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Neologisms and Word plays in selected works of James Thurber as translated  
by Radoslav Nenadál /

Neologismy a jazykové hříčky ve vybraných dílech Jamese Thurber v překladech Radoslava  
Nenadála

BAKALÁŘSKÁ PRÁCE

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## **Prohlášení/Declaration**

Prohlašuji, že jsem tuto bakalářskou práci vypracovala samostatně, že jsem řádně citoval/a všechny použité prameny a literaturu a že práce nebyla využita v rámci jiného vysokoškolského studia či k získání jiného či stejného titulu.

I declare that the following BA thesis is my own work for which I used only the sources and literature mentioned, and that this thesis has not been used in the course of other university studies or in order to acquire the same or another type of diploma.

Prague, 21.8.2013

## Abstract

In this thesis I have considered neologisms and word plays from three children stories of James Thurber: *The 13 Clocks*, *The White Deer*, and *The Wonderful O*. The first part of the thesis is concerned solely with examples from the original. For the sake of structure I have divided the material into categories based on the motivation and processes employed in their formation: lexical and association-based in case of neologisms, and complex word plays created by shifting letters and parts of words, or working with the peculiarities of English pronunciation.

The second part contains analysis of the same neologisms and word plays in Czech as translated by Radoslav Nenadál. It is structured according to the nature and result of the translation: there are neologisms translated by using extant Czech words, neologisms translated by forming a new compound, translations preserving both form and content of the original, translations preserving the form of the original but differing in the content and implications, translations preserving the content but changing the form, and translations preserving neither the form nor the content of the original.

The most important conclusions based on this study's results are that *The 13 Clocks* differs from the other two stories in terms of the strategies employed by the translator, and that when unable to find Czech equivalents for English word plays which would preserve both the form and content of the original, he prefers to retain the form and alter the content.

## Abstrakt

V této práci analyzuji neologismy a slovní hříčky ze tří pohádek Jamese Thurbera: jedná se o *Třináctery hodiny*, *O bílé lani*, a *Báječné O*. První část práce se zabývá pouze příklady z originálu. Pro přehlednost jsem materiál rozdělila do kategorií na základě motivace a procesů užitých při tvoření daných slov a sousloví: neologismy s lexikální motivací a ty založené na principu asociace, komplexní slovní hříčky stvořené přesouváním písmen a slov, a ty založené na zvláštích anglické výslovnosti.

Druhá část obsahuje rozbor týchž neologismů a slovních hříček v češtině podle překladu Radoslava Nenadála. Je strukturována podle povahy a výsledku překladu: jsou zde neologismy přeložené použitím existujícího českého slova, neologismy přeložené vytvořením nového kompozita, překlady zachovávající formu i obsah originálu, překlady zachovávající původní formu ale lišící se v obsahu a implikacích, překlady uchovávající obsah originálu za cenu změněné formy, a překlady, jež si nedokázaly uchovat formu ani obsah odpovídající originálu.

Hlavní závěr vyplývající z výsledků mé práce jsou zjištění, že *Třináctery hodiny* se výrazně liší of ostatních dvou příběhů, co se týče použitých překladových strategií; a dále, že v situacích, kdy se překladateli nepodařilo najít český evivalent zachovávající obsah i formu originálu, dal přednost formě před obsahem.

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## 1. Introduction

In this thesis I consider neologisms and word plays in three children stories written by the American author James Thurber (*The 13 Clocks*, *The White Deer*, and *The Wonderful O*) and their counterparts as translated into Czech by Radoslav Nenadál. The reason I have chosen these tales and not Thurber's satirical short stories for adults, some of which have also been translated by Nenadál, is not only that they are very close to my heart, but also because stories for children give the author the most freedom when it comes to various word plays. In an article entitled „Wordplay of James Thurber“ the author, A. Ross Eckler, mentions an interview with the BBC in which Kenneth Tynan said that Thurber lived in "an interior universe, entirely inhabited by words, which he could play with, dismember, anatomize, dissect, reassemble in strange and odd combinations... His mind was a seething kind of kaleidoscope of word forms, word shapes, abused words, misused words, neologisms, old coinages re-shaped."<sup>1</sup> It is no wonder, then, that when it comes to this author's fairytales, one finds an intricately woven tapestry of puns, words misused and mispronounced, ordinary words revealing others hidden amidst their letters, or opposites lurking just a letter away.

When it comes to works of such an imaginative author with an obsession for the oddities of language, a translation to so different a language as is Czech from English can easily turn out either dull or incomprehensible, or quite different from the original; the dilemma of literary translation is always whether to preserve the content or the form.<sup>2</sup> Nenadál's translation not only preserves the original message, but develops the humorous style further in places; he does this through various devices, like alliteration, rhyming and register, which I have been forced by the expanse of a bachelor thesis to leave aside, despite my original intention to include them in my analysis of the translation. I have chosen neologisms and complex word plays, for they are most interesting for close inspection, and probably most difficult to translate.

The prime objective of this thesis is not to offer a definitive and full-range categorization of all neologisms Thurber uses, and of all their counterparts in the Czech translation, although I do divide the individual words and phrases into categories, for easier orientation. My aim is to consider closely the neologisms Thurber uses, to determine as precisely as possible the strategy used, its design, and its effect on the reader; in the second part I intend to consider the same words and passages which in the original contained invention of new words and phrases, and

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1 A. Ross Eckler, "The Wordplay of James Thurber," *WORD WAYS* 6.4 1973: 241.

2 Zlata Kufnerová et al., *Překládání a četina* (Jinočany: H&H Vyšehradská, 2003) 135.

establish to what extent these strategies and effects have been maintained, or how violated, and for what reason. In the case of several specific examples of translation which did not follow the same word-formation processes as were employed in the original I comment on the difference and offer an alternative translation, not to challenge Mr. Nenadál's solution but with the sole intention to illustrate the difference between the original and the translation; and often to defend the translator's version by showing the ineptitude of applying the same strategy in forming a Czech neologism as is employed in the original.

The categorization I propose is therefore most important to the structure of the thesis, whose point lies in the concrete realizations of the individual strategies, not in rigid division of the words and phrases into classes and types.

Not being a native speaker of English, and not having the opportunity to be able to follow new trends in the use of words in such an ever-changing language, I used several dictionaries of standardized language to determine whether or not a word is in regular use and simply unfamiliar to me or whether it is Thurber's invention. When the dictionaries failed to provide the word I needed, I turned to the Corpus of Contemporary American English of the Brigham Young University, and to make sure Thurber did not draw on an older term no longer in active use I consulted their Corpus of Historical American English as well. Following this, I searched in slang dictionaries, and as a last instance I searched the web for a mention of the word. Despite being a native speaker of Czech, the strangeness of some words included in the Czech version forced me to search in various Czech slang dictionaries as well. A word qualified as “neologism” if I failed to find it anywhere.

I excluded personal names of the characters from my study, however interesting they may be, for their analysis would require too much additional space, as the problematics of names, often used not only for expressing the character's nature and role, but also to help place the story explicitly within the tradition of children stories. I have however included several lists of made-up royal names, for they are comical and function together, rather than serving a specific purpose in the story's narrative. I have considered neologisms (as defined above) and complex word plays, drawing on shifting, omitting or changing letters, parts of words, or whole words within a sentence.

## 2. Neologisms in the Original

Creating a new word and using it in a text which is meant to be read is only effective if the word can be understood by a wide enough readership. He must therefore follow certain word-formation processes which the readers are familiar with, and which they can apply on the newly encountered word to guess its meaning. Most likely to be understood are those which follow closely word-formation strategies employed automatically in the creation of folk etymologies: like analogy with lexical words. This includes composites and new forms derived from known words. More complex word-formation strategies include more complicated mental processes, like association across the boundaries of semantic fields, and considering the implications stemming from the phonetic form of the word; but more on that later. First I will present neologisms constructed by analogy with extant lexical words.

### 1. Analogy with Lexical Words

I have mentioned composites as a typical representative of neologisms formed on the basis of analogy with lexical words. In Thurber's stories, however, there are no composites as such to be found; only a special kind of composites, and those are portmanteau words. For the purposes of this thesis it suffices to say that portmanteau words are a kind of composites which are formed by substituting individual morphemes of words on the basis of their partial homonymy.<sup>3</sup> Thurber uses *poppycockalorum* and *cockahoopatrice*.

