils, it was probably the time when he decided not to have a full-time job and

do what he enjoyed. He was a man of many professions and a well-educated person at the same time.

He was not demanding. Simple and cheap food was sufficient for him as well as he talked to ordinary people with simple spirit. Although he did not have many friends, the two he had were the real ones – Ralph Waldo Emerson and William Ellery Channing. It was Emerson who probably described Thoreau’s character in the best and most accurate way.

“He was bred to no profession; he never married; he lived alone; he never went to church; he never voted; he refused to pay a tax to the State: he ate no flesh, he drank no wine, he never knew the use of tobacco; and, though a naturalist, he used neither trap nor gun. He chose, wisely, no doubt, for himself, to be the bachelor of thought and Nature. He had no talent for wealth, and knew how to be poor without the least hint of squalor or inelegance. .... Thoreau was sincerity itself ...”  
[22]

Thoreau seems to be a symbol for moral and determination to keep someone’s attitudes and opinions even in extreme situations. He was imprisoned, as he refused to pay taxes in protest because the government led a war in Mexico and used to support a spread of slavery in the South. Although he was for abolition of slavery, unfortunately, he did not live to the end of American Civil War. He suffered from consumption and died on 6th May 1862, the war ending in 1865. He was taken as an example and hero because of his desire for originality and straightforwardness. Emerson himself gave a speech during Thoreau’s funeral, as he knew him very well and he was aware of the loss which the literature suffered when Thoreau died.

## 4. Thoreau’s writings

He started as a writer by contributing for periodicals. He published “*A Natural History of Massachusetts*”, “*Sir Walter Raleigh*” and “*Thomas Carlyle and His Works*” between 1842 and 1847. The most common genre for Thoreau was an essay such as “*On the Duty of Civil Disobedience*” (1849), “*Walking*” and “*Cape Cod*”. He spoke publicly on many political issues at the Concord Lyceum. Many of his speeches were later published including “*Paradise (to be) Regained*”, “*Slavery in Massachusetts*”, “*A Plea For Captain John Brown*” et cetera. Although he loved Concord, he travelled in

order to explore landscape in Maine and Canada and wrote “*The Maine Woods*” and “*An Excursion to Canada*”. Thoreau was a supporter of Charles Darwin’s Theory of Evolution, some of his writings included detailed observation and analysis of botanical, meteorological, and geographical elements including “*The Succession of Forest Trees*”, “Autumnal Tints” and “*Wild Apples: The History of the Apple Tree*”. (HOKEŠ: 4)

The book the bachelor paper focuses on is *Walden, or Life in the Woods* and it belongs to the most popular piece of American literature.

## **5. Thoreau’s style (used especially in *Walden*)**

As for his style of writing, he usually said what was in his mind in an unforgettable way. “If one has anything to say, it drops from him simply and directly, as a stone falls to the ground.” This saying can be understood as an effect of good writing on the reader, to whom the words sound naturally with no effort on the writer’s part. Thoreau was capable of writing prose that sounds as familiar as ordinary speech but just better balanced. (KLINKENBORG 1992: 12) Some parts of *Walden* are written in an extensive and descriptive way with no metaphors, for instance, Thoreau informs the reader about the exact cost of his house which was built by himself “because very few are able to tell exactly what their houses cost, and fewer still, if any, the separate cost of the various materials which compose them.” (THOREAU 1992: 43)

On the contrary, he uses a completely different style full of metaphors and imperatives towards the end of the book, which makes the reader think deeply about the issue and this fact reveals the exact attitude of the person who has written these words. He believed in the beauty of the common life. In addition, he can be considered an enthusiastic person who was enjoying his life with a great attitude towards nature.

“However mean your life is, meet it and live it; do not shun it and call it hard names. It is not so bad as you are. It looks poorest when you are richest. The fault-finder will find faults even in paradise. Love your life, poor as it is. You may perhaps have some pleasant, thrilling, glorious hours, even in a poor-house.” (THOREAU 1992: 290)

## **6. Thoreau's influence on other writers**

According to Josef Jařab, who wrote an epilogue to Josef Schwarz's 1991 translation, Fitzgerald was nostalgic when he was writing a letter to his daughter after reading Thoreau. He realized what he had missed because of leaving nature out of his life. He regretted not spending enough time in woods, in the mountains or around wild water. He also expressed his disappointment with the hierarchy of values which many people, but characters in his books as well, followed. (JAŘAB 1991: 299) Martin Luther King also claimed himself as Thoreau's follower. He was a leader of Afro American movement for the people's rights and received the Nobel Peace Prize. He was using means of civil disobedience in order to abolish discrimination and segregation so there are no doubts King was influenced by Thoreau. (ADAMS 1963: 106, 107) On the other hand, Nathaniel Hawthorne was refusing transcendentalists' opinions but it may seem, Hawthorne admired Thoreau in some way as well, although he said about him that he had never met such an egoist.

## **7. Walden**

The book of the same name as the pond was firstly published in 1854. Emerson owned some land near the pond and Thoreau built a tiny chalet in order to live in seclusion there. Walden Pond was a familiar place to him, a part of his consciousness, and he came there with the purpose of writing. He moved to Walden on a symbolic date, 4th July 1845, Independence Day, to free himself from Concord or generally American society and choose solitude.

He was living there for two years but he summarized his stay at the pond into one year. Many people thought that it was a gesture of rejecting the civilization. In fact, Thoreau did not want to shun society, just to be close to nature. It is said, Walden is a spiritual biography and contemplation of the relationship between human and nature and the meaning of life and existence. Thoreau himself claimed the purpose of Walden which was to warn people about increase in materialism and hunt for money. (JAŘAB 1991: 302) There is no question that his attitude was not likely to be understood because many people considered this way of spending free time as idleness.

Surprisingly, Thoreau wrote eight versions of the book before it was finally ready for the printer and *Walden* was published “nine years and one month” after Thoreau began living at the pond. (KLINKENBORG 1992: 21)

Moreover, the seasonal structure of *Walden* played an important role as well. Each of the seasons has a typical feature which Thoreau described in great detail. For readers, Thoreau may seem to have been a scientist and ecologist who knew all the animals living near the pond which symbolizes the unity of Thoreau’s book.

## **8. A few words about the translators of *Walden***

**Zdeněk Franta** (1868 – 1943)

He was a high school teacher who translated many other books from English, including *Gulliver’s Travels* by Jonathan Swift, *Little Dorrit* by Charles Dickens, and *Short History of the World* by H. G. Wells. (HOKEŠ 2010: 3)

He also wrote an introduction to his translation which shows knowledge and enthusiasm for Thoreau.

