

# Karel Čapek's *RUR*: A Comparison of Two English Translations

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Levý, Jiří, and Zuzana Jettmarová. 2013. *Umění překladu*. 4th ed. Prague: Apostrof.  
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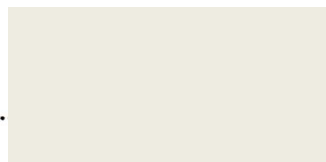
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## **ABSTRAKT**

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá analýzou dvou překladů české klasické divadelní hry od Karla Čapka – R. U. R. Cílem této práce je porovnat a zhodnotit dva anglické překlady této hry. Teoretická část se zaměřuje na teorii překladu obecně a dále se zaměřuje na překlad dramatu. Tato část také obsahuje náhled do autorova života a jeho tvorby a popisuje původ slova robot. Následně jsou v této části krátce popsáni oba překladatelé, jejichž překlady se tato bakalářská práce zabývá. Praktická část obsahuje analýzu překladu idiomů, metafor, slovní zásoby ale také vlastních jmen postav. V praktické části je obsaženo srovnání těchto dvou překladů a analýza rozdílů mezi nimi. Praktická část obsahuje analýzu časového hlediska obou překladů a jejich následné srovnání. Tato část se zabývá jazykem, který použil Paul Selver v překladu z roku 1923 a jazykem použitým Davidem Wylliem v překladu z roku 2015. V neposlední řadě se zaměřuje i na jazyk, který je použitý v českém originále a jeho srovnání s oběma verzemi anglického překladu.

Klíčová slova: překlad, divadelní hra, Karel Čapek, české divadlo, R. U. R., idiom, metafora, drama, robot

## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis deals with the analysis of two translations of a Czech play by Karel Čapek – R.U.R. The goal of this thesis is to compare two English translations of this play. The theoretical part focuses on translation theory and then it focuses on the translation of drama. This part also contains an insight into the author's life and his work and then this part focuses on the origin of the word robot. The translators are introduced in this part as well. The practical part focuses on the analysis of both translations and the differences among them. The practical part consists of translation analysis of idioms, metaphors, vocabulary, and proper names of the characters. This part also deals with language Paul Selver used in the translation from 1923 and the language David Wyllie used in 2015. Finally, it focuses on the language used in the Czech original and the comparison of this original with the two versions of the English translation.

Keywords: translation, play, Karel Čapek, Czech theatre, R.U.R., idiom, metaphor, drama, robot

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## INTRODUCTION

My bachelor's thesis deals with differences in two English translations of RUR. I chose this play for several reasons. One of them the fact the play seems to be much ahead of its time. Karel Čapek predicted the expansion of robotics and the possible negative impact on human life. His play RUR is supposed to be taken as a warning for future generations of what might happen if the robotics gets out of control.

Another reason why I chose the work of art that Čapek's language is unique and flowery which is hard to translate. The goal of my thesis is to find out which translation corresponds to the Czech original more. The first translation my bachelor's thesis deals with is by Paul Selver who translated RUR in 1923. The second translation is by David Wyllie who translated RUR in 2015. I chose these two translations because there is a longer period of time between them. The fact that the first translation was created only a few years after the original book was published means that the language should be similar to the original. However, it might be different from the translation from 2015. The second translation should be linguistically closer to the language that is used nowadays. Čapek used his own flowery style and the translation probably should reflect it.

The translation is highly individual, and no measure can state that one translation is better than the other. However, if there are missing parts and those parts are important for the plot and the meaning of the text in the source language, that translation may not pass on the main thought of the source text. Omissions can happen by mistake or through censorship or self-censorship. If the translator knows he is being censored, he might decide not to translate controversial parts because he is well aware of the censorship, and it would not make any sense to translate something that will probably be crossed out anyway.

This thesis presents a survey of the two English translations of the highly praised work of Czech literature and explains their positive and negative sides. It notices the context in which the translations originated and evaluates the contribution to the quality of interpretation of a foreign viewer.

## **I. THEORY**

## 1 RUR AS A PLAY

RUR is a dramatic play consisting of three acts. Karel Čapek published it in 1920 and it was first performed in 1921 (Britannica 2014). The play takes place on an unknown island in an unknown time. The reader knows that the play takes place over ten years (five in one of the translations) because there is a ten-year (five-year) leap in the plot which is mentioned by the characters in the play several times. The play starts when Helena Glory, a daughter of the president, visits a robot factory on an unknown island. She wants to fight for the robot's human rights as a member of The League of Humanity. She meets all the scientists that are actually humans and then marries the general director of the factory.

Then the plot jumps to the time exactly ten years after Helena's arrival. There are more and more problems with the robots and in the end, no kids are being born. One of the scientists gave some of the robot's feelings. They want to take over the Earth because they think humans are unnecessary. The scientists and the director want to exchange their lives for the robot recipe, which was burned down by Helena in the meantime. The robots kill all of them except one – the only human who also works manually as the robots do - Alquist. Later he found out that he is the only human alive on Earth and the robots respect him because he is supposed to be the one who should create new robots. The robots need the recipe because they can live approximately 20 years. Then the only human alive sees two robots – Primus and Helena and he notices signs of love between them. Alquist lets them go to restore life on Earth.

## 2 KAREL ČAPEK AND HIS WORK

This chapter introduces the author Karel Čapek. It is typically important for translators to know the author of the text they are to translate. By learning about the author, the translator gains a broader overview of his background thus gaining more understanding of his work. Karel Čapek was born on January 9th, 1890, in Malé Svatoňovice, a small village in the northern part of the Czech Republic. He graduated from a grammar school in Prague in 1909 and then started his higher education journey the very same year at Charles University in Prague. Čapek studied Philosophy, Aesthetics, Art History, German, English, and Czech Studies. He graduated in 1915 and earned his degree as a Doctor of Philosophy. In 1917 he got a job in a newspaper and started working as an editor. Four years later he started working as an editor for Lidové noviny [People's Newspaper]. In the same year, he also worked as a director and playwright in Královské Vinohrady Municipal Theatre. In 1922 he met then President of the Czech Republic Thomas Garrigue Masaryk for the first time. Their friendship lasted for a long time until Masaryk's death in 1937. Čapek was nominated for the Nobel Prize in 1936 for the first time. He was nominated 6 times after that in the years 1932-1938. He died on the 25th of December 1938 because of pneumonia (Karel Čapek 2017). Although RUR is one of his famous works, he is also known for The Insect Play, The War with The Newts, The White Disease, Krakatit, The Absolute at Large, or The Makropulos Affair.