To provide some context: in *The 13 Clocks* the characters need to move a young woman to tears, because she has been given the gift of tears which turn to gemstones. The problem is that so many men have sought her out for this gift, and she has wept so often, that she has grown cynical and cries no more. As she does not seem moved at all by tales of regular misfortunes, the characters turn to more unusual sources, and end up telling her “tales of frogs in the forum, and the toads in the rice that destroyed the poppycockalorum and the cockahoopatrice,”<sup>4</sup> which obviously qualifies as the saddest of stories. *Poppycockalorum* and *cockahoopatrice* are compounds made up from slang expressions: *poppycock* means “nonsense, rubbish”<sup>5</sup>; *cockalorum* “a self-important, swaggering, boastful little man”<sup>6</sup>; *cock-a-hoop* “in high spirits, transported with joy”<sup>7</sup>;

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3 Martin Procházka, *Literary Theory: An Historical Introduction* (Praha: Karolinum, 2008) 134.

4 *The 13 Clocks* 80.

5 Jonathan Green, *Cassell's Dictionary of Slang* (London: Cassell&Co, 2000) s.v. *Poppycock*.

6 Jonathan Green, *Cassell's Dictionary of Slang* (London: Cassell&Co, 2000) s.v. *Cockalorum*.

7 Jonathan Green, *Cassell's Dictionary of Slang* (London: Cassell&Co, 2000) s.v. *Cock-a-hoop*.

and (probably) *cockatrice* is either “a prostitute” or “a baby”, but originally the word referred to a monster the likes of a basilisk<sup>8</sup>. The resulting terms are confusing to say the least. It is especially words like these that place Thurber in the tradition of authors like Edward Lear or Lewis Carroll (whose nonce names from the poem “Jabberwocky” he uses in *The Wonderful O*, alongside characters from Wizard of Oz, Marry Norton's *The Borrowers*, and some creatures of his own: “*the tove, the mome rath, and the borogove, the whiffenpoof and wogglebug and Dong, the Pod, the Todal, and the gorm.*”<sup>9</sup>

There are several instances of creation of new words through four-part analogy,<sup>10</sup> a common process of word-formation by applying a formant used to derive a new form from another word of similar structure, which results in a non-existent (meaning not in regular use, not a part of standardized language) word-form, whose process of emergence is easily traceable by the general knowledge of the original process.<sup>11</sup>

Thus in *The White Deer* on the analogy of *participate-participant* the word *obliterant* is derived from the verb *obliterate*; and the speaker himself is troubled by the problematics of this word: “*Obliterant,*” he repeated, frowning. “Is there such a word?” “You are perhaps thinking of '*eradicant*,’”<sup>12</sup> his friend the Royal Recorder advises him, falling into the same trap, and forming *eradicant* by the same analogy, using the same formant, and adding it to another word of similar meaning, offering a word which does not exist either and is just as wrong.

On the basis of similar analogy between *tricky* and *trickery*, for example, is there in the same story formed the word *finickery*. *Finicky* meaning “difficult to please, picky,” the analogically formed noun denotes a bard's fancies of the youngest prince in *The White Deer*; so termed by his older brothers, who are hardly literate and fail to grasp his passion for poetry: so by having them insult their brother by a grammatically incorrect term, formed by incorrect analogy, the author inherently comments on their stupidity and lack of education.

A quite specific kind of neologisms is represented in *The White Deer*. In the story a hunted white deer turns suddenly into a lovely maiden, who cannot remember her name or history. It is essential to find out her background however, both so that she can be returned to her parents, and so that if she was a princess, one of the princes who hunted her could marry her. For this purpose the Royal Recorder recites all names of kings from a “ponderous ledger in the hope that

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8 Jonathan Green, *Cassell's Dictionary of Slang* (London: Cassell&Co, 2000) s.v. *Cockatrice*.

9 *The Wonderful O* 42.

10 H. H. Hock, *Principles of Historical Linguistics* (Berlin – New York: Mouton de Gruyter 1991) 167.

11 Jiří Rejzek, *Lidová etymologie v češtině* (Praha: Karolinum, 2009) 40.

12 *The White Deer* 94.

one of them might light a light in the lady's eyes."<sup>13</sup> These names are all very peculiar: "Paq, Pardo, Payorel, Pent, Perril, Peo, Pilligro. Piv, Podo, Polonel, Puggy" is the first sequence. "Zar, Zazo, Zat, Zawazaw, Zav, Zax, Zay, Zazir, Zazuno, Zyzz," is the second list. There are several reasons as to why these lists sound so comical. Most of the names are actual aristocracy-related words transformed slightly; only several are offensive or completely nonsensical. The practice of different words made into a list, transformed so that they would fit, even if the original meaning is lost, is beloved by children: let me mention above all the Czech song "Holka modrooká, nese dávej u potoka" and the popular way of singing it with changing all the vowels into "e" or "i" and others ("Helke medreeke, nese dévej e peteke...").

Another reason why this is effective is the universally shared experience of strange and comically-sounding names. It is a situation we are all familiar with, when at the beginning of a new class the teacher reads the students' names out loud, there is always at least one which inspires muffled laughter. The existence of funny last names – and the urge to create even funnier ones – is one of the sources for humour in many languages. From the English tradition let me mention Rowan Atkinson and his spot "Nobody Called Jones," or Hugh Laurie and Stephen Fry and their sketch "Names" on their show "A Bit of Fry and Laurie."

Thurber is said to have been „addicted to the practice of discovering unifying themes in words which begin with a common letter.“<sup>14</sup> It is impossible to find all the implications he has hidden in his lists of words with common initials, but we should consider the possible meaning hidden in them.

A certain amount of correlation between the word's sound and meaning has been thoroughly pointed out for example by Margaret Magnus: in *God of the Words* she mentions clustering (the tendency towards similarities in meaning among words which share a sound, most commonly the initial; e.g. bang, beat, bat, blow, batter, bruise, blister, bash, bomb, bombard, bump<sup>15</sup>), and the archetypes hidden in letters: "The snake speaks to Eve. The /s/ verbs of verbalizing involve speaking and seduction. Those in /t/ are didactic. Those in /b/ are bombastically blathering, blaming, blessing, and bothering. Those in /f/ are lying. But the /s/ verbs of verbal behavior are specifically suited to the serpent: cite, saga, say, sermon, speak, speech, state, story, swear; sabotage, seduce, sell, siren, slogan, soothe, spell, spoof, sweet."<sup>16</sup> To include such a detailed analysis of Thurber's neologisms is, on account of space, impossible, and I will not be referencing her conclusions, but I merely wish to point out the existence of a link between a word's particular

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13 *The White Deer* 22.

14 A. Ross Eckler, "The Wordplay of James Thurber," *WORDWAYS* 6.4 1973: 245.

15 Margaret Magnus, *Gods of the Word* (Kirksville: Thomas Jefferson University Press, 1999) 90.

16 Margaret Magnus, *Gods of the Word* (Kirksville: Thomas Jefferson University Press, 1999) 74.

form and meaning.

Any list of nonce words starting with the same letter is implicitly funny. The fact that this letter is “p” only adds to this: the aspirated English /p<sup>h</sup>/ is a comical sound in itself; even more so when it occurs at the beginning of royal names. Considering that some of them are words transformed so that they would fit the pattern, one must needs notice how pompous and pretentious (note all the p's) the initial “p” makes them sound.

As for the initial “z”, it is the opposite of “p” in implications. It is often used by writers for names of strong negative characters. It sounds majestic and mean. Besides in English “z” as an initial is quite scarce, and therefore precious.

Some of these names, like *Paq*, carry no implicit meaning (besides sounding like “puck”). These are usually the very short ones, like *Piv*, *Zar*, *Zazo*, *Zat*, *Zav*, *Zay*, or *Zyzz*. Longer words with no lexical implications but comical pronunciation include *Zawazaw*, *Zazuno*, and *Zazir*, although the last one might be a note on majestic-sounding Arabic names like “Zahir”, which here through the reduplication sounds implicitly funny.