**Miloš Seifert** (1887 – 1941)

He is another high school teacher and a founder of the first Czech “Woodcraft Tribe” inspired by Ernest Thompson Seton and his Woodcraft Indians. He was a pacifist who wrote a handbook of the Woodcraft Movement in 1920. One of its chapters was titled “H. D. Thoreau – The Pioneer of Our Ideal.” (HOKEŠ 2010: 3)

According to Jan Hokeš, it is obvious that the early Czechoslovakian Woodcrafters regarded both Thoreau and Seton as major inspirations. They even named one of their campsites in Slovakia “Walden”. Seifert stated about *Walden* that “this book is so important that it will never be too late for it to appear. The future is still to show its value.” (HOKEŠ 2010: 3)

### **Josef Schwarz (1915 – 2003)**

He translated more than fifty works of such famous writers like Poe, Forster, Faulkner and Thoreau. He was a radio director, dramaturge and a recite who was also known under his pseudonym “Červinka”. He left the Republic in 1939, the time of post-Munich Second Republic. His life as a Jew in Protectorate was not easy so he moved to London. Later on, during the war, he was a BBC broadcaster, recommended by the father of Madelaine Albright. Schwarz returned to Czechoslovakia in 1946 and devoted his work to directory and translating. He got awarded by the Crystal Rose, which is the highest kind of award for recitation. [26]

## **9. General information on translating**

The issue of the most suitable way of translating has been under discussion for many centuries. Basically, a translator should know the language that he/she translates from, the language he/she translates to and the general content of the translating text such as local realities, the author’s peculiarity or certain field the text is focused on. (LEVÝ 1983: 15)

There is a theory which defines a language as a code consisted of language elements and rules according to they are combined. Werner Winter claims that every word is just an element separated from the general linguistic system and its link towards other segments differentiate in particular languages. (WINTER 1961: 75)

A translation can be considered as a result of translator’s utterance and creativity. The translator is a crucial part in order to create the final formation of the writing and put there his/her own style. In addition, the translation depends on translator’s language knowledge and ability to be as precise and careful as possible. Translator is also linked to his/her period and nation and a reader can see the translating norm and attitude towards the process of translating behind the translator’s work. (LEVÝ 1983: 31) That is why there are significant differences when comparing two or three different translations, as each translator is a specific person with his/her own opinion and experience which is reflected. However, a translator is principally a reader. The writing can be defined as an objective material which is transformed by the reader.

The process of translating should not be finished when a translation is ready, as the translation fulfils its function when it is read. As a result, the translator has to take into his/her consideration the readers who are supposed to read his/her translation in the future. (LEVÝ 1983: 50)

To sum up, there are three phases of translator's work:

- understanding the pattern,
- interpretation of the pattern,
- rewrite the pattern. (LEVÝ 1983: 51)



## 10. Analysis - focus on the single words

**Thoreau:** No dust has settled on the robe (p. 97)

**Franta:** Žádný prach neusadil se na této roušce (p. 112)

**Seifert:** Žádný prach neusadil se na rouchu (p. 98)

**Schwarz:** Prach se neusadil na tom hávu (p. 91)

Different translation of the word “robe” could be caused by the fact that Thoreau uses a word “veil” in the previous sentence and in the sentence which follows he substitutes “veil” by “robe” which is a synonymous expression. This was probably done in order not to repeat himself and as an effect, each of translators choose different equivalent.

The definitions of the words “háv”, “roucho” and “rouška” are very interesting. “Háv” is a ceremonial expression. “Roucho” stands for a garment which is used for ceremonial event or clothing in general. However, it tends to be an archaic word and according to Michal Novotný its origin is associated with something stolen. [18]

**Thoreau:** The oldest (p. 97)

**Franta:** Nejstarší (p. 111)

**Seifert:** Nejstarší (p. 98)

**Schwarz:** Kterýsi (p. 91)

Concreteness comes to reader’s mind when comparing the way of translating. Seifert and Franta change directly the English word by the Czech one. Schwarz uses the word indeterminate in the meaning. With regard to the context, there is a reason for its use.

“The oldest Egyptian or Hindoo philosopher ...” (Thoreau 1962: 97) Schwarz’s version could be considered relevant, as Thoreau did not have to bear a specific person in his mind.

**Thoreau:** That time which we really improve (p. 97)

**Franta:** Ten čas, který svým životem zdokonalujeme (p. 112)

**Seifert:** Ten čas, který opravdu prožíváme (p. 98)

**Schwarz:** Ten čas, který svou existencí vskutku zušlechtujeme (p. 91)

In fact, nobody translated the word “improve” properly. It should have been translated as “využít” into Czech, as one of the definitions of the word is “to use to good purpose” (WEBSTER 1981: 573). Thoreau uses this word quite often, for instance, in his essay *Walking*.

“Let us improve our opportunities...”

“Využívejme tedy možností, které máme...”

Seifert’s translation is probably closer those of Franta and Schwarz. One may say that they did not understand the overall meaning of the sentence, or the word. Surprisingly, Franta translated the word “improve” in the right way in his 1902 translation – “Ten čas, kterého opravdu užíváme...” (FRANTA 1902: 116) Unfortunately, he changes the correct translation in the second edition.

**Thoreau:** Says the poet Mir Cammar Uddin Mast (p. 97)

**Franta:** Praví básník Mir Kamar Uddin Mast (p. 112)

**Seifert:** Básník Mir Camar Uddin Mast praví (p. 98)

**Schwarz:** Praví indický básník Mir Kamar Uddin Mast (p. 91)

Seifert keeps the name in the original version, Franta and Schwarz adapt the word “Cammar” according to the phonological system of the Czech language. “C” was changed to “K” and only one “m” was used. On the other hand, Seifert should have kept the original entirely.

As Knittlová says in her book, there is information that might be added to make the translation more accurate for the readers. (1995: 51) Schwarz adds the attribute “indický” to broaden factual knowledge. Levý also states some principles for translators and one of them is the statement that translation can add or omit something from the original but the next principle is that translation should not add or omit anything. (1983: 32) However, the fact that Schwarz extends the sentence with an adjective would

be definitely not evaluated as the negative approach. On the other hand, Schwarz sometimes burden the text excessively such as on page 286 where the sentence “It is not worth the while to go round the world to count the cats in Zanzibar” translates as “Nestojí za to obeplouvat svět jen proto, aby se spočítaly kočky v Zanzibaru, jak to provedl pan Pickering”. This intervention in the text could be considered inadmissible because it has not a function of an annotation and almost no reader would know who Pickering was.

**Thoreau:** cheap (p. 98)

**Franta:** laciný (p. 112)

**Seifert:** laciný (p. 99)

**Schwarz:** levný (p. 92)

This comparison deals with the synonyms “levný” and “laciný”. Both can be translated by the English word cheap. However, there is a gap between the first half of the twentieth century and the last decade of the twentieth century when Schwarz’s translation appeared. Nowadays, the word “laciný” is not used so often but there are some expressions where “laciný” cannot be exchanged by “levný” such as “laciný trik”.

**Thoreau:** trivialness (p. 98)

**Franta:** všednost (p. 113)

**Seifert:** triviálnost (p. 99)

**Schwarz:** jalová řeč (p. 92)

It seems that Seifert follows Thoreau’s version closely. Franta’s version does not really fit the sentence which focuses on some words of an ancient language, which are raised out of “the trivialness of the street”. (THOREAU 1962: 98) That is why, the word “všednost” does not cover the real meaning and it could be even misleading for a reader. Schwarz adds the word “řeč”, which is crucial for the proper understanding and which makes it easy for the reader to follow.

**Thoreau:** study of the classics (p. 98)

**Franta:** studium klasiků (p. 113)

**Seifert:** studium klassiků (p. 99)

**Schwarz:** studium klasiků (p. 92)

It is not clear why Seifert uses double s in the word “klassik”. The period of Humanism used double consonants but it is connected to the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century. In 1902 the first “Czech spelling rules” (Pravidla českého pravopisu) were published by Jan Gebauer. Here the doubling of consonants in foreign words was cancelled. However, Franta’s 1902 translation consists of the word “klassik” as well.