### 2.1 Etymology of the word robot

This chapter focuses on the origin of the word *robot*, which is used countless times in the book. The word became well established in many languages of the world which is why it is important to know its origin. Many people, especially Czech people, think that it was Karel Čapek who invented the word robot because he was the one who wrote the play. Nevertheless, it was Karel's brother Josef Čapek who invented this word. Karel Čapek had a different word in his mind – labors. This word has Latin origin in the word *labor* which means work. But Karel Čapek did not really like the word and that is why he asked his brother for help (Řeháková 2014).

His brother was inspired by the word of a Czech origin *robotá* which means work in Czech, but it has connotations of the hard work of the serfs on the fields that belonged to the sovereign. The word *robotá* has been used since the 17th century. The fact that the robots cannot own anything, and they have to work for somebody, was the main reason why he came up with this word (Kužník 2011).

### 3 TRANSLATORS

This chapter focuses on Paul Selver and David Wyllie whose translations are analysed in this thesis. It is important to know the background of a translator to fully understand his language and intentions or reasons for certain changes or omissions.

#### 3.1 Paul Selver

Paul Percy Selver was born in London on the 22 March 1888. One day he bought a book *Slavische Literaturgeschichte* by Josef Karásek, who was a Slavist from Vienna. Selver started translating the verses that were written in a very special and rare language – Czech. He popularized then name Bohemia in the London press. But in 1918, when Bohemia became Czechoslovakia Selver noticed, that the buttress of Bohemia is two authors that are different on both ethical and esthetical levels – Otokar Březina and Petr Bezruč. One of them described the reality as it was, but the other one described it as it is supposed to be in the future. He felt the need to decide which of them was important for the world and that might be reflected in his translation of *RUR* from 1923 as well.

Paul Selver is best known for his translations of Karel Čapek's works such as *RUR*, *The Macropulos Secret*, *The Mother*, *Tales from Two Pockets*, or *The Insects Play* which was written by both Čapek brothers Karel and Josef. His other well-known translations include *The Good Soldier Švějk* by Jaroslav Hašek, *The Jail* by Josef Svatopluk Machar, or *The Land of Many Names* by Josef Čapek.

Selver was a translator in the first place. He was also a journalist and a writer. He decided not to do a job that would make him famous, and he stayed devoted to translating.

He actively participated in a Czech struggle for independence since the day he set his foot in the office of the Czechoslovak resistance which was close to the Czechoslovak embassy when the new state was created. He stayed in touch with Czechs between the wars and he promoted Czech modern literature in comparison with western literature. He was an employee of a Czechoslovak embassy until 1954 when he was fired, but not because of his age. The reason why he had to leave was the apparently delayed conclusion of an insurance contract of embassy staff between Czechoslovakia and the United Kingdom (Mikulová 1999).

### 3.2 David Wyllie

David Wyllie is a translator from Portsmouth, and he is still active. He offers professional translation services from Czech, German, and French to English. He covers a wide range of areas and fields including business and other specialized areas. He translated RUR in 2015. Moreover, he also offers proofreading, transcription, and localization services (David Wyllie, n.d.).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> I tried to contact the translator to collect more information, but unfortunately, he did not respond.

## 4 TRANSLATION THEORY

Anthony Pym (2014) explains that the word *theory* comes from Greek, where to theorize means to look at a view. Theory gives people the view and explains the scene they are looking at. Also, the word *theatre* has the exact same origin (Pym 2014).

In theatre dialogue, there are three functional relationships according to Jiří Levý (2013) - relationship between spoken language and colloquial language, spoken language and the addressee and spoken language and the speaker. The first relationship between the spoken language and colloquial language deals with diction and stylistics. The relationship between the spoken language and the addressee deals with the individual perception of an addressee. Every addressee may perceive the lines in a different way. The relationship between the spoken language and the speaker reveals a lot about the speaker themselves. This relationship also characterizes things, features, and happenings the speaker is talking about (Levý 2013).

According to Dagmar Knittlová (2010), there are four types of translation between languages: interlinear, literal, free, and communicative translation. The interlinear translation is an extreme form of literal translation, and it does not respect grammar. The literal translation is similar. It does not respect collocations, idioms, or other fixed phrases but, it respects grammar. Free translation respects grammar but not connotations. It might seem poor because it is not tightly connected to the source text. The last, communicative translation respects everything that is presented in the source text. It respects idioms, similes, correct equivalents, or clichés. The main goal of a translator is to translate the meaning correctly, the form is secondary (Knittlová 2010).

It could thus be assumed that communicative translation should be used primarily. However, sometimes the literal translation is the right one. According to Mona Baker (2011), other issues that a translator must respect are coherence and cohesion. Cohesion is about the relations of the parts of a text and how correlates together. The parts must be connected, and the text must seem as one, not as parts put together. On the other hand, coherence embodies relations that underlie the surface text. There is no text that is coherent or incoherent from the beginning. It depends on how the text is received. It means that the receiver understands the text and therefore it is coherent in their own eyes (Baker 2011).

According to Susan Bassnett (2014), there might be a problem with translating a dramatic text. The translator must decide whether to translate it as a literary text or if the translator should translate the function of this text and focus on the complexity. Dramatic texts are



complex because the reader sees them as incomplete. After all, they are completed with the final performance during a play (Bassnett 2014). It follows that the final perception of the text relies on the translator and their choice. If the translator decides to translate the text as a literary text, the actors are responsible for the final perception. Contrastingly, if the translator decides to translate it as a dramatic text and they present the text as a complex system, the translator is responsible for the perception. The point is that the person who will see the play will never know who is responsible for it. The spectator will not know if the play was written or translated well or if the actors made a terrible play look good. It might be visible for the reader since the text will tell them more about the translator, but still, the translator is the one who decides whose responsibility it is.

Robert Corrigan (1961, in Bassnett 2014) a researcher on translating for actors says that the reader must “hear” everything from the written dialogue. The reader should see the gestures, hear the intonation, pauses, and strength of the voice. It seems to be better if the translator chooses to translate the dramatic text as complex and not just as a literary text.

## 5 TRANSLATION OF PROPER NAMES

Translation of proper names can be problematic in any text that is supposed to be translated. In RUR it is an important issue because both translators dealt with this problem differently. According to Cambridge Grammar of English, syntactically, a proper noun is a unit on a word level and its category is noun, but a proper name is a noun phrase (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy 2008).

### 5.1 Origin of proper names in the play

It is essential for a translator to be familiar with such nuances in proper names. Good-quality translation should reflect the author's intentions with the names and characters they belong to. The reader will feel more connected to the text if it is translated accurately, and the author's initial thought is passed on.