Others seem to derive from implicitly pejorative words: *Podo* seems to have the strongest affiliation with the word “dodo”, which combined with the lofty initial makes it very unflattering. *Puggy* is an actual word meaning “like a small dog”: a name quite insulting to a member of the aristocracy, even if (or especially if) true.

Others can be discovered to be derived from actual words connected with royalty and aristocracy: *Pardo* is almost the French loanword for an apology, “pardon”; *Payorel* as a pompous version of “bayonet”; *Pent* from “rent” (as the income of aristocracy paid by the king) or or “tent” perhaps (if we keep to the battle imagery), or possibly also „gent“; *Perril* is only misspelled “peril”, not exactly a royal concept but it is nevertheless a name a knight might use to highlight his courage; *Peo* is a transformation of the extant (and majestic) name “Leo”; *Pilligro* a variation on “filigree”, a fine and delicate piece of metalwork; *Polonel* is a pompous “colonel”.

## 2. Working on the Principle of Association Stemming from the Phonetic Level

Words like *guggle* or *whupple* or *thrug* neither work entirely on the principle of phonology, nor are they portmanteau words as such, or pieces of specific words strung together to make a new one. However, the author must needs wish his new words to be understood, therefore there must be certain mental or linguistic processes which are universally shared, which the author can rely on in his readers. This is the process of association.

Neologisms of this type sometimes seem to be composed of several morphemes which can be isolated and described individually. A good example of this is the word *Todal*, a mysterious creature from *The 13 Clocks* which everyone fears to the point of losing all hair colour the moment the *Todal* is mentioned. In this case, then, we could speak of isolating individual morphemes /təʊd/ and /əl/ (we would have to accept Saussure's claim that the spoken word is the true form of language, and that the role of spelling has been greatly exaggerated<sup>17</sup>; in the case of nonces, this is more easily acceptable than in ordinary language; and besides, children stories are intended mostly to be read aloud to children who have no idea of the words' spelling); but we would miss the overall sound of the word, reminding us of the American pronunciation of „total“. In the case of *zickering*, if we tried to work with morphemes alone, we would find ourselves completely at a loss.

Thurber, following in the footsteps of writers such as Lewis Carrol or James Joyce, enjoys making up such words which tickle the reader's imagination and knowledge, and require an adventurous mind. They seemingly combine at least two parts of several words, which are shared by more than one lexical word; this means that rather than isolating the individual parts and combining their senses to find the meaning of the neologism, the process which actually brings understanding is searching for all words with which the neologism shares a morpheme, and which remind us of the word we are trying to place. This means that not only would routine isolation of morphemes and defining their individual meaning be very dull work, but it would not lead us to the sense of the nonce; the process of association is more effective than systematic methods observing exact morphological rules. We need to (and do so quite easily, it seems) collect as many „similar“ words which offer more pieces to the puzzle which is the particular neologism, and its meaning is then caught in the net of our associations. Some interpretations may be more far-fetched than others; but what keeps the various association chains from running too wild, or in completely different directions, is context. Although this may sound too intuitive to work universally, the fact that authors keep making up words of such nature proves that there

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17 Ferdinand de Saussure, *Kurz obecné lingvistiky* (Praha: Academia, 1996) 59.

must be a great part of this association net we, as readers, share.

In a fascinating study on the nature of the human brain, mathematics, music and, most importantly, languages and the nature of communication and understanding, a book called *Gödel, Escher, Bach*, its author, Douglas R. Hofstadter, discusses the peculiarities of the possible translations of “Jabberwocky” by Lewis Carroll: “In ordinary language, the task of translation is more straightforward, since to each word or phrase in the original language, there can usually be found a corresponding word or phrase in the new language. By contrast, in a poem of this type, many “words” do not carry ordinary meaning, but act purely as exciters of nearby symbols. However, what is nearby in one language may be remote in another. Thus, in the brain of a native speaker of English, “slithy” probably activates such symbols as “slimy”, “slither”, „slippery”, “lithe”, and “sly”, to varying extents.”<sup>18</sup>

Another discussion of the same dimension of nonce interpretation can be found in “Language as Imitation: Jakobson, Joyce, and the Art of Onomatopoeia” by Derek Attridge. He discusses certain nonces from *Ulysses* to illustrate how even in the case of the least lexical-based nonces their affinity with extant lexical words is important in the subconscious process of constructing the unknown word's meaning: “f” from “Ff. Oo. Rrpr,”<sup>19</sup> hints at the word “fart”, Attridge says, and “kran”<sup>20</sup> is not very far from “tram”<sup>21</sup>, so the sounds are partly derived from terms describing what they express (or, possibly, the other way around).

Furthermore, nonces used for the expression of specific sounds are in both these authors' opinions linked to whatever they represent by a net of linguistic associations firmly embedded in our minds. What Hoffstadter illustrates on the example of “slithy” from “Jabberwocky”, Attridge shows on the word “Krandl-” from *Ulysses*, denoting the sound a tram makes: it “evokes a number of phonetically-related verbs of movement and noise: “trundle,” “rumble,” “grumble,” “shamble,” “scramble” - what has been called a “phonesthetic constellation”<sup>22</sup>; and mechanical associations are evoked by its closeness to “handle” and by the presence of “-krank-” later in the string.”<sup>23</sup>

Although the process of finding lexical associations is crucial for defining the nature of such a word, its phonetic properties cannot be overlooked. Beginning already with Plato's *Cratylus*, there has always been a debate on the extent to which words' sound corresponds with their meaning.

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18 Douglas R. Hofstadter, *Gödel, Escher, Bach* (London: Penguin Books, 2000) 372.

19 James Joyce, *Ulysses* (Ware: Wordsworth Editions Ltd, 2010) 289.

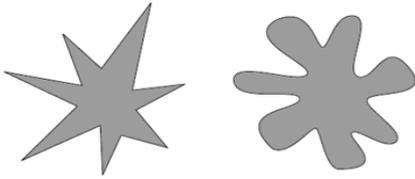
20 James Joyce, *Ulysses* (Ware: Wordsworth Editions Ltd, 2010) 290.

21 D. Attridge, “LANGUAGE AS IMITATION: JAKOBSON, JOYCE, and the ART OF ONOMATOPOEIA.” *MLN* 9.5 1984: 1122.

22 Dwight L. Bolinger, *Forms of English: Accent, Morpheme, Order* (Cambridge: Mass., 1965) 233.

23 D. Attridge, “LANGUAGE AS IMITATION: JAKOBSON, JOYCE, and the ART OF ONOMATOPOEIA.” *MLN* 9.5 (1984) 1122.

Besides the conclusions of scholars like Margaret Magnus, there is also a more general dimension to the sound of words and its connection with the impression they make, and that is well illustrated by the Bouba-Kiki experiment.



“Bouba-Kiki effect” is the name of a curious phenomenon first reported by a German psychologist and phenomenologist Wolfgang Köhler in 1929 (although this name was first mentioned in 2001 by Ramachandran and Hubbard<sup>24</sup>, Köhler's original name was “the Takete-Maluma effect”<sup>25</sup>). It derives from an experiment in which many people were asked to match particular made-up words to particular abstract drawings of unfamiliar objects. In overwhelming majority they matched words like *takete* or *kiki* to an image of jagged, star-like object and words like *maluma* or *bouba* to an image of a rounded, cloud-like object.<sup>26</sup>

There are various explanations of this phenomenon. Theories accentuating the role of vowels propose that there is a synaesthesia-like process in the brain during articulation which links the motor or somatosensory areas involved in articulating sounds, and the visual areas activated while perceiving shapes of objects.<sup>27</sup> This means that while a person is articulating the word *maluma* which requires the rounding of the lips, they are reminded of round objects; not so with *takete*. Consonant-based theories stress the contrast between spectral density and attack between /t/ or /k/, and /m/ or /l/ - which makes the first two relatively harsh and, indeed, “jagged”, in comparison to the mellow second pair.<sup>28</sup>

There is of course an obvious flaw in this argument, specifically the restricted selection of sounds and shapes. The aim of this experiment, however, was nothing more than to point out the tendency of the human mind to associate sounds with certain qualities, like shape, in general terms.