**Thoreau:** oracles (p. 98)

**Franta:** věštírny (p. 113)

**Seifert:** věštírny (p. 99)

**Schwarz:** orákula (p. 92)

According to Levý, a translator has to be a good reader at the same time. The translator can never know what kind of readers will follow his lines. Moreover, most readers might not know what “orákula” means, therefore, Seifert’s and Franta’s version tend to be friendlier to the readers. In addition, “orákulum” stands often for the word “věštba” as well. Schwarz probably expects so called reader’s higher level of knowledge. On the other hand, this statement could be controversial because when he extends the text by some additional information it is vice versa.

**Thoreau:** say what we will of their genius (p. 101)

**Franta:** sud’me o jejich geniu jakkoli (p. 116)

**Seifert:** ať si říká kdo chce co chce o jejich génii (p. 101)

**Schwarz:** ať jakkoli vynášíme jejich génia (p. 95)

It is the same case with the word “kormorán“ (SCHWARZ: 96) versus “kormoran“ (FRANTA: 117) which appeared in the chapter too. At the beginning of the whole process, there is lexically and morphologically foreign word. However, the language is not static. That is why, the word moves from periphery to the centre and

becomes a domestic word. Nowadays, people tend to use rather short vowels such as in the familiar words like “bonbon” and “citron”.

**Thoreau:** the Bible (p. 102)

**Franta:** bible (p. 117)

**Seifert:** bible (p. 102)

**Schwarz:** Bible (p. 96)

The Bible can be written with small or capital “b”. The capital letter usually expresses one’s respect and for example Evangelicals write this word with a small letter. (Pravidla Českého Pravopisu 2009: 49)

**Thoreau:** in a precious casket (p. 100)

**Franta:** ve skvostném pouzdře (p. 114)

**Seifert:** v nádherné skřínce (p. 100)

**Schwarz:** v drahocenném pouzdře (p. 94)

Cambridge online dictionary translates the word “casket” as “skříňka”, which Seifert chooses. “No wonder that Alexander carried the Iliad with him on his expeditions in a precious casket”. (THOREAU 1962: 100) A modern reader would probably state that Alexander could hardly carry a book in a casket which would mean “skříňka”. However, it could have been like Seifert translates either. Franta and Schwarz are right when translating it as “pouzdro”. It is necessary to emphasize that a translator ought to read the text carefully and thoroughly in order to transform the text into another language which the translator is familiar with.

## **11. Focus on the group of words, phrases**

**Thoreau:** In accumulating property for ourselves (p. 97)

**Franta:** Hromadíce jmění pro sebe (p. 111)

**Seifert:** Hromadíce jmění pro sebe (p. 98)

**Schwarz:** Můžeme hromadit majetek, ať pro sebe (...) (p. 91)

Both Seifert and Franta choose the same way of translating using a participle (“přechodník”).

(HAVRÁNEK, JEDLIČKA 2002: 112) Although it was frequently used until 14<sup>th</sup> century, its frequency was declining with an exception of the period of the Czech National Revival in order to reflect humanistic Czech language. [20] Now it is a matter of written language, however, when translations are edited, participles are not used any more, as it sounds archaic. Seifert’s and Franta’s translations are just 16 years apart (1933 and 1949) in contrast with Schwarz’s 1991 translation. This difference between dates of translation is the reason why Schwarz uses different formula.

**Thoreau:** To be intoxicated by a single glass of wine (p. 97)

**Franta:** Opíti se jedinou sklenicí vína (p. 112)

**Seifert:** Býti opojen jediným douškem vína (p. 98)

**Schwarz:** Jedinou číškou vína jsem se opil (p. 91)

This time Franta is the one who literally translates the underlined expression. Seifert makes the amount of wine for intoxication smaller. According to him it does not have to be a glass, a gulp is enough. The Seifert’s translation might be a good association for readers and it sounds well. While Schwarz changes a glass on a “goblet” (“číška” in Czech), which contains an expressive meaning, he also works with the word order. Three previous versions are assembled as a verb and a direct object whereas Schwarz shifted the object at the beginning, followed by a subject and a verb.

**Thoreau:** A written word is the choicest of relics (p. 100)

**Franta:** Psané slovo je památka nejdrahocennější (p. 114)

**Seifert:** Psané slovo jest nejdrahocennější památkou (p. 100)

**Schwarz:** Vždyť psané slovo je převzácnou relikvií (p. 94)

Generally, the typical position of an adjective in Czech sentence is before a noun. That is why, Franta’s version tends to sound unnaturally but it is actually an archaism. Seifert and Schwarz differ in the used vocabulary, however, both can be considered as synonyms. “Památka” and “relikvie” means the same thing as well as

“drahocenný” and “převzácny”. Schwarz version sounds a little bit more splendid and mysteriously which could be more attractive for readers.

**Thoreau:** ancient man’s thought (p. 100)

**Franta:** myšlenky člověka antického (p. 114)

**Seifert:** myšlenky starověkého člověka (p. 100)

**Schwarz:** myšlenky dávnověkého člověka (p. 94)

Despite of the fact that all three men choose different way how to translate the word “ancient”, it is interesting that nobody translates this phrase using the plural (“myšlenky starověkých lidí”), which would sound natural.

**Thoreau:** inaccessible circles (p. 101)

**Franta:** kruhy, jež vyznačují blahobyť a vybroušený společenský mrav (p. 115)

**Seifert:** bohaté a uhlazené kruhy společenské (p. 101)

**Schwarz:** nedosažitelné kruhy (p. 94)

This time it is Schwarz who literally translates the original expression. On the other hand, Seifert and Franta extend the information given about the circles and described it in detail. It is probably the way the two men think the inaccessible circles are. However, it is quite an extended sentence where everything is mentioned by Thoreau and “inaccessible circles” could be really translated as “nedosažitelné kruhy”, as a line before Thoreau claims “...the circles of wealth and fashion...” (THOREAU 1962: 101)

**Thoreau:** has ever been made (p. 102)

**Franta:** nikdy nebyl pořízen (p. 115)

**Seifert:** nikdy vykonáno nebylo (p. 101)

**Schwarz:** žádný se zatím neobjevil (p. 95)

Franta and Seifert follow the original passive structure whereas Schwarz translates the phrase into the active voice. This example serves as a perfect illustration how essential the differences between the ways of negation in two languages are. All of

the Czech examples consist of two negative words (nikdy nebylo; nikdy nebyl; žádný se neobjevil). On contrast, there can be only one negation in English sentence.

**Thoreau:** at most astrologically (p. 102)

**Franta:** nanejvýš astrologicky (p. 116)

**Seifert:** spíš astrologicky (p. 102)

**Schwarz:** nanejvýš zrakem astrologů (p. 95)

Thoreau associates the terms of astronomy and astrology with his opinion that the works of the great poets are read “as the multitude read the stars, at most astrologically, not astronomically.” (THOREAU 1962: 102) Thoreau’s point is to make readers think while reading so they could discover a contrast between astronomy and astrology. Astronomy, and this is the crucial fact, requires intellectual disciplines. A reader who is not familiar with the information would probably miss the point of the whole paragraph.