Karel Čapek wanted the names in his drama to represent dominant countries of the Euro-Atlantic civilization. The name of Harry Domin represents the USA with his managing skills. Dr. Gall represents France because of the older name Gallia which was used by Romans. England is represented by Busman, and the last country – Germany – is represented by Dr. Hellemeier.

The origin of other names is important in the play as well. Fabry's name has an origin in the Latin word *febris* which in this context could mean a strong passion for creating the Robots. But his name could also represent the manufacture because the word *fabricare* means *to create* in Latin. Alquist's name also has a Latin origin. It is derived from the word *alquis* which means *somebody* or *anybody*. Helena's name has a more poetic origin. Her name is the same as the name of The Helen of Troy who was known for her infinite beauty. Even her surname Glory adds another property to her character. She is revered by all the employees of the company and of course by Harry himself (Vacek 2020). The origin of Nana's name in the source text is in a Czech expressive word *nána* which is close to the English word *simpleton* or *a gullible person*. The language Nana uses is simpler, plain, and less sophisticated than the language of the other characters. She uses common sense a lot and she does not think about anything too much. She uses colloquial language instead of formal language as opposed to the other characters.

### 5.2 Translation of addressing

Language, culture, and traditions differ significantly from country to country. They make usage of addressing an emotional issue. Addressing that is in one culture formal and polite

may seem unfriendly and mean or the other way around – too polite and sarcastic in another culture.

Addressing is one of the problems in translation that signal foreignness of the source text. It gives the text a local colouring and it is mainly a sociological problem. It depends on the translator if he expresses this local colouring and provenience. In addition, the translator deals with the problem if the translation is supposed to be faithful, nice, actualized or not. There are other parts of a dialogue that a translator has to deal with such as proper names, greetings, and cultural differences. For instance, in drama there is a dialogue as a basic text scheme, therefore addressing is inherent, text-forming, and stylistic element.

There are social hierarchy, age gaps, personal relationships, personality of the characters, or academic degree that also need to be reflected in addressing itself. These translation problems are bigger and harder to solve if the source language and the target language are far from each other linguistically or culturally.

Addressing becomes a problem while translating degrees as well. Translation of degrees might be a problem especially when translating from Czech to English. In the Czech language there are different degree forms because degrees are gender-dependent such as *doktor/doktorka, professor/profesorka, inženýr/inženýrka*. In Czech, the readers recognize the gender by the degree, even if the name is not included (Kufnerová 1994). These translation problems are not easy to solve if the other language does not use it. Translators may mention for instance, Miss or Madam or use a pronoun *she* in the text, to show the person is a woman.

When it comes to translation of addressing by surname, there is another problem – gender inflection. Woman surnames usually have a suffix *-ová* that is added to men's surname if it is in a form of a noun and ends with a consonant for example, *Novák – Nováková* (Internetová jazyková příručka, n.d.). On the other hand, there is a suffix *-á* that substitutes the suffix *-ý* in men's surname if the surname is in an adjective form *Novotný – Novotná* (Internetová jazyková příručka, n.d.).

## 6 LANGUAGE RESOURCES

### 6.1 Colloquial language

Colloquialisms are hard to translate because they vary from culture to culture and language to language. Sometimes it may be impossible to find a correct equivalent to translate a colloquialism correctly. Colloquial language is an important part of translating because it gives the text familiar vibe, and the reader may feel like it was not even originally written in a different language.

Colloquial language is a language that is used in familiar and informal conversations (Merriam-Webster 2011). Colloquial expressions consist of phrases, or words. Writers usually use colloquial language intentionally to express a character's background. If the character comes from a poor origin or is not well educated, chances are that he or she will use colloquial expressions. In addition, the writer may make the reader feel more connected to the character because of those colloquial expressions. Colloquial expressions also might appear in a daily conversation among a group of friends, or they can appear on any other less formal level.

*Wanna, gonna, or gotta* are examples of verbs that are commonly used in an informal conversation among people usually on the same social level which includes friends or family. Phrases such as *It's on me!*, *You're driving me crazy!*, *He's a bit thick in the head* are colloquial phrases or colloquialisms that might be used in a daily informal conversation but not on an academic and formal level. There are also some words that are used only on an informal level such as *dude* when a person is speaking about a guy, or a friend, word *kicks* is used as a colloquial expression for shoes, or word *ball* is used when a person is speaking about having a good time (Twinkl, n.d.).

### 6.2 Colloquial vs. Common Czech language

The character Nana uses informal language, and it is important for the translator to understand her informality and mirror it in the target text. However, there are two layers of informality in the Czech language – The Colloquial, and Common Czech, both derived from the Standard Czech. There are differences between Colloquial and so-called Common Czech and both of them are used in the source text. Although Common and Colloquial Czech are two different things, they share some similarities which are hard to translate.

Common Czech is a part of informal language. The so-called Common Czech is used mainly in Bohemia and western Moravia. According to the Institute for the Czech language, the

further from Prague, the less common Czech is used. In the territory of eastern Moravia, it is used rarely and usually only by people who are not native Moravian. It is typical for users who grew up in those parts of the Czech Republic where the common Czech is spoken (Müllerová and Hoffmannová 1997). According to Kufnerová (1994), typical features of common Czech language are for instance, -ej instead of -ý, for example *dobrej/dobrý; zejtra/zítřa; přemejšlej/přemýšlej -í* instead of *-é mlíko/mléko; vlízt/vlézt*. There are also differences in verbs in third person singular in the past tense. Common Czech sometimes omits -l at the end of singular male verbs in simple past, for instance, *nes-nesl; řek/řekl; moh/mohl*. Another feature is adding a prefix -v to verbs *vodjel/odjel*, nouns *vokno/okno, voko/oko* and adjectives *vostrý/ostrý*. This can also be applied in some cases to the whole sentence *vočekáváme vod tebe vodpověď/očekáváme od tebe odpověď*. There are words that prove that these changes might be also combined such as *vohlíd/ohlédl*. This verb has -v added at the beginning, -é is changed to -í and -l is left out at the end of the verb. Sometimes common Czech also shortens -í in certain words, usually verbs, such as *nevím/nevím; nepovídej/nepovídej*.

On the other hand, Colloquial Czech is a tool that is used during immediate, casual, and non-official contact that is being realized by spoken language and the speaker uses features of colloquial style. Colloquial Czech is defined as the spoken form of a formal language. However, Colloquial Czech is considered formal while Common Czech is not (Müllerová and Hoffmannová 1997). In conclusion Colloquial Czech is mainly spoken, while Common Czech is spoken and written as well. In a daily life it can be observed that Common Czech is used not only in Prague and its surrounding, but also in other parts of the Czech Republic, but because of people moving across the country and using the language they used while growing up. Common Czech is used across the Czech Republic, but the dialects still prevail.