The Bouba-Kiki thesis was later expanded by many<sup>29</sup> to include not only nonsense sound clusters, but also to describe tendencies regarding the formation and use of regular words: for

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24 V. S. Ramachandran, E. M. Hubbard, “Synaesthesia: A window into perception, thought, and language.” *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 8.3 2001: 34.

25 W. Köhler, *Gestalt psychology*. (New York: Liveright 1929)

26 Alan K. S. Nielsen and Drew Rendall, “Parsing the Role of Consonants Versus Vowels in the Classic Takete-Maluma Phenomenon.” *Canadian Journal of Experimental Psychology* 67.2 2013: 153.

27 V. S. Ramachandran, E. M. Hubbard, “Synaesthesia: A window into perception, thought, and language.” *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 8.3 2001: 34.

28 C Westbury, “Implicit sound symbolism in lexical access: Evidence from an interference task.” *Brain and Language*, 93, 2005: 10–19.

29 L. Hinton, J. Nichols, J. Ohala, *Sound symbolism*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

example, Sapir in his study<sup>30</sup> notes the vowel-specific marking of size diminution or augmentation (where words denoting small size usually contain high, front vowels: *tiny, bit, teeny, little*; while words denoting large size more commonly contain low, back vowels: *chunk, huge, block*).<sup>31</sup> This means that the tendency to connect some phonological properties to certain visual – or other – percepts is present even in our everyday language.

This area has been studied from various viewpoints, and some researchers have even connected it with works on the evolution of speech and the sound-making tendencies of primates,<sup>32</sup> noting that sudden harsh sounds are commonly associated with distress and aggression, while melodious, cooing or comforting noises are reserved for calm and intimate situations. Others have written about the same tendency in human speech;<sup>33</sup> it is more prominent in the changes of diction than choice of words, but it is certain that some awareness of this tendency must be present in the human mind, at least on a subconscious level.

I am far from attempting to study Thurber's neologisms on anything close to this level of expertise and scientific detail; I merely wish to illustrate that there are exceptions to the widely accepted Saussurean tenet that “the form of the symbol is arbitrary”<sup>34</sup> – which is undoubtedly true for most words, but there are also those whose sound is undeniably linked with their meaning; e.g. onomatopoeia, words used to describe sounds, or particular neologisms. An author like James Thurber with his peculiar obsession with sounds and letters must have taken great advantage of this dimension when creating new words.

On account of the restricted extent of this thesis I will focus solely on those association chains which the context designates as relevant. I would however like to illustrate the full range of possibilities when it comes to associations of various kinds, at least on one example. I will show this on the phrase “he will slit you from your guggle to your zatch,”<sup>35</sup> used as an ultimate threat in *The 13 Clocks*. The word *guggle* is not to be found in a standard dictionary, but I did find it in *Cassell's Dictionary of Slang*, which confirmed that the word means “the windpipe, the throat”, derived from Standard English *guggle* (which I have not been able to find in a standard dictionary either), “to make a gurgling sound, like that of water pouring from a narrow-necked bottle.”<sup>36</sup> I am uncertain as to how much one ought to rely on a single source of non-standardized language,

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30 E. Sapir, “A study in phonetic symbolism.” *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 12, 1929: 225–239.

31 Parsing the Role of Consonants Versus Vowels in the Classic Takete-Maluma Phenomenon, 153.

32 E.S. Morton, “On the occurrence and significance of motivation structural rules in some birds and mammal sounds.” *American Naturalist*, 111, 1977: 855–869.

33 J. Bachorowski, M. J. Owren, “Vocal expression of emotion.” *The handbook of emotions*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New York: Guilford Press, 2008) pp. 196–210.

34 Ferdinand de Saussure, *Kurz obecné lingvistiky* (Praha: Academia, 1996)

35 *The 13 Clocks* 24; 26.

36 Jonathan Green, *Cassell's Dictionary of Slang* (London: Cassell&Co, 2000) s.v. *Guggle*.

but it is true that when we consider the phonological properties of the word *guggle*, we find ourselves amidst glottal sounds (notice the name), so that the whole word sounds a lot like throaty gurgling.

If we trust the Czech translation we find that Nenadál has resolved the word *guggle* to mean “throat” and *zatch* to mean “crotch”. It is possible to see it the other way (or any other way, for that matter – there are a number of ways in which the human body can be slit), if we consider *guggle*'s similarity to “gut” and link *zatch* with, for example, “latch”, as something resembling a throat in terms of function, at least partly. If, however, we trust the dictionary and take the translation as accurate (which would also make more sense considering the usual direction of slicing people in half, taking into account gravity and all), we can look around for more useful connotations. *Guggle* could be linked with “goggle” and thus connected with eyes; if the Duke really did slit the prince vertically in half, his proficiency with the sword would have to be immense for him to be able to avoid the upper half of the prince's face.

Trying to find meaningful sound associations for “zatch”<sup>37</sup> (which cannot be found in any dictionary, either standard English or not) leads us to “crotch/crutch”; the letter “z” at the beginning could be the result of a tendency to model pairs of words which represent “from the beginning to the end”, or “from head to toe”, as “from A to Z”. The nonce for throat would not sound right beginning with an “a”, while in the case of crotch it does not impede the associations. There is also the link with words like “zipper” or “patch”, both suggesting the crutch of trousers, or “hatch”, offering a – more sophisticated and less probable, but still possibly present – connection with the groin.

Having illustrated an expanded range of possibilities in relation to associations, I will focus solely on those relevant to the specific context from now on. In the case of *zickering*<sup>38</sup> (used of bats), lexical associations seem to help us little, but in fact create a field within which we can then grope for the “correct” meaning after our own hearts: e.g. “bickering” reminds one of a neverending stream of high-pitched noises; the similarity to “zigzag” supplies the image of a back-and-forth kind of movement; and *flicker* reminds one of the unsteady motion of a candle flame in a draught. The resulting vision is of something zooming back and forth with frantic beating of tiny wings, possibly making squeaky noises in the process. It is a nonce which communicates at the same time the impression of movement and sound, which is remarkable.

The most terrifying creature in *The 13 Clocks* is *the Todal*.<sup>39</sup> Its resemblance to “toad” is undeniable, as well as its homophony with the American pronunciation of “total”: together they

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37 *The 13 Clocks* 24; 26.

38 *The 13 Clocks* 42.

39 *The 13 Clocks* 50; 58; 59; 66; 97; 123.

form something like “the final toad”. Another dimension, although one Thurber could not have expected his juvenile readers to grasp, is the word's similarity to the German term for Death, “Tod”. Seen from this perspective *the Todal* looks like an adjective, Tod-al, meaning “deadly”. There is also the possibility of seeing it as “Toad-al”, as a term describing a creature resembling a toad, but that is not as effective (scary) as the other interpretations.

A *blob of glup*<sup>40</sup> resembles *from your guggle to your zatch* in structure. *Blob* is a regular lexical word denoting a “drop” or “globule”, which is not very useful in this context though; it is supposed to be the name of something terrifying to the characters, even if comical by sound to the reader. A certain on-line dictionary lists among other uses also “an object, especially a large one, having no distinct shape or definition;”<sup>41</sup> which is more fitting here. *Glup*, on the other hand, is completely made-up. It suggests stickiness by association with “glue”, and loud swallowing by its closeness to “gulp”. The inversion within the word creates the image of reversal, which would create an object or a creature which expels something sticky. Altogether, *a blob of glup* truly makes an image of something which one would be very unfortunate to meet: a large, indistinct shape dripping with slime.

Thurber uses conversion, which is much easier and more common in English than in Czech, to put *blob* and *glup* to good use. As *blob of glup* becomes the utterance *the Blob will glup him*, which suggests we have now become so intimately acquainted with the *Blob* it deserves a definite article and a capital “B”, *Glup* becomes a verb, which just like the noun is left to the reader's imagination (probably still following the line of slime and spitting), but in this context the similarity to “gulp” gains in importance. The resulting threat is that the mysterious object or creature will either swallow its victim, or cover him with (possibly lethal) slime. At the end of the story *the Blob* is revealed to mean *the Todal*, which completes the image of being eaten by a giant toad (which is a slimy experience indeed).