However, when it comes to the particular translations, Seifert and Franta use an adverb. By contrast, Schwarz uses the advantages of declension and cases in Czech.

**Thoreau:** they know little or nothing (p. 102)

**Franta:** vědí málo nebo nevědí nic (p. 116)

**Seifert:** vědí málo nebo nic (p. 102)

**Schwarz:** vědí pramálo nebo vůbec nic (p. 95)

Seifert translates the phrase literally, whereas Franta repeats the verb, which could be regarded as unnecessary. Schwarz translates it in the way which Thoreau could use if he knew Czech language and lived one century later and it is exactly the aim of a good translation.

**Thoreau:** A man, any man, will go considerably out of his way to pick up a silver dollar; but here are golden words, which the wisest men of antiquity have uttered, and whose worth the wise of every succeeding age have assured us of;-and yet we learn to read only as far as Easy Reading, the primers and class-books, and when we leave



school, the “Little Reading”, and story books, which are for boys and beginners; and our reading, our conversation and thinking, are all on a very low level. (p. 104, 105)

**Franta:** “Little Reading“ (p. 117)

**Seifert:** »Krátké Čtení« (p. 104)

**Schwarz:** Literární maličkosti (p. 96)

Franta noted: „Asi „Zábavné čtení“. Reading je název několika amerických měst“.  
(Franta 1949: 117)

Translators’ creativity and imagination is shown at the point like this. As Levý claims, translation is “a work of art”. (LEVÝ 1983: 83) Furthermore, the translation cannot be the same as the original. (LEVÝ 1983: 88) That is the reason why Franta’s “no translation” could be seen as one with the lack of originality. Although one may remark that “Literární maličkosti” is abstract, his creativity should be appraised.

**Thoreau:** dulness of sight (p. 103)

**Franta:** slabozrakost (p. 118)

**Seifert:** zkažený zrak (p. 103)

**Schwarz:** tupozrakost (p. 96)

Though Seifert and Franta translate the phrase stated above in a proper way, Schwarz’s expression reflects the tone in which the whole paragraph and also chapter. Thoreau is likely to criticise people and their knowledge in the field of English classics.

**Thoreau:** he being a Canadian by birth (p. 104)

**Franta:** je rodem z Kanady (p. 118)

**Seifert:** jest Kanad’an rodem (p. 103)

**Schwarz:** pochází totiž z Kanady (p. 97)

It depends on the specific time when a reader deals with the writing. Contemporary readers would definitely appreciate Schwarz’s translation which sounds naturally. Furthermore, Mathesius claims that updated translation should be written in the way the writer would in the case of living those days and using “our vocabulary”. (LEVÝ 1996: 233)

Seifert's version may seem to be translated without any translator's own creativity, as it visibly and almost literally substitutes Thoreau's words but one could speculate it is rather a style typical for that time.

**Thoreau:** college-bred (p. 103)

**Franta:** ti, kteří vystudovali universitu (p. 118)

**Seifert:** akademičtí lidé (p. 103)

**Schwarz:** absolventi univerzity (p. 97)

Franta decides to use a relative clause while his colleagues choose a noun phrase. When any text is translated from English into Czech, the Czech version tends to be longer, which can be explained by saying that English is an analytic language whereas Czech is the synthetic one. Seifert and Schwarz take benefit from declension, an important facility of the Czech language. There might be a discussion about the Seifert's way of translating because the expression "akademičtí lidé" refers to staff as well. The word "college-bred" stands for people educated in a college so Schwarz's version is in this case suitable and melodious for readers.

## 12. Focus on the sentences

**Thoreau:** I think that having learned our letters we should read the best that is in literature,... (p. 102)

**Franta:** Jakmile se naučíme písmenům, měli bychom čísti nejlepší, co jest v literatuře,... (p. 116)

**Seifert:** Myslím, že naučivše se znáti písmena, měli bychom čísti co je nejlepšího v literatuře,... (p. 102)

**Schwarz:** Když už jsme se naučili znát písmenka, měli bychom, myslím si, číst to nejlepší, co se v literatuře najde,... (p. 95)

Seifert uses a participle which has been already evaluated as an archaism for a modern reader. However, it was a good translation that time. When the context is considered, it is very difficult to guess what exactly had Thoreau in his mind. In conclusion, all three versions can be right, however, Schwarz's translation "když už" tend to be a little bit negative and strong.

**Thoreau:** To read well, that is, to read true books in a true spirit. (p. 99)

**Franta:** Dobře čísti – to jest čísti pravé knihy v pravém duchu. (p. 113)

**Seifert:** Čísti správně – to jest čísti pravdivé knihy opravdovým duchem. (p. 99)

**Schwarz:** Číst dobře – to znamená číst správné knihy v správném duchu. (p. 92, 93)

Although "true" means "pravdivý", it sounds strange in connection with a book. In addition, the word "true" is used twice in the sentence and Franta as well as Schwarz translate it in the same way (see "pravý" and "správný"). Seifert used two different words ("pravdivý" and "opravdový"). The fact that one word can be translated in a different way is quite common, especially in the Czech language. Franta's and Schwarz's versions are similar because they differ just in the way which proves the translations are forty-two years apart ("čísti" versus "číst"; "jest" versus "znamená"). However, Schwarz's expression "správné knihy" tends to act as a dictation that there are some books which are "true" and only those need to be read.

**Thoreau:** It requires a training such as the athletes underwent, the steady intention almost of the whole life to this object. (p. 99)

**Franta:** Vyžaduje to ustavičného cviku, jako u atletů, a napjaté pozornosti téměř celého života. (p. 113)

**Seifert:** Vyžaduje cviku, jako atleti se podrobují trainingu, napjaté pozornosti téměř celého života k tomuto předmětu. (p. 99)

**Schwarz:** Vyžaduje nemenší průpravu, než jakou podstupují atleti, trvale, téměř celým svým životem se upnout k tomuto předmětu. (p. 93)

Firstly, the longer part of the text is compared, the more deviations and differences are revealed. Seifert includes the word "training" into his version which could be discussed as a result of increasing interest in English. That is why some

expressions were used with the unchanged spelling. Secondly, the word “intention” is interesting to look at. The modern translation of the word as “záměr” would not fit the sentence. The fact that one deals with English of the first half of the nineteenth century has to be taken into consideration. It means, many words used to have slightly different meaning. Webster’s dictionary from 1828 and 1913 states the following regarded to the word “intention”: “A stretching or bending of the mind toward an object; closeness of application; fixedness of attention; earnestness.” [30]

**Thoreau:** Homer has never yet been printed in English, nor Aeschylus, nor Virgil even. (p. 101)

**Franta:** Homér nebyl ještě nikdy tištěn v angličtině, ani Aischylos, ba ani Virgil. (p. 116)

**Seifert:** Homer nikdy ještě nebyl anglicky tištěn, ani Aeschylos, ani Virgil. (p. 101)

**Schwarz:** **Ani** Homér, **ani** Aischylos, **ba ani** Vergil nebyli nikdy vydáni v kloudné angličtině. (p. 95)

Firstly, the sample written above requires a comment on gradation. Each of the translators deals with it in different way. To be objective, Seifert does not manage it well, as his translation seems to be awkward. Nobody would say it like this. Franta’s version is much better, however, Schwarz uses the most natural and typical way of gradation (the bolded one).