### 6.3 T/V forms and their translation

T/V forms and their translation may be problematic because some languages such as English does not differ these forms. English uses only one pronoun *you* when referring to one person or more. There is a pronoun *thou* that may be used to differ this, but nowadays it is felt as archaic and is predominantly in poems and prayers, but in the past, it was used as a familiar reference for a single person or invariable plural. On the other hand, most languages such as German, Italian, Spanish or Czech use two different singular pronouns of addressing.

The *T/V* stands for *tu/vos* which comes from Latin. *Tu* was used as a singular while *vos* was used at the beginning of the fourth century only for the emperor. Also, Royals sometimes

refer to themselves as *we* in situations where an ordinary person would use *I* and, in the past, an emperor referred to himself as *nos* and *vos* was a reciprocal of it (Brown and Gilman 1960). Because English does not use two singular pronouns, translation of those two different pronouns in another language is hard and has to be differentiated in some other way for example, by using a pronoun. In Czech it is possible to use a *vos* form with a surname to express politeness on a semi-formal level.

## 6.4 Tropes

Tropes are important part of a translated text because if a translator chooses correct equivalent, the translated text seems familiar, natural, and easy to read. However, if a translator chooses incorrect equivalent, the text may seem unnatural, confusing, and misleading in a target language.

### 6.4.1 Simile

A simile is a figure of speech that compares two things that are not similar. Words *like* and *as* are used in similes (Merriam-Webster 2011). A simile might be also described as explaining how things are like some other things more poetically. Similes sometimes become popular catchphrases. For instance, there is a well-known example of a simile from a famous movie *Forrest Gump* – *life is like a box of chocolates: you never know which one you're going to get*. In the example from *Forrest Gump*, life is described as similar to a box of chocolates. It is a simile because simile makes the comparison using *like* or *as* (Underwood 2021).

Similes are also used in daily conversations. For instance, *she's as sweet as honey* can be used to describe a cute baby. In Czech, there is a similar metaphor *je sladká jak cumel* which means that she is as sweet as a pacifier.

However, Czech simile does not have to contain only *like* or *as*. A Czech simile *Lepší vrabec v hrsti, než holub na střechě* is considered a simile as well, even though it contains a comparative particle *than*. Loosely translated it means *It's better to have a sparrow in hands, than a pigeon on the roof* which means that is better to have something small in your hands than something bigger or better far from you. In Czech language there are more relational members such as *like, as, than/ jak, jako, než*. These members compare one thing to another and with these members a person can express a relation for example, among two nouns *Je chytrý jako jeho bratr/He is smart like his brother* or *Je chytřejší než jeho bratr/ He is smarter than his brother* (Čermák and Hladká n.d.).

### 6.4.2 Metaphor

Metaphor is a figurative expression based on external context (Mrákota 2005). It is a figure of speech. Different word or a phrase is used instead of some other word or phrase. This figure of speech is trying to find likeness and similarity between those two things that are not alike at the first sight (Merriam-Webster 2011). A metaphor is most used in spoken language, but it appears in a scientific style as well (Kufnerová 1994).

A metaphor can be sometimes confused with a simile. While simile uses words such as *like* or *as* to compare not similar things, a metaphor does not use any of these words. A metaphor says that something is some other thing. For example, a sentence: *My life is an open book* is a metaphor because there is no *like* or *as* used. If the word *like* was added to the sentence like this: *My life is like an open book* it would make it a simile (Underwood 2021).

According to this, all similes are metaphors because it is a figurative comparison but not every metaphor is a simile because words such as *like* or *as* are used in simile.

A metaphor is hard to translate because the translator must know the meaning of the metaphor on every level and also how often it is used to find the correct equivalent. The translator must know whether the metaphor is commonly used or if it is used in a specific field therefore it is not neutral and known for general public. If the translator translates a metaphor with another metaphor, it is a perfect situation. However, a metaphor can be translated as a simile, or it can be explained in a sentence without using any tropes or figures. These changes may not change the meaning but according to Kufnerová (1994), they might deform its figuration. The conclusion is that it is always better to find an equivalent with as similar meaning as possible than translate it literally or change it into some other figure of speech. This way the figuration stays the same and there is no deformation.

### 6.4.3 Idiom

An idiom is a type of fixed phrase which is hard to translate (Mrákota 2005). The problem might be in the fixedness of the phrase, or the lack of corresponding phrase in different languages. Idiom is an expression that has a meaning that cannot be derived from the actual meaning (Merriam-Webster). According to Baker (2011), idioms are frozen language patterns and they do not allow form variation unless the speaker's intention is some word play or a joke based on a different word order. They very often carry a meaning that cannot be understood from the components of the idiom.



An English idiom the cat is out of the bag which carries the meaning of telling someone a secret, exists also in the Czech language. Idiom *je to venku* is used quite commonly in the same context. Another idiom that exists in both Czech and English is used when a writer wants to express that somebody died, but he wants to express it in an offensive way, he can use for instance, the English idiom *he kicked the bucket*. An equivalent for this idiom in Czech is – *natáhl bačkory*. Translated word-for-word, it means that *he put on the slippers*. People use it when they want to express in an offensive way that someone died (Taraldsen Medová, n.d.)

## 6.5 Translation methods

There are several translation methods that are used in translating. Some are more exact while other are more focused on the meaning, not on the most accurate translation.

Calque or a loan translation is the literal translation from the source language into the target language. Using calque, a translator creates a new term in the target language for example, *a free verse* is a calque of French *verse libre*.

When a translator translates each word literally, it is a literal translation or word-for-word translation. This translation method is used solely if the source and the target language are linguistically and culturally close. However, there is a difference between literal and word-for-word translation. Literal translation respects the grammatical structure of a target language, while word-for-word does not. Adaptation is so-called cultural substitution. A translator substitutes word or phrase that exists in the source language with an equivalent in the target language. Adaptation makes the text easier to understand due to the cultural re-creation. An example of adaptation is *football* in the UK and *soccer* in the USA.

Equivalence translation is the oldest norm used for translating. This method translates the meaning rather than words and phrases literally (Pactranz, n.d.).

## 7 RUR REFERENES IN POP CULTURE

The importance of the translations is also visible in pop culture where it is often featured in films, series, and other works of art. Thanks to these translations, English-speaking audiences were able to read RUR as well. The translations into other languages caused the spread of this play that is now known worldwide. It is the translators who allow speakers of different languages to read the same books and the translators give them the opportunity to enrich their personalities with interesting thoughts that were written in a different language. However, with great power comes great responsibility. The translators are responsible for rewriting a text correctly in another language therefore they have to express the thoughts correctly to capture the whole meaning of a particular text.