When it comes to violence in stories for children, mysterious threats and actions are often the best solution; Thurber uses it with *the Todal* and *blob of glup*, and later in the same story also when he describes what the *Todal* does that makes it so terrifying. The word he uses is *gleep*.<sup>42</sup> The only mention of *gleep*'s meaning with any relation to Thurber's text is in an on-line urban dictionary, where it states that *gleep* means “To shoot saliva in a stream from one's mouth while holding the tongue to the roof of the mouth.”<sup>43</sup> Although this information comes from a less reliable source, it does however point out a possible point of reference on which understanding of the nonce could

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40 *The 13 Clocks* 50; 66; 123.

41 <http://dictionary.reference.com>.

42 *The 13 Clocks* 59.

43 <http://www.urbandictionary.com>.

be built. Its absence from dictionaries, of regular or slang language, suggests that even if the word did not originate with Thurber, it is not in wider use even today; but there might be a connection of this term in a native English speaker's mind of *gleep* and shooting saliva from one's mouth; it is possible, for example, that it is something children would say.

Possible lexical associations might involve „glee“, suggesting an enjoyment on the part of the *Todal* of whatever the word *gleep* signifies, and the stickiness arising from the connection with „glue“; or perhaps with „gleam“, adding a visual effect to the picture, implying perhaps the gleam of eyes in the darkness, or of slime on the beast's body (if we accept the *Todal*'s resemblance to a toad). Another option is the nonce's similarity to „leap“, creating a more violent image.

If we consider *gleep* from the Bouba-Kiki angle, we may arrive at the picture of a giant toad with its mouth wide open; for if the connection of words with images is made through association with the way they are pronounced, *gleep* makes us think of thin, long, but horizontally wide objects; there is a certain gulping sound involved (*gl*), a distinct widening of the mouth (*ee*), and a definite finality at the end, made with the lips (*p*). If we apply these impressions on the *Todal*, we can see clearly how easily and with what zest the Duke got swallowed by the giant toad; or, if we follow closely the precise order of the sounds, we can see it spitting (probably something not only disgusting but also lethal, considering it is supposed to be the Duke's end).

*The Todal* is said to be made of *lip*,<sup>44</sup> which is a complete mystery to me. Besides the usual sense (the rim of the mouth or the edge of something) there seems to be only the slang meaning of “giving somebody lip”, as in “talking back to someone who deserves respect, being rude”. As it is supposed to be a substance inspiring either disgust or dread, I might attempt to come up with associations like “limp”, “drip”, “tip” - suggesting slackness, wetness, possibly some prickly characteristics. But the word *lip* is so regularly used that it seems unlikely the reader is supposed to see anything too inventive in it. In addition to the other characteristics of *the Todal*, which include eating Dukes and Princes whole, and being sort of slimy, *lip* fits nicely with the rest. It emphasizes the creature's mouth, which must indeed be enormous, and besides, lips are often soft and moist.

In *The Wonderful O* one of the pirates has a parrot, who keeps repeating words with “o” in them (which the pirate hates above all else). At one point the pirate exclaims “*Stop his squawking! Or else I'll squack his thrug till all he can whupple is geep.*”<sup>45</sup> Keeping in line with the kind of unspecific danger he used already when describing *the Todal*, Thurber introduces yet another mysterious threat, this time significantly more complex: some of the words I believe are not even meant to be

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44 *The 13 Clocks*, 59.

45 *The Wonderful O* 48.

understood exactly. With the exception of *squawking* (which is a slang expression for constant complaining, while at the same time nicely imitating the sound a parrot makes) and *geep* (a slang expression for “an obnoxious, inept or suspicious person,” which might contain some implication but here I think it represents mainly the only sound the parrot will be able to make after the punishment), the rest of the mysterious words do not carry a specific meaning, only the echoes of others: when we consider only those words which fall into the same semantic category as can from the context be expected of these neologisms, *squack* resembles “smack”, “whack”, or “strike”; *thrug* is the most mysterious of all, possibly an inventive name for a tail or (more probably) beak, given the context, yet the particular words from which the form stems escape me; and *whupple* apparently stands somewhere between *utter* and *whimper*, which also describes quite expressively the word's meaning.

There are several instances of words which on the scale of lexical to onomatopoeic neologisms stand significantly closer to the latter end. In his article on onomatopoeia Derek Attridge distinguishes two types of onomatopoeia, creating a typology I would like to mention in connection with my own. Among results of lexical onomatopoeia he lists those regularly used words which describe a sound by partly imitating it (e.g. “jingle”, “tink”, “smack”<sup>46</sup>). Non-lexical onomatopoeia creates those words which imitate the sound as closely as possible, often violating conventions of the phonetic system of the language, not meant to be read aloud precisely as they are spelled (which is often impossible) but rather communicating the nature of the sound the reader is then supposed to make after his own fashion (like fart noises “Prrrpfrrppfff”<sup>47</sup> or a creaking door “eeee”<sup>48</sup>). Thurber combines these two kinds in his own onomatopoeia: when trying to express a complex specific sound, he merges several lexical onomatopoeia with the non-lexical element, and comes up with an original way to describe the sound he means as closely as possible.

*Thlup* (in the sentence “Now that my precious gems have turned to thlup”<sup>49</sup>) is a sound-based nonce with no lexical associations with the possible (but debatable) exception of “flop”. Rather like the words “thump”, “thud”, or “squelch”, it is an attempt to express a sound in the English phonetic system. The word is used for gems that have turned back to tears, so *thlup* means liquid, the pronunciation of the word resembling the sound of stepping suddenly into water, or of drops

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46 D. Attridge, “LANGUAGE AS IMITATION: JAKOBSON, JOYCE, and the ART OF ONOMATOPOEIA.” *MLN* 9.5 1984: 1129.

47 D. Attridge, “LANGUAGE AS IMITATION: JAKOBSON, JOYCE, and the ART OF ONOMATOPOEIA.” *MLN* 9.5 1984: 1128.

48 D. Attridge, “LANGUAGE AS IMITATION: JAKOBSON, JOYCE, and the ART OF ONOMATOPOEIA.” *MLN* 9.5 1984: 1126.

49 *The 13 Clocks* 25.

falling on the ground.

*Squutched*<sup>50</sup> (a fictional regular past tense form of a made-up verb *to squutch*) is similar to *thlup* concerning the range of associations: here it is words like “squidge” (to squeeze together, esp. of malleable substances<sup>51</sup>), “squoshy” (soft and insubstantial<sup>52</sup>), “squishy” or “squelch” that make up this word's alternative set of connotations. The sound it denotes is therefore quite clear – perhaps prolonged slightly through the use of two subsequent u's. It is an original term for a long squelching sound.

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50 *The 13 Clocks* 124.

51 Jonathan Green, *Cassell's Dictionary of Slang* (London: Cassell&Co, 2000) s.v. *squidge*

52 Jonathan Green, *Cassell's Dictionary of Slang* (London: Cassell&Co, 2000) s.v. *squoshy*

### 3. Word Plays in the Original

#### 1. Complex Plays Involving Shifting Letters and Parts of Words

When it comes to leaving out letters, there is the tendency shared by many languages (e.g. Hebrew, or Arabian) to omit vowels (they are fewer in number and thus carry less meaning); but in languages like English this leads to crucial misinterpretations. The numerous instances of this mistake in *The Wonderful O* may be a humorous comment on how languages deteriorate through careless use.

Thurber is said to have spent a considerable amount of time musing on words from whose letters other words could be put together, or which contained all vowels in a specific order, and so on. He experimented with defining words by combining the meanings of their parts, or all words that could be made up from the original word's letters, thus finding a new set of alternative connotations for the word. In his search for words he didn't hesitate to create new ones, and positioning them right next to real words, including them in the same list; he also entertained himself and his friends with the bizarre treats that the strangest combinations of letters presented for him, such as „ugug“ in „plugugly“, „achach“ in „stomachache“, or „chchh“ in „mlechchha“.<sup>53</sup>

Of the works discussed in this thesis the one most prominently concerned with this type of wordplay (and, indeed, built on it) is *The Wonderful O*. The plot is constructed around two pirates and their crew arriving on an inhabited island and starting to dictate a new world order, one from which the letter O is exempted. The results are devastating for the islanders, but quite comical for the reader. The story contains, among other things, endless lists of what the islanders had to give up and get rid of, in other words - all the instruments, games, books, animals and parts of buildings and streets and all other things whose names contained the letter “o”. I will not discuss them here at all, for as cleverly construed as they are, their length and obvious purpose, as well as an easy translation, make them an unfit subject for this study.