Secondly, there are differences also in translation of the proper names such as Homer and Aeschylus. These are Greek names which are transferred according to the given rules of the individual periods.

Thirdly, the short or long vowel in the word “Homer” is set the specific time of the translation. A tendency to adapt written form to the way how words are pronounced occurred in 1941. That is why Franta put „é”, as his translation appeared in 1949 and Seifert’s before 1941, specifically, in 1933. When Schwarz published his translation, the long version in the foreign words was still used but two years later (1993) a great change occurred.

Moreover, Schwarz adds the word “kloudné” in order to stress the meaning. However, the sentence should not have been translated literally. There were definitely

some English translations of the ancient works. Thoreau probably wanted to express his idea that no English translators' versions can be compared to the ancient classics.

**Thoreau:** .. equalled the elaborate beauty and finish and the lifelong and heroic literary labors of the ancients. (p. 101)

**Franta:** ...nevyrovnali se krásné vypracovanosti a dovršenosti ani celoživotním a heroickým literárním činům starých. (p. 116)

**Seifert:** ...vyrovnávají se propracované kráse a ucelenosti a celoživotní a hrdinné literární práci starých mistrů. (p. 101)

**Schwarz:** ...vyrovnalo té vytříbené kráse a dokonalosti, těm celoživotním, heroickým literárním výbojům starých. (p. 95)

These extracts deal with punctuation and conjunctions. Seifert keeps the original and it is again not the most suitable way. Franta connects the elements better but Schwarz, using the commas, achieves the most natural and relevant translation.

Considering the end of the sentence, Seifert seems to be closer than Franta and Schwarz. Their sentence tends to sound incomplete and it is not clear that the word "starých" is connected with the writers.

**Thoreau:** The works of the great poets have never yet been read by mankind. (p. 102)

**Franta:** Lidstvo ještě nečetlo díla velikých básníků. (p. 116)

**Seifert:** Díla velkých básníků nikdy ještě nebyla čtena lidstvem. (p. 102)

**Schwarz:** Lidstvo zatím ještě nečte díla velkých básníků. (p. 95)

The position of "mankind" translated by Seifert is absolutely inaccurate. It is just a copy of the original and it sounds very unnatural. Schwarz reflects present perfect tense in his translation which indicates the duration from the past to the "present".

However, Czech language does not have any perfect tenses so Franta's version fits the condition of the language although Schwarz's translation is probably the most appropriate one.

**Thoreau:** ..., and not be forever repeating our a b abs, and words of one syllable, in the fourth or fifth classes, sitting on the lowest and foremost form all our lives. (p. 102)

**Franta:** ..., nezůstavati po celý svůj život sedět ve čtvrté nebo v páté třídě obecné školy v nejprvnější a nejnižší lavici. (p. 116)

**Seifert:** ..., a ne pořád ve čtvrté nebo v páté třídě opakovati abecedu a jednoslabičná slova a zůstávati seděti celý svůj život v nejnižší a nejprvnější lavici. (p. 102)

**Schwarz:** ..., a ne jen donekonečna odříkávat abecedu a slabikovat slova a celý život jako žáci jednotřídky vysedávat v těch nejpřednějších škamnách. (p. 95)

Seifert's translation is again a true copy of the original. On the other hand, Franta's so called "free" translation omits some information such as "words of one syllable". However, the main idea of the sentence was kept. Schwarz's version differs from the other ones a lot. His version consists of "slabikovat slova" instead of "jednoslabičná slova", as Seifert translated, "jednotřídka" instead of Franta's "obecná škola". These expressions could depend on what the translators experienced when they attended school. Although some children would not understand the word "škamna" nowadays, it perfectly fits the sentence. "Škamna" could be defined as a massive wooden desk used from the nineteenth to the first half of the twentieth century. [21]

There were lower ones in front of the classroom for the smaller pupils and the higher ones at the back so it is a perfect equivalent. [21]

**Thoreau:** ..., and for the rest of their lives vegetate and dissipate their faculties in what is called easy reading. (p. 102)

**Franta:** ..., a ostatek svého života živoří a utrácejí své schopnosti tak zvanou „lehkou četbou“. (p. 117)

**Seifert:** ..., a ostatek života vegetují a svoje schopnosti utrácejí v tom, čemu se říká lehké čtení. (p. 102)

**Schwarz:** ..., ale jinak do smrti duchovně vegetují a promarňují své vlohy tak zvanou lehkou četbou. (p. 96)

Translation of the word "reading" differs from the way they translate the name of the chapter. The verb „vegetate“ was translated as „vegetovat“, only Franta used more Czech expression „živořit“ which sounds familiar for readers. Franta's second

part of the sentence sounds not natural because “utrácet schopnosti” is not used in Czech nowadays. However, it could have been common that time. Schwarz manages to translate the sentence in a balanced way which is easy to read through.

**Thoreau:** They read the nine thousandth tale about Zebulon and Sephronia (p. 102)

**Franta:** Čtou tisíc a tisícátou povídku o Zebulonovi a Sefronii (p. 117)

**Seifert:** Čtou devítitísíctou povídku o Zebulanovi a Jefronii (p. 102)

**Schwarz:** Čtou devítitísíci příběh o Zebulonovi a Sefronii (p. 96)

It is mainly “Sephronia” to be discussed, as even in the original versions in English it differs. In other versions there is Sophronia. That is why it is not surprising that Czech translations differ in this point as well. Franta probably makes mistake and confuses the initial letter, which might be caused by working with a manuscript. However, the fact that other two translators do not repeat his mistake is highly positive and it proves their careful effort and faith in their own work. In the case of the ordinal, Seifert and Schwarz follow the original, Franta chooses a different way.

**Thoreau:** The Skip of the Tip-Toe-Hop, a Romance of the Middle Ages, by the celebrated author of Tittle-Tol-Tan, to appear in monthly parts. (p. 103)

**Franta:** „Záhadný skokan“, román ze středověku od proslulého autora „Černého komedianta“. „V týdenních sešitech!“ (p. 117)

**Seifert:** »Skok prstochodců« , středověký román od slavného spisovatele »Malého Tol-tana«, měsíčně jeden sešit. (p. 103)

**Schwarz:** „Co krok, to skok – milostný příběh ze středověku od proslulého autora knihy Enyky Benyky – bude vycházet v sešitech jednou měsíčně. (p. 96)

Each kind of literature has its own specification regarded names (LEVÝ 1983: 155) so it might cause relatively great difficulties when translating. According to Levý, the translator has to be aware of this fact and it is often better to use some patterns common in the mother tongue in order to make the translation sound natural and understandable.

Seifert does not manage the translation well. Schwarz probably knew Thoreau’s *Walking* where the similar expression is described as “dětské žvatlání”. That is why he

uses “enyky benyky”. Franta translated *Walking* and his version included “nesmyslné dětské říkanky”. However, he does not change the sentence when preparing new edition of *Walden*. All translators assume that the novel appears “v sešitech”, which is possible but it used to be common in “our conditions”. Thoreau could have meant that the novel will appear in magazines in parts.