### 7.1 Eric the Robot

The first British robot was constructed in 1928 by captain William H. Richards and Allan H. Reffel. Both were war veterans, and they built the robot because they wanted to open the Society of Model Engineers exhibition at London's Royal Horticultural Hall. They were inspired by Čapek's play RUR because their robot Eric has the three letters on his chest. But this was not the only inspiration. Erich Roučka, a Czech entrepreneur, established the first company in 1911 that produced electrical measuring machines in Austria-Hungary. Erich Roučka made a deal with the Čapek brothers, and he named his first automatic regulator E. R. ROBOT. This company also focused on export to the United States and the British Isles. This may be the reason why the word robot is so well-known worldwide (Robot 2020 2022).

### 7.2 Batman: The Animated Series

There is an undeniable RUR reference in Batman: The Animated Series. In the TV series, there is a robot named Karl Rossum. Of course, this name is a reference to Karel Čapek's RUR. The robot is named after the playwright Karel Čapek himself, and his first name was combined with the company's name in his play RUR – Rossum's Universal Robots. His first name Karel was changed to Karl. In one episode of the Batman: The Animated Series, there is also a robot who is driving a car with *RUR* written on the licence plate (Stein 2012).

### 7.3 Futurama

There is a reference of Čapek's RUR in the fifth episode of the first season of the animated science fiction TV series Futurama – Fear of a Bot Planet. The protagonists Fry and Leela have to fly in a Planet Express spaceship to a planet inhabited solely by robots to save their

robot friend Bender. The planet carries a name Chapek 9 which is a reference to Karel Čapek. Chapek is supposed to sound similar to Čapek's name in the Czech language (Serialzone, n.d.).

## **II. ANALYSIS**

## 8 METHODOLOGY

There were many reasons why I chose RUR as a topic for my thesis. I read the Czech RUR when I was in high school, and I was amazed by the flowery language and the fact that the play is ahead of its time with the robots and a possible war. This was one of the reasons why I chose this book for my bachelor thesis. Since my thesis deals with a comparison of two English translations, I chose one older translation published in 1932, and a new translation published in 2015. I wanted to analyse translations that were published in different eras therefore I can see the differences in language and style. Another reason why I chose this play was the fact that it is made of dialogues and drama seemed harder for me to translate therefore, I wanted to see the differences in translations of this play. The reason I chose translation in general for my thesis was quite simple. When I was 18, I translated *The Raven* by Edgar Allan Poe and I had it printed a year later. I always liked translating literary texts because the translator has the opportunity to pass on the author's thoughts and be the author himself as well. Also, it happened to me a few times that I was reading a book, and then I realized that I was not enjoying the plot or the story. I am enjoying the language and the writing style created by the translator.

At the beginning of my analysis, I read the Czech text again to remember and memorize it better, then I underlined and highlighted metaphors, similes, idioms, and other parts that seemed important to me and hard to translate. Next, I opened both translations and read both of them, and highlighted again all the terms such as metaphors, idioms, and similes that I considered important. Then I opened the source text, and I was trying to find the same metaphors, idioms, similes, and so on in all three books. Once I found them, I was prepared to start writing the outline of my practical part. While reading the two translations, I realized that there are also factual differences and omissions, so I highlighted them as well. I knew what I found, but I had to sort all the terms, therefore I divided them into metaphors, idioms, similes, and colloquialisms and compared them with each other.

The orientation in the three books was not easy considering that one of the translators omitted a lot of the terms and parts of the play. It took me a while to understand the same text translated differently and most importantly in one of the translations, I was constantly looking for something that was not even there due to the omissions which were often confusing and chaotic.

## 9 TRANSLATION ANALYSES OF THE DIFFERENCES

At the very beginning of the source text, there are brief descriptions of the characters. There are some changes in the names of the characters and the description mentioned in chapter 8 is missing. There are differences in the formatting of the text. Paul Selver used *Act I, Act II, Act III, Act IV* while David Wyllie used *Introductory Scene, Act Two, Act Three*. Comparing this to the source text, Karel Čapek used the longer form *Předehra, Dějství druhé, Dějství třetí*. This means that Karel Čapek, and David Wyllie used *Předehra/ Introductory Scene* as the first act because the second act follows right after it.

David Wyllie's format of particular acts is closer to the source text, but Čapek used ordinal numbers, while David Wyllie used cardinal numbers. Another difference is that Paul Selver used capital letters for each character's name in the text when a character is speaking. After each name dot follows to divide the lines and the character that is speaking. David Wyllie did not use anything to make the text look clearer. There is a name of the character that is speaking and the line, with a capital letter at the beginning, is right next to it without any dot, colon, or hyphen. Another difference between these translations is that Paul Selver kept the capital letter R at the beginning of every word robot in the whole book in the same way Čapek used in his work. David Wyllie, on the other hand, uses a small letter.

### 9.1 Translation of the names of the characters

Čapek obviously had some intentions with the names of the characters stated in chapter 5. If the names are changed by a translator, the initial thought of the author may get lost, and the foreign viewer would not be able to understand the meaning behind the name of the characters. However, if the name has some connotations in the source text, it should be changed in order to keep the meaning.

In David Wyllie's translation, all the names remained unchanged. However, in Paul Selver's translation, several names are changed, and the brief description of the characters is missing. Some of the names differ only in spelling, others are completely different while some remained unchanged. Helena, Dr. Gall, Alquist, and Fabry are not changed in Selver's translation. However, there is a slight change in Fabry's position in the company. In the Czech source text, Fabry is addressed as *inženýr Fabry*, which is a common association in Czech society of a person with an academic degree they have achieved; in this case, a master's degree in technical sciences (Ing.). His *inženýr* (Ing.) degree is not mentioned in Selver's translation. Selver uses the surname Domain for Harry Domin, which only seems to differ in spelling.

Names such as Busman, Nana, or Hallemeier are completely changed. Busman was changed to Berman and Selver even added the first name to this character – Jacob. Selver gave Busman the first name Jacob of Hebrew or Jewish origin, possibly with the intention to reveal Busman's origin without having to mention that he is actually Jewish. He did not add any first name to other characters, which suggests he probably wanted to express something special with the name Jacob. Hallemeier's name is changed to Helman. The last character whose name was changed is Nana; it is changed to Emma in Selver's translation. Nana's name has a meaning in the source text – naive or gullible. However, Selver changed her name to Emma which does not resemble anything in the English language, especially not her poor background.