I would, however, like to comment on the places where the so-called “o-lessness” has been used to create a pun. Thus “court” becomes “curt,”<sup>54</sup> and nobody is able to tell apart “owed” and “wed”, “oft” and “foot”, “odd” and “dodo”<sup>55</sup>. Some of them are not, strictly speaking, contained one in the other, but only an “o” away. In an attempt to simplify matters slightly, and given the

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53 A. Ross Eckler, "The Wordplay of James Thurber," *WORD WAYS* 6.4 1973: 244.

54 *The Wonderful O* 19.

55 *The Wonderful O* 26.

nature of the story, which works substantially with the results of letter omission, I have decided to include here not only those instances where one can be wholly construed from parts of the other, but also those which need the addition of one or two O's.

It is impossible to decipher the author's original intention, whether the specific pairs of words he chose to illustrate his point were picked randomly, or whether he used those where he saw some inherent link between the two, some underlying meaning he wished to communicate to the reader.

Some of these pairs inspire the notion that a word's meaning (understand its broader meaning, its connotations) may be hidden in its letters: for example, with "court" and "curt", the derived word conveys the quality of the original, or possibly offers a description of what the court proceedings became under the new regime. The word „odd“ could easily be derived from "dodo", if such a letter-based kind of derivation worked in English. The complaint "Worst of all, a hero's her"<sup>56</sup> hides the comment on the hopelessness of the people in the new regime: they have lost even their heroes, for they have become effeminate through the loss of "o". The same implicit sigh is present in "moan is man"<sup>57</sup> and "woe is we".<sup>58</sup>

Other pairs, like „owed“ and „wed“, put together two words of opposite polarity with regard to connotations (if we put aside the somewhat far-fetched notion of the author making a covert comment on the immensity of wedding expenses, or the costs of divorce) - and so may be an observation on how curious it is that such a vast gap between two verbs may be crossed by one letter; or it may possibly belong in the previous group, as a hidden commentary on the implicit commitment which makes debt and marriage remarkably similar.

Words like "oft" and "foot" seem to have no other effect than to nudge the reader's imagination to try and picture in what circumstances it would be possible to confuse these two, what context would allow it (if any), and what humour could derive from interchanging such concepts - of different word classes, their meaning neither linked nor obviously disagreeing, simply completely dissimilar. It is so also with the long musing on the difficulties of the new language: "When coat is cat, and boat is bat, and goatherd looks like gathered, and booth is both, since both are bth, the reader's eye is bothered,"<sup>59</sup> or with "anon is ann".<sup>60</sup>

Also sentences like "Taking a letter from hoarder makes it harder"<sup>61</sup> are very funny because the observation on the word *harder* being hidden inside the word *hoarder* combines with the apparent

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56 *The Wonderful O* 50.

57 *The Wonderful O* 50.

58 *The Wonderful O* 50.

59 *The Wonderful O* 50.

60 *The Wonderful O* 50.

61 *The Wonderful O* 46.

statement of the sentence: as taking anything from a hoarder makes life harder for the thief, it is not completely nonsensical and makes a hilarious pun. Similarly the remark “Take the F from life and you have lie”<sup>62</sup> is a covert comment on the nature of the changes in language the two pirates are making, and the effects it has on the inhabitants.

One of the pirates laughs at a poet, who has by the process of losing his “o” become a “pet”, and who is walking his poodle (and defends his dog's right to remain on the island by translating his name into foreign languages): “You are *both* pets now!”<sup>63</sup> The word “curt” is put together with the word “curtsy”, highlighting their crucial difference while creating a pleasant sound effect, in “At this the women rose in anger and dismay and left the curt without a curtsy.”<sup>64</sup>

There are word plays brilliantly using a wider context, like the brilliant “No one could play *Othello* when *Othello* turned to *Thell*, and Desdemona was strangled at the start.”<sup>65</sup> - noting that for the two significantly diverse plays, both of which contain a scene where a female character is strangled, differ in name only by the two vowels.

“Ophelia Oliver repeated [her name], and vanished from the haunts of men.”<sup>66</sup> This is a mystery, even to native speakers; some theories include *liver* being an alternative slang name for female genitals, or more appropriately in the context of a children's story *liver* as something disgusting to children generally; the implications of *Phelia* (Philia) combined with the word *liver* (if understood as “someone who lives generously”) might imply debauchery. The theory I prefer is the new name's resemblance to the phrase “feel ya (your) liver,” which does indeed sound discouraging when uttered instead of an introduction.

We can see why “the author of a book *Flamingo Stories* read *Flaming Stries* aloud to his wife, and gave up writing:”<sup>67</sup> when tales about birds turn to something unknown but burning, possibly sounding almost like “streets”, one does tend to lose an appetite for writing.

Besides playing with the possibilities of losing individual letters, Thurber also includes word plays with larger portions of words: his *Moondays* and *Feydays*<sup>68</sup> in *The 13 Clocks* are a good example. They are mentioned in a scene with several other peculiar, even mad, announcements, so the implication is quite clear: here is a country where things sound almost as they should, but if you listen closer, you find that it all goes downhill, from mad to madder, from “moony” (dreamy,

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62 *The Wonderful O* 46.

63 *The Wonderful O* 18.

64 *The Wonderful O* 23.

65 *The Wonderful O*, 26.

66 *The Wonderful O* 69.

67 *The Wonderful O* 27.

68 *The White Deer* 63.

somnambulant) to “fey” (outright crazy).

Playing with words and rolling them around on his tongue, Thurber obviously wished to try how some of them work backwards: from the chiasmatic *thorny Boar of Borythorn*,<sup>69</sup> which got scrambled only slightly, and the similar *Orchard of Chardor*,<sup>70</sup> and then all the way to *the wuffing-puffing of the surly Nacilbuper*,<sup>71</sup> which is “republican” spelled backwards, for some unfathomable reason used in a children story for no specific reason in particular.

In *The Wonderful O*, Thurber used the opportunity of o-lessness to propose some wild biological inventions, in the words of a lawyer who is trying to convince the crows of angry wives (not “women”, for that word has been banned, because it conceals an “o”) that they do not see what opportunities lie in the prohibition of “o”: “Forget-me-nots, when crossed with madwort, lose their O's,” he says. “I get a hybrid which I call regret-me-evers. Love-in-a-mist, when crossed with bleeding hearts, results in sweethearts' quarrels. Black-eyed susans, crossed with ragged sailors, give me ragged susans. Jack-in-the-pulpit, crossed with devil's paintbrush, should give me devil-in-the-pulpit. And think of the fine satanic chimes that will emerge from hellebore crossed with Canterbury bells.”<sup>72</sup> Aside from presenting a wonderful idea of mixing the names of two plants crossed genetically, Thurber lets his mind run amok among the unlimited variety of herbal names to create combinations which sound as ridiculous and evil as possible.

Playing with even larger units Thurber tried in *The White Deer*, when after enumerating all the existing royal names to the nameless princess without any of them ringing a bell, the Royal Recorder tries inventing some new ones, in the hope that this might help – against all odds, for there really is no logical reason why it should. Especially considering the way he does it: „Rango, Rengo, Ringo, Rongo, Rungo“ is the first and only sequence which does in fact consist almost entirely of names, even if somewhat strange ones; so the Royal Recorder applies the same strategy to random clusters of syllables which come to his mind, with rather less success when it comes to creating at least plausible names: “Rappo, Reppo, Rippo, Roppo, Ruppoo;” then he tries with other real names, but through using the same tactic loses the thread of reality very soon: “Santo, Sento, Sinto, Sonto, Sunto;” “Talar, Teletar, Tilitar, Tolotar, Tulutar;” “Undan, Unden, Undin, Undon, Undun;”<sup>73</sup> “Varalare, Veralare, Viralare, Voralare, Vuralare;” “Waxy, Wexy, Wixy,

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69 *The 13 Clocks* 24.

70 *The Wonderful O* 39.

71 *The Wonderful O* 69.

72 *The Wonderful O* 23.

73 *The White Deer* 34.