**Thoreau:** some little four-year-old bencher reads his two-cent gilt-covered edition of Cinderella (p. 103)

**Franta:** nějaký malý čtyřletý mudrc čte svou korunovou knížku v pozlátkové obálce o Popelce (p. 117, 118)

**Seifert:** nějaký čtyřletý žáček čte svoje pozlacené vydání Popelky (p. 103)

**Schwarz:** nějaký čtyřletý mudrlant čte v pozlátkovém dvoucentovém vydání Popelku (p. 96)

The first noun which has been underlined was translated as “mudrc” which could be considered as a neutral word, “žáček” tends to be more positive or a diminutive. The expression “mudrlant” is rather ironic and according to “Pravidla českého pravopisu” it is colloquial. The following underlined expression (“two-cent gilt-covered”) is translated in different ways as well. Franta modifies American cents to Czech Crowns whereas Schwarz keeps the cents. On the contrary, Seifert omits this part and makes the sentence visibly shorter. In most cases, it was Franta and Seifert who translate literally and now it is Schwarz. It is evident that it is very difficult to make some conclusion, as it would be controversial. According to Cambridge online dictionary, the word “gilt” can be defined as something which is “covered with a thin layer of gold or a substance which is intended to look like it”. Seifert prefers the idea that the edition of Cinderella would be covered with gold while Franta and Schwarz choose the cheaper and simpler material. The reason why “pozlátkový” might be discussed as more proper translation is the fact that the stated prize is very low. It is rather unlikely to be covered with the “real gold”. The last interesting issue of the given extract is the usage of possessive pronouns. It is not necessary to translate English pronouns into Czech but only Schwarz omits the word “svoje” and he is right.



**Thoreau:** Indeed, there is hardly the professor in our college who, if he has mastered the difficulties of the language, has proportionately mastered the difficulties of the wit and poetry of a Greek poet, and has any sympathy to impart to the alert and heroic reader. (p. 104)

**Franta:** Ztěžka u nás najdeme profesora, který, když ovládl obtíže jazyka, by stejně ovládal také obtíže důvtipu a poesie řeckého básníka, a mohl vštípiti stejnou sympatii čilému a vytrvalému čtenáři. (p. 119)

**Seifert:** Ba, jest na našich vysokých školách sotva profesor, jenž ovládnuv obtíže jazykové, by stejnou měrou ovládl i obtíže vtípu a poesie řeckého básníka, a mohl by sděliti stejný zájem i čilému a hrdinnému čtenáři. (p. 103, 104)

**Schwarz:** Na našich univerzitách byste asi marně hledali profesora, který by stejnou měrou, s jakou zvládl nesnáze jazyka, zvládl i nesnáze důvtipu a poesie řeckého básníka a dokázal pro ně nadchnout vnímavého a neohroženého čtenáře. (p. 97)

The first point to be discussed is the position of the word “hardly” and its Czech equivalents “ztěžka”, “sotva” and “marně”. Franta keeps the word order of English version and put the word “ztěžka” at the beginning of the whole sentence. Seifert and Schwarz put the word into similar place. However, Seifert associates the word with the noun “profesor” and Schwarz with the verb “hledat”. Secondly, the verb “impart” can be translated in many ways as well. Franta’s translation “vštípiti” tends to be quite intensive, Seifert’s is neutral and Schwarz’s “nadchnout” is strong in meaning and a little bit exaggerated. Finally, the adjective “heroic” is translated as “vytrvalý”, “hrdinný” and “neohrožený”. Although “hrdinný” is the direct translation, it is rather abstract. Who is the heroic reader? That is probably why Franta and Schwarz decide to avoid the abstraction.

**Thoreau:** who in this town can tell me even their titles? (p. 104)

**Franta:** kdopak v našem městečku dovede mi i jen vyjmenovati jejich názvy? (p. 119)

**Seifert:** kdo by mi v tomto městě dovedl říci aspoň jejich názory? (p. 104)

**Schwarz:** kdo mi v tomhle městě poví, jak se vůbec nazývají? (p. 97)

Thoreau uses a modal verb in his sentence. Franta and Seifert keep it in their translation whereas Schwarz does not. Schwarz also translates titles not using a noun but the verb. His translation is definitely more “free”.

**Thoreau:** Moreover, with wisdom we shall learn liberality. (p. 105)

**Franta:** Kromě toho bychom se s moudrostí naučili velkodušnosti. (p. 120)

**Seifert:** Ba co více, moudrost učí nás svobodomyšlnosti. (p. 105)

**Schwarz:** Moudrost nás nadto naučí i velkodušnosti. (p. 98)

There is one more example which proves many ways how a translator can deal with translating. While Schwarz changes the position of the word “nadto”, Seifert and Franta keep Thoreau and his “moreover” which is usually at the beginning of a sentence. Schwarz can benefit from the fact that the Czech language has a free word-order.

**Thoreau:** It is time that villages were universities, and their elder inhabitants the fellow of universities, with leisure – if they are indeed so well off – to pursue liberal studies the rest of their lives. (p. 106)

**Franta:** Je na čase, aby se vsi staly universitami a jejich starší obyvatelé posluchači universit s volným časem – jestliže jim to poměry dovolují – aby se podle chuti oddali studiím po další čas svého života. (p. 121)

**Seifert:** Jest na čase, aby vesnice byly universitami a starší obyvatelé jejich posluchači universitními s volným časem – vede-li se jim opravdu tak dobře – aby mohli věnovati svobodně studiím ostatek svého života. (p. 105)

**Schwarz:** Je načas, aby naše malé obce byly univerzity a jejich starší obyvatelé posluchači takových univerzit s dostatkem volného času – když se jim opravdu daří tak dobře -, aby se mohli do konce života bez zábran oddávat studiím. (p. 99)

There is one more example to show the issue of possessive pronouns in English versus in the Czech language. This time, Schwarz adds a pronoun “naše”, although there is none in the original. One may argue if it is appropriate. His translation also contains different punctuation. Seifert and Schwarz deal with the sentence “if they are indeed so well off” in the similar way. On the other hand, Franta’s translation is unique and nice. He achieves it thanks to so called “free” translation. Lastly, “the rest of their lives” is interesting to look at. Franta translates as “po další čas svého života”, Seifert’s translation is “ostatek svého života” and Schwarz “do konce života”. Franta’s translation does not reflect the same meaning as those of his colleagues. “Další čas života” is not the same as “do konce života”.

**Thoreau:** „Being seated to run through the region of the spiritual world; I have had this advantage in books“ . (p. 97)

**Franta:** „Knihy mi umožnily, že jsem sedě letěl oblastí světa duševního;... (p. 112)

**Seifert:** »Sedě prolétnouti krajinami duchovního světa: tu výhodu mi poskytly knihy« . (p. 98)

**Schwarz:** „Vsedě jsem cestoval krajinou duchovního světa – díky svým knihám. (p. 91)

There are many evident differences among these three translations. Generally, English uses quite a lot of non-finite verb forms and Thoreau uses it in the sentence as well. Non-finite verb forms such as “being seated” can be translated in many ways into Czech. There is a tendency to use a subordinate clause or finite verb form to deal with this kind of grammar. However, there is also an infinitive “to run through” which is a non-finite verb form as well. “Being seated” is translated as “sedě” and “vsedě”. All translators do it in the same way while the infinitive differs in translation. Franta uses a subordinate clause “že jsem sedě letěl oblastí světa duševního”. The reason why it is so is the fact that Franta changes the position of the second part of Thoreau’s sentence “I have had this advantage in books”. While Seifert and Schwarz keep the sequence of the original, Franta creates more natural sentence by switching the sentences. His version differs in punctuation, as he needs neither colon nor semicolon. Schwarz omits the word “advantages” and translates the phrase as “díky svým knihám”, which sounds fine. Seifert keeps the original and he adds the verb “poskytnout” because it would be not appropriate to keep the original verb “mít”.