Nana's name change is the most significant name change in the play. One translator did not change the name while the other one did. In Selver's translation, Nana was changed to Emma. It can be assumed that Emma is a name of a middle or upper class woman. Selver changed her name to Emma, which does not resemble that she is a member of a lower or working-class. It clearly was Čapek's intention to make her a lower-class character, since she uses colloquial language, and she is Helena's maid. Considering that Jane Austen used the name Emma for an upper-class character 200 years ago, it probably was used more by upper-class people more than the working class. Selver could have translated Nana's name for example as Eliza after Eliza Doolittle from G. B. Shaw's *Pygmalion* because Eliza Doolittle was obviously a member of a working-class and she spoke with a Cockney accent as well. Alternatively, Selver could have used the name Nancy from *Oliver Twist*, which is also a name that Charles Dickens used for a lower-class girl.

In David Wyllie's translation, *Nána* is changed into Nana, which might resemble a nickname for a grandmother. The nickname *nana* is the most popular nickname for a grandmother in 32 states in the USA and one of the most popular nicknames in the United States (Coventry Direct 2019).

The description of the characters is missing in Selver's translation. Therefore, a reader does not know details, such as appearance, about them. For example, in the Czech source text and in Wyllie's translation Busman is described as a fat, bald short-sighted Jew. However, this is not mentioned in Selver's translation. Domin is described as thirty-eight years old, tall, clean shaven. Hellemeier is described as noisy heavily build guy with a big ginger moustache and hair. Dr. Gall is lightly built, lively and has a black moustache. Alquist is older than the others, dressed without care has long grey hair and beard. All this gives the reader a bigger picture of the characters. The reader of the play can imagine the characters and be closer to



them. The description of the features allows the reader to imagine the characters in his or her mind and the play is more vivid. If all this is taken away from the play, the characters are just names with a dialogue. The reader cannot see the characters and it is harder to picture the situations the characters are in.

## 9.2 Changed facts

ST (1):

HELENA: Bratři, nepřijela jsem jako dcera prezidentova. Přijela jsem za Ligu Humanity. Bratři, Liga Humanity má už přes dvě stě tisíc členů. Dvě stě tisíc lidí stojí za vámi a nabízí vám svou pomoc.

BUSMAN: Dvě stě tisíc lidí, panečku, to už je slušné, to je docela krásné.

DW (1):

Helena Brothers, I haven't come here on behalf of my father. I'm here on behalf of the League of Humanity. Brothers, the League of Humanity now has more than two thousand members. There are two thousand people who are standing up for you and want to help you. Busman Two thousand people! Dear me, that quite a decent number, that very nice indeed.

PS (1):

HELENA. Brothers, I have not come here as my father's daughter. I have come here on behalf of the Humanity League. Brothers, the Humanity League now has over two hundred thousand members. Two hundred thousand people are on your side and offer you, their help. BERMAN. Two hundred thousand people, that's quite a tidy lot, Miss Glory, quite good.

The biggest difference between these translations is that David Wylie translated *dvě stě tisíc členů* as *two thousand members* whereas Selver used *two hundred thousand members*. Two hundred thousand members is the literal translation whereas two thousand members is incorrect. Wylie completely changed the number of members of the League of Humanity and the number of numbers appears a lot smaller so the League of Humanity might appear less important and not that big. Busman is surprised by the amount of people working for the League of Humanity and when David Wylie changed the number from two hundred thousand members to only two thousand members it appears irrelevant that those people would want to help them in any way. Selver translated it literally and correctly, while Wylie did not.

ST: (2):

DR. GALL: Teď je tomu na minutu deset let –

PS (2):

DR. GALL. And five years later to the minute.

DW (2):

Dr. Gall And now it's ten years ago to the minute.

David Wyllie translated *na minutu deset let* as *ten years ago to the minute* which is a faithful translation. Paul Selver translated *na minutu deset let* as *five years ago to the minute* and that is half of what Selver said. Selver changed the time that has passed since the moment when Helena arrived and that means that Helena and Harry are married only for five years instead of ten. Changing the number of years also changes the time of the revolution of the robots. In Paul Selver's translation everything happened quicker than in the source text and in the David Wyllie's translation because Selver changed the time period from 10 years to 5.

### 9.3 Simile

ST (3):

BUSMAN: Jemináčku, slečno, to znamená, že práce klesla v ceně. Vždyť Roboti I s krmením stojí za hodinu tři čtvrtě centíku! To je vám legrační, slečno: všechny továrny praskají jako žaludy nebo honem kupují Roboty, aby zlevnily výrobu.

DW (3):

Busman Dear lady, what I mean is that the price of labour is getting cheaper! Even with its food, a robot cost no more than three quarters of cent per hour! It's wonderful; every factory is buying robots as quick as they can to reduce production cost, and those that aren't are going bankrupt.

PS (3):

BERMAN. Why, bless me, Miss Glory, it means that the cost of labour has fallen. A Robot, food and all, cost three and fourpence per hour. All factories will go pop like acorns if they don't buy Robots to lower the cost of production.

The difference here is that Paul Selver used an English simile to translate a Czech simile in the source text. *všechny továrny praskají jako žaludy* and *all factories will go pop like acorns* is a faithful translation of this simile. David Wyllie did not use simile, and he used a different word order in English. The meaning is similar, but Paul Selver's translation is proof that it is sometimes possible to translate some Czech similes to English without changing the word order or removing the simile completely. The meaning is preserved because a person is able to imagine what *to pop like acorns* means. That is why Selver translated it better because he used a simile while Wyllie did not.

ST (4):

DR. GALL: Váš miláček? Ta mne zůstala. Je rozkošná, a hloupá jako jaro. Jednoduše k ničemu.

PS (4):

DR. GALL. Your favourite? I kept her. She's lovely, but quite stupid. Simply no good for anything.

DW (4):

Dr. Gall Ah your favourite. She stayed with me. She's as charming and as silly as a spring day, but simply no good for anything.

David Wyllie used a faithful translation and translated *je rozkošná a hloupá jako jaro* therefore David Wyllie translated Czech simile again as a simile in English. However, Paul Selver did not use simile and translated the literal meaning as *she's lovely, but quite stupid*. It is better to translate simile with another simile therefore Wyllie's translation is more accurate.

## 9.4 Metaphor

ST (5):

HELENA *sama*: Oh, hluchý květ! To je slovo! Zastaví se u Hallemeierových květů. Ach, květy, jsou mezi vámi také hluché? Ne, ne! Nač byste potom kvetly?

DW (5):

Helena (alone) Oh, dead flower! What a phrase that it! It seems to apply to Hallemeier's flowers! Oh, flowers, are any of you sterile too? No, no! What would you bloom for if you were sterile?