Woxy, Wuxy.”<sup>74</sup> Such vigorous repetition with patient substitution of vowels is typical for children plays with words, their patient babbling, and their humour. With the exception of *Waxy* (also a very unusual name to think of for a king) and the few which happen to be names of various foreign origin (it is hard to tell whether the author intended this or not), none of the words mean anything specific, nor do they have any clear lexical connotations. The humour here derives from the ridiculous situation, and the absurd strategy the Royal Recorder uses to try and make the princess remember her name. There is a possibility there might be a hidden author's wink in connection with the ridiculous nature of some names, even – or perhaps especially – amongst nobility, but that can be only guessed at. The King ridicules his Royal Recorder soon after this enumerating scene: “Pap, Pep, Pip, Pop, Pup,” he sneers, imitating the form, not the content, and later he shouts “Scribble, scrable, scrubble!”<sup>75</sup>, reminding the reader once more of this play, which is obviously very popular with the juvenile readership.

## **2. Pitfalls of Pronunciation**

Having a keen ear for language, Thurber enjoyed noticing the interesting ways in which people around him mispronounced English, and often made their mistakes or casual pronunciation into quite interesting new words or surprising statements.<sup>76</sup> In “Friends, Romans, Countrymen, Lend Me Your Ear Muffs” (Lanterns and Lances), Thurber complains of “crippled or wingless words that escape, all distorted, the careless human lips of our jittery time.” From this it is clear that mispronunciation and mutilation of language by carelessness weighed heavy on his mind, and works like *The Wonderful O*, where the usurpers of the island wreak havoc by deleting one letter from all words, are good examples of this.

It is typical that despite the mayhem the deletion of “o” has caused, there are some people who enjoy the new trend: “O-lessness is now a kind of cult in certain quarters,” the evil lawyer observes, “a messy lessness, whose meaninglessness nonetheless attracts the few, first one or two, then three or four, then more and more.”<sup>77</sup> It is easier for children than adults, which is nicely illustrated in a dialogue between a father and his son who comes from school speaking without O's as they are now all supposed to, insisting that he has learned it at “schl”; his father cries, in a wonderfully humorous imitation of a disagreement on language trends between two generations, “Never hiss at me! When I want aloes, I don't want ales, I hate such names. And

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74 *The White Deer* 35.

75 *The White Deer* 108.

76 A. Ross Eckler, “The Wordplay of James Thurber,” *WORD WAYS* 6.4 1973: 246.

77 *The Wonderful O* 46.

cameos are cameos, not comes. Yesterday I met a man who wanted four canoes..."<sup>78</sup> "Fur canes," corrects his son. And he goes on to say announce that "mist is always mist, but what is mist isn't always mist," which means "mist is always moist, but what is moist isn't always mist."<sup>79</sup>

Besides complaining about the tendencies taking root among ordinary people when it comes to carelessness in their speech, Thurber also teases the reader with unpronounceable words: sometimes only inviting them to pronounce the jaw-breaker in their minds (like in "A man named Otto Ott, when asked his name, could only stutter."<sup>80</sup>), but more often making them say the impossible consonant clusters aloud: "And so the locksmith became lcksmith, and the bootmaker a btmaker;"<sup>81</sup> "Books were bks and Robinhood was Rbinhd"<sup>82</sup> An English speaker will be forced to insert schwa instead of "o", but the humour lies in the attempts to pronounce the sounds as close together as possible, the way they are spelled. A similar case is the sentence "A swain who praised his sweetheart's thrat, and said she sang like a chir of riles or a chrus of vires, was slapped."<sup>83</sup>

The humour gains an additional dimension when the newly formed clusters are illustrated by their resemblance to whispers and keys in locks, and when the narrator himself starts omitting "o": "Little Goody Two Shoes lost her O's and so did Goldilocks, and the former became a whisper, and the latter sounded like a jiggle in a lck."<sup>84</sup> This is another incentive for the reader to try and pronounce the words for himself and examine their resemblance to the sounds described.

Teasing the reader with unpronounceable words is not present only in *The Wonderful O*, although given the nature of the tale it is most frequent there. But also in *The White Deer* he tickles the reader's linguistic imagination when he invites them to pronounce "Ixxzyo!"<sup>85</sup> - a magical incantation. The double "x" in the word is a true challenge for an English speaker.

Thurber uses several more complex plays involving the peculiarities of English pronunciation: in *The 13 Clocks* the main evil character is a Duke who has killed many a prince "for using names which start with X" for no apparent reason besides being thoroughly evil-minded. The main good protagonist is a prince who "called himself Xingu, which was not his name, and dangerous, since the name began with X - and still does."<sup>86</sup> His actual name is Zorn of Zorna, so he is safe, in fact. The peculiarity in this case is that "x" at the beginning of a word is pronounced /z/ in English, so

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78 *The Wonderful O* 44.

79 *The wonderful O* 44.

80 *The Wonderful O* 70.

81 *The Wonderful O* 9.

82 *The Wonderful O* 9.

83 *The Wonderful O* 45.

84 *The Wonderful O* 69.

85 *The White Deer* 60.

86 *The 13 Clocks* 23.

the Duke cannot tell the difference until he learns the name's spelling. The prince might be calling himself Zingu, for all he knows. Even if we let this pass unchallenged, the prince comes off as ridiculously courageous, defying the Duke on purpose with a made-up name of the kind which irritates him the most. On the other hand, the prince thought of this pseudonym before he knew of the Duke's aversion; so it is just coincidence, even if a extraordinary one.

In *The Wonderful O* Thurber uses the ambivalence of homophony to create a pun: one of the pirates is asked where he comes from, and answers “not from regions which are wholly land,”<sup>87</sup> hinting that his skill on the sea derive from the nature of the part of the world he comes from; but to the reader, or listener, he also unintentionally implies that his character is evil through and through, having come from regions which are no Holy Land indeed.

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<sup>87</sup> *The Wonderful O* 3.

## 4. Nenadál: Neologisms and Word Plays Translated

I have divided Nenadál's translation strategies into several categories based on the level of the result's compliance with the original version.

### 1. Neologisms Translated by Using Extant Czech Words

The word *guggle*, being a cluster of sounds rather than a derivation of some extant term for throat, would – observing the same word-formation strategy – be probably translated as “chrchoň” or “glogl”; however, Nenadál must have considered this to be misleading, so instead of making up his own word he chose an extant Czech word, *chřtán*<sup>88</sup>, which not only fulfils the phonological requirements (it, too, sounds a little like gurgling, through similarity with words like “chrčení”) but also has the right stylistical connotations, as it is not used regularly but is stylistically marked as something one might expect in a children story. He might also have used “hrdlo”, which is phonologically closer to the original, but does not sound as unusual.

*Thlup*, with its lack of lexical associations, and an almost purely phonetic nature, is a tough nut to crack: if the translator had only been following its phonetic properties and tried to make a similar formation in Czech, he would probably have ended up with something along the lines of “čap” (resembling the sound of stepping in water or of falling drops, but derived from no extant word); yet in Czech this would be quite confusing, so he chose a word already in use, even if only in slang: *sajrajt*,<sup>89</sup> “mess, disgusting substance or liquid”<sup>90</sup>. It denotes the nature of the signified clearly, adding a dimension of negative evaluation.

The nonce *squatched* (past tense of *squatch*, apparently) is quite clear in terms of meaning. Its similarity to words used for squelching sounds and squeezing of soft things leaves no doubt as to what it expresses. Nenadál seems to have found no reason to attempt to make up his own version, but simply used the word *čvachtlo*<sup>91</sup>, which expresses the meaning correctly and includes the onomatopoeic element, without confusing the reader with added or altered syllables.

There is one neologism which Nenadál simply could not (or chose not to) find a Czech equivalent for, but translated it instead by explaining the meaning, as he understood it. Thus

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88 *Třináctery hodiny* 10; 11.

89 *Třináctery hodiny* 43.

90 Jan Hugo, et al., *Slovník nespisovné češtiny* (Praha: Maxdorf, 2009) s.v. *Sajrajt*.

91 *Třináctery hodiny* 44.