(“Takovou výhodu jsem měl v knihách”.) Although “mít výhodu” can be used in the Czech language, it always depends on the particular context. To conclude, Franta, Seifert and Schwarz translate it well.

## Conclusion

The following conclusion is based on the practical part of this bachelor paper where three translations have been compared. Thoreau's writings have been read by Czech readers for more than a century. "In fact, the history of Czech translations of Thoreau is longer than that of the Czech Republic or of the former Czechoslovakia" (Hokeš 2010: 3)

Zdeněk Franta was the first to translate *Walden* into Czech. Although it appeared in 1902 for the first time, when analyzing different versions, its second edition from 1949 is used. "Franta's translation of *Walden* was one of the earliest translations of any text by Thoreau into any language, preceded probably only by the German version of *Walden* in 1897". (Hokeš 2010: 3)

The second man who dealt with the book by Thoreau was Miloš Seifert. His version from 1933 was employed as well as Schwarz's 1991 translation.

The oldest and the most modern translation are fifty-eight years apart. As no language is a static unit, it should not be surprising, that dramatic changes have occurred since the beginning of the twentieth century. As a result, there was a need for some rules to be written down and kept in order to unify different ways of the written language. The first such procedure is associated with 1902 and Jan Gebauer. Other changes happened in 1941, 1957 and 1993. (Ládková, Svršek 1997)

The specific translations of *Walden* were chosen in the way to show as much differences as possible. There are no doubts every person is unique. That is why each translator has his own way to cope with the process of translation. This technique can be based on their experience, age, personality, the time they live in and many other factors.

Additionally, one may ask how these three translators were familiar with Thoreau's way of thinking. There is hardly a person who might compete with Thoreau who used to spend at least four hours walking in nature and built his cabin on his own and could calculate all the costs.

Although Seifert seems to have been very close to nature, as he was associated with the Woodcraft movement, it does not have to mean he understood Thoreau's

writing well. His version tends to be translated literally with lack of translator's own invention. Though Seifert's pioneering work deserves appreciation, his work definitely cannot be compared to that of Schwarz because he was an experienced translator of more than fifty works. One of the reasons why Schwarz's translation is considered to be the best one could be also his job. As a BBC broadcaster he must have increased his vocabulary and improved grammatical patterns which were valuable when translating. Moreover, when he returned from London, he worked as a director and a reciter so his ability to work with his mother tongue had to be higher than average - all of these were naturally reflected in his translations and readers can admire his art when enjoying their reading.

There is almost no information about the life of Zdeněk Franta so it is very difficult to comment on his translation, however, he was experienced translator.

Generally, his version seems to be in most cases similar to Seifert's one. However, Franta did not tend to translate as literally as Seifert did. Considering that his Czech version of *Walden* was the first, its quality is remarkably high. According to Jan Hokeš, despite a few inaccuracies, Franta successfully retained much of the original meaning. One of his weaknesses was the translations of Thoreau's nature writing, especially the names of plants and animals. "The English word sometimes means a different plant or animal species in Europe than in America." (Hokeš 2010: 3) Additionally, Franta's translation is a smaller book illustrated with beautiful drawings by a Czech-born American, Rudolf Růžička. The pictures let readers in narration.

The main differences which have been revealed concern orthographic and lexical differences. As probably all languages, Czech disposes of many synonymous expressions. Seifert and Franta chose the vocabulary which tends to be archaic and not used any more nowadays but it is associated with the time when their translations were done. The next differences occurred in the particular spelling, long versus short vowels, "s" versus "z" in the words like "universita" and so on. Word order is another area dealt with in many ways by many authors. Seifert seems to reflect the English word order without taking into his consideration that the Czech works language has a completely different system. Although there is a free word-order (WO) in Czech, some WO sounds

more natural than the other way. Furthermore, some examples proved that Schwarz provides readers with some additional information which is in some cases irrelevant while Franta sometimes omits some part.

With respect to what has been written in the theoretical part about the general information on translating, Josef Schwarz perfectly knew the language he translated from, the language he translated to and he was also familiar with Thoreau's style, life and background knowledge. In this case, after more than a hundred years the first Czech translation ever, the "better" and "high-quality" translation appeared and is available for readers who are interested in no "Little Reading". It would be appropriate to conclude by quoting Thoreau that "books must be read as deliberately and reservedly as they were written". (Thoreau 1962: 99)

## Resumé

Tato bakalářská práce se zaměřuje na prózy Henry Davida Thoreau, konkrétně na jeho pravděpodobně nejznámější dílo *Walden*.

Thoreau je významným spisovatelem první poloviny devatenáctého století, který se nechal inspirovat Ralphem Waldo Emersonem, svým pozdějším blízkým přítelem, který dokonce pronesl řeč na Thoreauově pohřbu. Oba muži jsou také známí jako transcendentalisté. Právě Emerson byl zakladatelem tohoto směru, který má kořeny v německé ideologii a je spjatý s mužem jménem Immanuel Kant.

Emerson společně s Thoreauem, Alcottem a Fullerovou založili roku 1836 v Concordu takzvaný transcendentální klub a vydávali časopis pod názvem „Sluneční hodiny“. Jejich častými tématy byly individualita, sebedůvěra, patriotismus a demokracie. Mimo jiné byli také pacifisté a jejich ideály významně ovlivnily vývoj americké filozofie a kultury.

Thoreau již od útlého věku trávil mnoho času v přírodě a našel v ní mimořádné zalíbení. Po studiích na Harvardské univerzitě se stal na krátkou dobu učitelem. Na této pozici ale dlouho nevydržel, protože odmítal studenty fyzicky trestat. Jeho otec byl tužkař, proto Thoreau nastoupil do jeho továrny. Obecně můžeme říct, že Thoreau byl muž mnoha profesí. Byl nejen velmi obratný a šikovný, ale také vzdělaný. Jeho zájem pro klasické řecké a římské autory vyvrcholil po ukončení jeho studia, kdy byl schopen číst tato díla v originále. Prakticky ale mohl číst literaturu všech moderních evropských národů. Jeho dílo, které začal psát už jako student, čítá přibližně třicet svazků.

V knize *Walden* Thoreau často vychází ze svého osobního postřehu nebo zkušenosti. Děj knihy se odvíjí od starého léta k novému jaru. Aby toho ale dosáhl, musel své zážitky za dva roky u Waldenského jezera shrnout do roku jednoho. Thoreau také zapojil do svého díla symboliku, konkrétně datum, kdy se k jezeru přestěhoval. Byl to totiž čtvrtý červenec, tedy Den nezávislosti.



Dá se říct, že tento příběh je biografický. Zamýšlí se nad vztahem člověka a přírody a nad smyslem života.