David Wyllie's translation of a metaphor *hluchý květ* as *a dead flower/sterile flower* is an example of a sense-for-sense translation because it could not be translated literally as *a deaf flower/blossom*. This metaphor means that the flower is sterile, therefore it is unable to reproduce and by flower Čapek means a woman. Wyllie translated the same word *hluchý* in two ways. At the beginning, it is *dead* and in the next sentence, it is *sterile*. This way is it more understandable and the meaning is clearer. The meaning of the dead flower is supposed to be the same as the sterile flower – it is a flower that can't reproduce. In Paul Selver's translation, this part about infertility is completely missing therefore the meaning of this part of the play may be changed due to this omission.

ST (6):

ALQUIST: Stal! Stal! Celý svět, celé pevniny, Celé lidstvo, všechno je jediná bláznivá, hovadská orgie! Už ani ruku nenatáhnout po jídle; cpe se jím rovnou do úst, aby nemuseli vstát – Haha, vždyť Dominovi Roboti všechno obstarají! A my, lidé, koruna stvoření, my nestárnem chudobou! Honem, honem sem se všemi rozkošemi! A vy byste od nich chtěla děti? Heleno, mužům, kteří jsou zbyteční, nebudou ženy rodit!

DW (6):

Alquist It has! It has! The whole world, all continents, all of mankind, all of it's just become one bestial orgy! No-one ever has to reach out his hand for food; he just stuffs it straight in his mouth without even needing to stand up. Haha, Domin's robots, they always take care of everything! And us human beings, the pinnacle of creation, we don't have to take care of work, we don't have to take care of poor.

David Wyllie translated the metaphor *a my lidé, my koruna stvoření...* as *And us human beings, the pinnacle of creation...* so he kept the metaphor also in the English language. He translated metaphor as a metaphor, therefore the figure of speech is not deformed, and the meaning is preserved. However, Paul Selver did not translate this part at all. The metaphor is quite similar because *koruna* could be also translated as *the pinnacle* or *the peak of something*. Because Selver omitted this part, Wyllie's translation is more accurate.

## 9.5 Idiom

ST (7):

HALLEMEIER: Hrome, budeme dělat černochoy Roboty a Švédy Roboty a Taliány Roboty a Číňany Roboty, a pak ať jim někdo vtluče do kokosů organizaci, bratrství, *škytá*, hup, pardon, paní Heleno, já si naleju.

DW (7):

Hallemeier We'll be making black robots and Swedish robots and Italian robots and Chinese robots, and if anyone ever talks to them about organization and brotherhood and (hiccups)...

PS (7):

HELMAN. By Jove, we'll make negro Robots and Swedish Robots and Italian Robots and Chinese Robots, and then ---

David Wyllie translated *...a pak ať jim někdo vtluče do kokosů organizaci, bratrství...* as *...and if anyone ever talks to them about organization and brotherhood and (hiccups).* Wyllie chose not to translate a Czech idiom *vtlouct do kokosů* which is an expression for saying something to somebody the way that the person remembers it. Wyllie translated rather the meaning of the idiom as *if anyone ever talks to them*. The meaning may be slightly different because it does not reflect the informality and colloquialism. The idiom is informal, but the translated explanation does not make it informal. In Paul Selver's translation this whole part is completely missing. It is a pity that Selver omitted this part and Wyllie did not use metaphor. Wyllie could have used a metaphor *to drill something into someone's head*. However, Wyllie at least translated the part, therefore his translation is more accurate.

## 9.6 Colloquial language

ST (8):

NÁNA *vyjde z tapetových dveří s náručím polínek*. Najednou topit! Teď v létě! – Už je zas pryč, to třesidlo? *Klekne ke krbu a rozdělává oheň*. V létě topit! Ta má nápady! Jako by už nebyla deset let vdaná! – Nu tak hoř, hoř! *Dívá se do ohně*. – Dyt' vona je jako malý dítě! Pauza. Kouska rozumu nemá! Teď v létě topit. *Přikládá*. Jako malý dítě! Pauza

DW (8):

Nana (enters through wallpapered door with armful of kindling) What's she want a fire for all of sudden? Middle of summer? 'E's gone now, has he, that maniac? (kneels at fireplace and lights fire) A fire in the middle of summer. She doe'n'alf get some funny ideas. You wouldn't think she's been married for ten years now! Come on now, fire (look into grate) More like a little girl, she is. (pause) Ain't got a bit of a sense. A fire in the middle of summer! (adds fuel) Just like a little toddler! (pause)

PS (8):

EMMA. What, light the fire? Now, in summer? Has that mad creature gone? [kneels down by the stove and lights the fire speaking half to herself] A fire in summer, what an idea! Nobody'd think she'd been married five years. [Looking into the fire] She's like a baby. [Pause] She's got no sense at all. A fire in summer, well I never. [Making up the fire] Like a baby. [Pause]

In the Czech source text, it is visible that Nana's language is not the same as the language of other characters. She uses colloquial, informal and common Czech language. David Wyllie changed the language of Nana much more than Paul Selver did. David Wyllie used for example *Ain't*, *doe'n'alf* or *'E's* which are indicators of colloquial and informal language in English. Paul Selver used a language that is very similar to the other character's language, therefore Nana's/Emma's poor background is not that visible. In one part of the book Helena mentions, while talking to the scientists, that Nana/Emma is the voice of people which is also an allusion to her background that she is not a scientist as they are therefore her language should be different. Because Wyllie changed the language more and used more colloquial expressions, his translation is more accurate than Selver's who did not differ Nana's language that much.

### 9.7 Addressing Helena Glory

As mentioned in chapter 5, In English, it is possible to express politeness when talking to a woman using words like Miss, Missis, or Madam. In Czech, a person can express politeness using third person plural instead of second person singular when talking to one person. However, it is possible to emphasize it with a word such as *paní*, *slečno*, or *madam*. Both translators used these formal words of addressing Helena Glory in necessary situations.

ST (9):

FABRY: Maličkost, paní Heleno,

DR. GALL: Haha, paní Heleno, to byla poslední karta.

DOMIN: Lituji, Heleno. Teď by nikdo z nás nemohl odjet.

ALQUIST: Jsem už starý pán, Heleno; mám své koníčky.

DW (9):

Busman Helena, what will you give me if I act as your advocate.

Domin Oh Helena! Nobody could hate men as much as a man!

Nana Oh, dear God, Helena, what have you done?

Alquist Nothing. You're right, there's no point in waiting for a miracle. Dead flowers fall to the ground, that's what they do. Goodbye, Helena.

PS (9):

DOMAIN. You know, Helena, you're a splendid girl.

