

Josek, Jiří. 2019. NA CESTĚ K SHAKESPEAROVĚ (PŘEKLADATELSKÉ REFLEXE) [eng.: The Journey to Shakespeare (Contemplations on Translating His Works)]. Prague: KANT – Karel Kerlický pro AMU.

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The Journey to Shakespeare is a thought-provoking insight into the work and translation philosophy of one of Czechia's most talented and prolific translators and translation studies scholars. While Josek's career encompassed a broad variety of works translated from English, his name is most commonly associated with the works of William Shakespeare, as Josek translated 34 of his plays together with his collection of Sonnets.

The monograph is based on Josek's habilitation thesis at Prague's Charles University, and was posthumously edited by his daughter Zuzana Josková, herself a translator of theatre plays from English into Czech. The aim of the monograph is to describe the basic problems associated with the translations of Shakespeare, using examples selected from Czech editions spanning more than one and a half centuries. As the introduction states, Josek's own approach to translation is based on the process of *creative reproduction*, and it is through this prism of translation as a creative endeavour that he contrasts and evaluates translation approaches across Czech history.

The brief introductory section outlines common issues in translating drama in general, with the theoretical structures rooted primarily in the Czech and Slovak tradition of Jiří Levý and Anton Popovič. Josek highlights the specific dimensions of drama translation aimed for the stage and the need for the translator to 'direct' the play in their own head, and these recommendations stem directly from Josek's experiences in directing his own plays in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Josek then focuses on the specific linguistic challenges of translating Shakespearean drama from English into Czech. These include the lower semantic density of English, the frequent use of homonyms for the purpose of wordplay, and the differences in the utilisation of abstract language, all of which are further complicated by Shakespeare's strict adherence to the iambic pentameter in his works. In choosing strategies for overcoming these issues, Josek places a strong emphasis on the translator's absolute understanding of the meaning and other features of the original work, and on a balance in the equivalence of form and content.

These introductory chapters are followed by the main section of the monograph, consisting of a discussion of the various methods for overcoming the listed challenges in Shakespearean translations

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while using existing translations of the plays as examples. Josek groups these into clusters with four main themes; issues associated with linguistic differences (such as homonyms, complex metaphors, rhythm and phonic differences), questions of character interpretation, contextual issues, and the translation of wordplay, malapropisms, substandard language and parody. Each section and subsection includes a brief description of the associated translation problems, and then proceeds to explain their various solutions on carefully selected examples. The most interesting and, from the perspective of translation studies scholars also most useful component of these discussions is the inclusion of a generous amount of existing Shakespearean translations into Czech that underpin the findings in each of these sections; as these represent works from translators spanning from the mid-19th century to the present day, their mutual comparison within clearly marked tables is invaluable in understanding the development of translation strategies throughout Czech history. The last section briefly outlines the specifics of translating Shakespeare for different media, including surtitles and dubbing, which is of particular use to audiovisual translators.

The value of Josek's monograph goes beyond just an interesting insight into the workings and methods of one of Czechia's most accomplished translators from English. Josek's findings rest not only on his personal experiences in translating the almost complete Shakespearean corpus, but also on his background in translation studies as an academic discipline and on his personal experiences in directing Shakespeare's play for the theatre. Although the robust scholarship in Shakespearean studies already includes a significant number of studies exploring the translation process of his works, Josek's background provides him with a unique combination of practical experiences and theoretical knowledge. As such, the monograph is a useful resource for a wide range of readers, from those keen to understand Shakespeare's original work, through translation studies scholars and practicing translators, to theatre producers and filmmakers.