Když se čtenář zpětně ohlédne za dílem Henry Davida Thoreau, uvědomí si, že to byl jakýsi prorok. Už v době, kdy žil on sám, sloužil *Walden* jako varování před rostoucími materiálními zájmy lidí, před honbou za penězi a ochuzováním ducha, což je v dnešní době velmi aktuální, že „nadbytečné bohatství si může koupit jen věci nadbytečné“. (SCHWARZ 2003: 145) Už na počátku devatenáctého století lidé pomalu zanevřeli na přírodu a zapomínali, odkud vývojově pochází a kam tudíž i nadále patří.

V tomto díle, a obecně ve způsobu myšlení Thoreaua, se našlo mnoho lidí jako například americký aktivista a bojovník za lidská a občanská práva Martin Luther King. Prozaik F. S. Fitzgerald si v dopise své dceři posteskl, že po četbě Thoreaua si uvědomil, co v životě minul, když z něj vynechal přírodu. Jeho slova dokazují zklamání nad životem, který sám žil a o němž psal. Jeho hrdinové i on sám vyznával hierarchii hodnot, kterou později sám odsoudil. Například ale také zesnulý Václav Havel v *Dopisech Olze* píše o srozumění s přírodou jako o něčem transcendentálním, co nás přesahuje.

Praktická část této práce je zaměřena na porovnání originálu a tří českých překladů *Waldenu*, respektive jedné kapitoly s názvem „Reading“. Je nutné podotknout, že čtení Thoreauových děl není vůbec jednoduché a dokonce mnoho roditelých mluvčích by nemuselo originál zcela pochopit. Proto je třeba ocenit všechny překladatele, kteří se do takovéto nelehké práce pustí. Čeští čtenáři mohou číst díla Thoreaua již více než celé století. První Čech, který přeložil *Walden*, byl Zdeněk Franta. Učinil tak v roce 1902, tedy za Rakouska-Uherska, kdy vyšlo jeho první vydání v Praze díky nakladatelství Jana Laichtera. Druhého překladu se milovníci Thoreaua dočkali v roce 1924 od Miloše Seiferta. Seifert byl průkopníkem woodcrafterské myšlenky v této zemi a stejně jako Zdeněk Franta byl učitelem. Svě první vydání Miloš Seifert zrevidoval a podruhé vydal v roce 1933 následované druhým vydáním Zdeňka Franty v roce 1949 doplněným ilustracemi od Rudolfa Růžičky.

Roku 1948 se v tehdejším Československu dostala k vládě komunistická strana a všechny soukromé podniky byly zestátněny. Krátce po začátku roku 1949, kdy byl vydán překlad Zdeňka Franty, přestalo nakladatelství Jana Laichtera v Praze existovat. Komunismus v Československu představoval konec překladu Thoreauových děl na více než čtyřicet let. Krátce po sametové revoluci v Československu požádalo nakladatelství Odeon Josefa Schwarzze o novější a modernější zpracování, které opravdu vyšlo v roce 1991. Schwarz byl zkušeným překladatelem více než šedesáti knih napsaných takovými spisovateli jako Poe a Faulkner. Situace pomnichovské druhé republiky donutila Josefa Schwarzze emigrovat do Velké Británie. Tam pracoval pro BBC na doporučení Madelaine Albrightové. V roce 1946 se vrátil zpět do Československa a pracoval v rozhlasu. Roku 1993 obdržel spolu s Rudolfem Hrušínským Křišťálovou růží, což je nejvyšší ocenění, jaké lze u nás v oblasti uměleckého přednesu získat.

K analýze byl vybrán překlad Zdeňka Franty z roku 1949, Miloše Seiferta z roku 1933 a dosud nejnovější překlad z roku 1991, za který čtenáři vděčí Josefu Schwarzzovi. Vzhledem k faktu, že v době, kdy Zdeněk Franta překládal, nebyly téměř žádné translatologické knihy a materiály, vypořádal se s překladem Thoreaua překvapivě dobře. Rozhodně to nebyl začátečník v oblasti překladatelství. Chyby, kterých se dopustil v nepřesných překladech rostlin či živočichů, lze odůvodnit nedostatkem zdrojů. V dnešní době by měl k dispozici botanický slovník, nehledě na neporovnatelné možnosti internetu. Miloš Seifert se s překladem vypořádal po svém, avšak ne vždy zvolil vhodnou strategii. Jeho překlad se zdá být neobratný a v některých případech se až otrocky drží originálu, aniž by zapojil slovní hříčky a vložil tak do překladu část sebe jako překladatele. Z těchto tří překladatelů měl pravděpodobně nejméně jazykových zkušeností. Na druhou stranu měl Schwarz pravděpodobně nejlepší znalost anglického jazyka díky tomu, že několik let ve Velké Británii žil a pracoval. Obratnost v jazyce českém mu rozhodně také nechyběla. Avšak, v porovnání s Frantou a Seifertem nejvíc zasahoval do překládaného textu. Při důkladné analýze bylo zjištěno, že mnohdy některá fakta vynechává, ještě častěji ale přidává informace, které originál neuvádí a mohou být klasifikovány jako nepřiměřený zásah do textu. Jak ale sám uvádí v knize *Trpělivě obnošené tělo*, Odeon ho požádal o překlad, který si žádá „čerstvější češtinu, stylistickou uvolněnost, smělejší fantazii.“ (SCHWARZ 2003: 145) A přesně to také Schwarz čtenářům poskytl. Jazyk jako takový se může jen těžko porovnávat, především

vzhledem k době, kdy jednotlivé překlady vyšly. Přirozeně, překlad od Schwarze je psaný modernější češtinou, proto ale nemohou být zbývající dva odsuzovány. Konkrétní podoba českého jazyka se odvíjí od pravidel a specifik, které s sebou každá doba přináší.

Knihy psané Thoreauem, a *Walden* obzvlášť, obsahují mnoho „narážek“ na díla jiných autorů, například na *Robinsona* od Daniela Defoe. I pro soustředěného a obeznámeného čtenáře může být velmi těžké postřehnout a odhalit vše, co do svého textu Thoreau ukryl a zakódoval. I proto je bezesporu zajímavé jeho dílo číst, protože v žádném případě nepatří do „lehké literatury“.

Na základě analýzy v praktické části autorka této práce vyvozuje obecné závěry. Zásadní rozdíly v jednotlivých překladech spočívají ve slovosledu, používání synonymních výrazů s různým zabarvením, interpunkci, v psaní velkých písmen, ve způsobu přepisování slov přejatých z cizích jazyků a mnoho dalších. Konkrétní podoba z velké části závisí na Pravidlech českého pravopisu či jiné normě, která se týká psané podoby jazyka.

Autorka v závěru práce bere v potaz, že jako každý jazyk, i ten český se nepřetržitě vyvíjí. Tyto neustálé změny jazyka vyvíjí na starší překlady určitý tlak a nelze popřít, že „překlad stárne rychleji než původní dílo. Originál stárne, překlad zastarává“. (KUFNEROVÁ 1994: 178) Mezi nejstarším a nejnovějším českým překladem *Waldenu* je propast sto deseti let. Všechny přirozené odlišnosti jsou popsány a vysvětleny s použitím odborné literatury a všechna zjištění jsou shrnuta v samotném závěru bakalářské práce.

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