BERMAN. Why, bless me, Miss Glory, it means that the cost of labour has fallen.

ALQUIST. Something like this: 'O Lord, I thank Thee for having wearied me. God, enlighten Domain and all those who are astray; destroy their work, and aid mankind to return to their labours; preserve them from destruction; let them no suffer harm to soul or body deliver us from the Robots, and protect Helena, Amen.

BERMAN. Madam Helena, what'll you give me if I take up your care for you?

FABRY. Excuse me, Madam Helena, Domain only means that you – he – that you didn't think-

David Wyllie used only Helena's name while addressing her. It seems more informal, and it looks like all the characters are on the same social level. All the conversations with Helena seem less formal because of this and Wyllie might have partially removed the social differences by not using Miss or Madam before Helena's name. On the other hand, Paul Selver used some title before Helena's name. Of course, her husband Harry Domin and her nanny Nana/Emma called her only by her name, but that's influenced by their personal relationship. All the other characters call her Miss Glory or Madam Helena in Paul Selver's translation which shows a certain distance from each other. In some dialogues, Alquist is the only character that uses only her first name when talking to her, but it was in a deeper personal conversation, therefore it is understandable why Paul Selver used only her first name and did not use anything like Miss or Madam before the name. Selver's translation of



addressing may be more accurate because Wylie did not divide social levels among the characters, and it is in some way divided in the source text.

### 9.8 T/V forms and their translation

In Czech, there are several techniques used how to express politeness. One of them is for example, using second person plural instead of second person singular when talking to one person. Linguistically termed the T/V forms. Because this does not exist in English, both the translators expressed it differently. They used formal form of addressing using words like Madam or Miss to express politeness and also, the social status of Helena Glory and the other characters. When expressing informality, they used solely Helena's name to show that those characters are on the same social level.

ST (10):

NÁNA: Šak vy si je taky vošklivíte. Pročpak ste si mě přivezla sem? Pročpak žádnéj z nich nesmí na vás ani šáhnout?

NÁNA: Je lepší než voni, Heleno. Von dobře ví, že je něco víc a že vod Pánboha. Dyt' i ten kůň se plaší, dyž potká pohana. Dyt' ani mladý to nemá, a i pes má mladý a každej má mladý-

PS (10):

EMMA. Why, you're scared of them too. What did you bring me here for?

EMMA. He's better than them. He knows it, too. Even the horse shies when he meets them. They don't have any young, and dog has young, and everyone has young-

DW (10):

Nana Well you hate them, and all. What d'you bring me right out here for anyway? Any why can't any of them even touch you?

Nana He's better than what they are, Helena. He knows perfectly well it was God what made him and that he's better than they are. Even the horse takes fright when he comes across one of those heathens. They don't have children, but even a dog has children, everyone has children.

Paul Selver did not use Helena's name therefore the sentence does not reflect the informality between the characters. However, David Wylie used Helena's name so the relationship between the characters is mirrored in the conversation because Nana used only her first name *Helena* without any title in front of it. This reflects the relationship between Helena and her

maid Nana because she is allowed to call her by her first name and does not need to use any title. Wyllie expressed the informality between the characters while Selver did not.

### **9.9 Selver's removed parts about Nana's/Emma's religious expressions**

ST (11):

NÁNA: Je lepší než voni, Heleno. Von dobře ví, že je něco víc a že vod Pánboha. Dyt' i ten kůň se plaší, dyž potká pohana. Dyt' ani mladý to nemá, a i pes má mladý a každej má mladý-

DW (11):

Nana He's better than what they are, Helena. He knows perfectly well it was God what made him and that he's better than they are. Even the horse takes fright when he comes across one of those heathens. They don't have children, but even a dog has children, everyone has children.

PS (11):

He's better than them. He knows it, too. Even the horse shies when he meets them. They don't have any young, and dog has young, and everyone has young-

David Wyllie stuck to the original text and translated all the parts in the source text while Paul Selver omitted certain parts, especially the parts where Nana/Emma was talking about God, or any other topics related to religion. He completely omitted the part about the bad situation regarding kids not being born anymore because God is angry with people and robots cannot reproduce. This part significantly contributes to the whole meaning of the play and removing such parts may lead to different meaning of the play. The reader of Selver's translation may have a completely different opinion on this play and the main thought may not be passed on. By omitting these parts, the allegory might stay hidden and the thought about the God's anger and the warning for future generations Čapek wanted to express may stay hidden.

## CONCLUSION

The two translations of Čapek's RUR analysed in my thesis indicate serious differences on several levels. The most significant change is in completeness/incompleteness of the texts. There are factual changes, changes in character names and in figurative language as well. Wyllie changed the number of members of the Humanity League at the beginning of the book from 200,000 to 2,000 which may make the Humanity League look minor and unimportant. Selver changed a different important fact as well. He changed the number of years that has passed since Helena first arrived from ten to five which significantly changes the plot. Changing the number of years also changes the time when the revolution of the robots happened and how many years have passed since the day the robots were improved to the day of the revolution. In Selver's translation the events happened quicker than in the source text likewise, Helena and Henry have been married for five years instead of ten. The reason why Selver changed the number of years from 10 to 5 is not clear to me.

Wyllie translated one simile as a simile, but he translated another simile literally without using English simile as an equivalent. Selver translated the first simile literally, but the other one as a simile. Metaphors were translated by Wyllie well. He used two different English terms for the same word to clarify the correct meaning of the Czech metaphor. On the other hand, Selver omitted this metaphor completely. Wyllie translate idiom using an explanation, not an English idiom, but Selver omitted the idiom. In Wyllie's translation Nana's colloquial language was expressed by using English colloquial language. However, Selver did not change the language significantly. In Selver's translation characters addressed Helena mostly as Miss or Madam which reflects the social hierarchy. Wyllie used Helena's first name without a title more often than Selver. Both translators used solely Helena's first name when she was addressed by her husband. When translating T/V forms in a dialogue between Helena and her maid, Wyllie used Helena's name to express the informality between these them while Selver did not, and the dialogue seems more formal.

In conclusion, both translators made factual mistakes. What is more important, though, is that Selver omitted parts that were important for the plot. The most important parts are those where Nana expresses her religious beliefs and she mentions that the reason why no people are being born is that the God is angry with people. This is crucial change in the play which carries the meaning and the warning Čapek wanted to express. These omitted parts are a reason why I consider Selver's translation incomplete and not exact, therefore worse than Wyllie's translation.

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**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

RUR	Rossum's Universal Robots
USA	United states of America
G. B. Shaw	George Bernard Shaw
UK	United Kingdom
E. R. ROBOT	Erich Roučka Robot
TV	Television
T/V	tu/vos