*zickering* became *zvuk svištivého letu*,<sup>92</sup> which expresses the meaning rather well, leaving out the zig-zag dimension of the original, but using the onomatopoeic word *svištivého*, which contains the sound as well as *zickering* does. That sound is explicitly mentioned draws the attention even closer to it, while the dimension of the type of movement, included in the original, is left out.

The list of characters' names taken from different children books, which places the story in the same tradition as Lewis Carroll, Marry Norton, or Lyman Frank Baum (“the tove, the mome rath, and the borogove, the whiffenpoof and wogglebug and Dong, the Pod, the Todal, and the gorm.”) is impossible to convert to Czech without modification, as few people are familiar with these characters in the original. Instead Nenadál used those names even a juvenile reader is likely to be familiar with: “Broučci, brouk Pytlík, kocour v botách, kačer Donald, Mickey Mouse, pták Ohnivák, liška Bystrouška a kůň Zlatohřívák nebo třeba opičák Fuk.”<sup>93</sup> The inclusion of foreign modern characters, Donald Duck and Mickey Mouse, seems like a surprising choice; but perhaps the translator intended to indicate the affinity of the story he was translating with the English literary tradition.

In a manner of speaking we might even say that the translation of “Ixxyo!” is comprised of extant Czech words (even if these are used only ever in children stories): “Mírnyx, týrnyx, iksviks, piksviks!”<sup>94</sup>

## **2. Neologisms Translated by Creating New Compounds**

*Zatch* is a word of mysterious origin: the most probable associations are “crotch”/“crutch” or “zipper”, the initial “z” denoting its finality. If the translator were to abide by the same rules for word-formation, he would probably end up with something unintelligible like “zlínok” (beginning with “z” and combining the words “klín” with “rozkrok”). Instead, he chose the more sensible approach of creating a new compound, *břichonoží*.<sup>95</sup> All bodyparts to which the unnamed part is adjacent are included, and the suffix is the same as in e.g. *podpaží* (armpit), which places the word among bodyparts. It is an elegant solution: it denotes the object clearly, sounds definitely strange, and contributes to the style of a children story by using a word-formation strategy common in children.

*Lip*, which *the Todal* is said to be made of, makes sense as it expands the associations with the mouth and moisture, but besides that, it is a mystery. Nenadál chose not to use a word of similar

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92 *Třináctery hodiny* 17.

93 *Báječné O* 135.

94 *Třináctery hodiny* 81.

95 *Třináctery hodiny* 10; 11.

sense in Czech, but instead formed a compound nonce: *smrdočepelěň*.<sup>96</sup> There is clearly no link between the original and the translation, the Czech version is a made-up composite of “stink” and “blade” with an unusual suffix *-eň*, used in formation of feminine names of action from verbs (like *sklizeň* or *kázeň*<sup>97</sup>). This means that the implied “verb” from which it is supposedly derived would be “*smrdočepelit*”, which makes even less sense than the compound used by the translator, and we must therefore conclude that he used the suffix for its aesthetic effect (the unusual letter “ň”) instead of any grammatical implications. The two parts of the compound name stench and possession of sharp edges as the main properties of the substance *the Todal* is made of.

Nenadál's version of *poppycockalorum* (*blbotřeskopleskoviště*<sup>98</sup>) is a compound of several Czech expressions drawing on *poppycock* meaning “nonsense, rubbish”: the translation is a portmanteau word of *blb* (a stupid person, with *-o* as the conjunctive suffix as in *modrobílý*), a modified version of the phrase *třesky plesky* (used to point out the silliness of a claim, and express one's distrust in it; it belongs to a number of set phrases in Czech whose structure is governed most prominently by their sound, usually by a rhyme<sup>99</sup>), and the suffix *-iště*, which designates a characteristic or the name of a place<sup>100</sup>. The result is remarkably similar to the image we get from the original, with the exception that what Thurber meant was probably a man or a character feature (*cockalorum* means “a self-important little man), and Nenadál turned his idea into a place name.

*Trnitý kanec z Trnokačiči*<sup>101</sup> is a precise word-for-word translation of the original *thorny boar of Borythorn* - with the slight reserve that to retain even the order of the individual parts of the composite it would have to be “Kancotrni”, but it is true that “Trnokačiči” sounds much more elegant. *Ever After* in “the blessed isles of Ever After”<sup>102</sup> is translated with similar ease and precision as *Ažnavěky* (the whole phrase reads “na blažených ostrovech Ažnavěcích”<sup>103</sup>).

One of the compounds is slightly problematic in terms of analysis: *the wuffing-puffing of the surly Nacilbuper*,<sup>104</sup> with “Nacilbuper” being “republican” spelled backwards, and therefore having no apparent connection to the story's content (it was perhaps simply a word Thurber liked for its sound and playfulness), has no parallel in Czech; so Nenadál came up with *strašlivé odfukování Óbrhóbrbalónoidu*,<sup>105</sup> an inventive composite of words in the style of children speech. *Óbr* suggests

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96 *Třináctery hodiny* 10.

97 Fr. Daneš, M. Dokulil, et al., *Tvoření slov v češtině 2* (Praha: Academia, 1967) 618.

98 *Třináctery hodiny* 29.

99 *Čeština nevšední* (Praha: Academia, 1972) 80.

100Fr. Daneš, M. Dokulil, et al., *Tvoření slov v češtině 2* (Praha: Academia, 1967) 447.

101*Třináctery hodiny* 10.

102*The 13 Clocks* 120.

103*Třináctery hodiny* 42.

104*The White Deer* 69.

105*Bílé lani* 86.

size, *hóbr* is probably just a rhyming complement (like in “*třesky plesky*” or “*drby vrby*”, mirroring the *wuffing-puffing*), and *balónoid* means “something very much like a balloon.” The whole carries as much meaning and coherence as the original does.

### 3. Translations Preserving Both Form and Content of the Original

In surprisingly many cases did Nenadál find ways preserve not only the point of the word play, but also its form.

*Blebanicovej blebanec*<sup>106</sup> is an excellent translation of *a blob of glup* using similar word-formation strategies as have been employed in the original. The associations upon which these words are modeled are colloquial expressions like “*blemcat*” (to shape a sticky substance<sup>107</sup>) and “*blevajs*” (a disgusting dish<sup>108</sup>), or “*dlabanec*” (a meal<sup>109</sup>) - which has nothing to do with the meaning but it does offer a rather nice template according to which the word *blebanec* could be shaped; it sounds colloquial, and there is the appropriate sound effect accompanying each contact of the squishy something with the floor.

It is true that there is one instance of this word's translation which has proven more problematic: while Thurber takes advantage of the easiness of conversion typical for English, *a blob of glup* changes into *the Blob will glup him*. In Czech conversion is more complicated, so Nenadál had to invent more of his own nonces where in the original there is only one used three times. Thurber used *a blob of glup* twice with no change, while Nenadál – probably enjoying the possibilities of playing with such ridiculous sounds – translated the first one as *blebanicovej blebanec*, and the second as *blebanec udělanej z bleptanice*<sup>110</sup>. The point in terms of meaning is the same, *blebanicovej* being a made-up adjective denoting what kind of *blebanec* it is; *udělanej z bleptanice* is saying the same thing, only *blebanice* becomes *bleptanice*, which is practically identical except for the tiny change which is just a play on the part of the translator.

The construction of *The Blob will glup him* (the definite article and capital B) suggests a level of familiarity which cannot be mirrored in Czech in any other way than just with the capital letter. *Blob* (*blebanec*) is the same in both languages, but *glup* was in this case translated as *blabne*. Nenadál has obviously taken a liking to this idea of his: he uses it as translation for a completely

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106Třináctery hodiny 19; 24.

107Jan Hugo, et al., *Slovník nespisovné češtiny* (Praha: Maxdorf, 2009) s.v. *blemcat*

108Jan Hugo, et al., *Slovník nespisovné češtiny* (Praha: Maxdorf, 2009) *blivajz*

109Jan Hugo, et al., *Slovník nespisovné češtiny* (Praha: Maxdorf, 2009) s.v. *dlabanec*

110Třináctery hodiny 44.

different word, *gleep* (probably by association with *glup*), which through its resemblance to “glee”, “glue”, “gleam” and “leap” (not to mention the sound itself, which sounds like something being swallowed) creates the picture of a vigorous jump (of something slimy, of course) and a swift gulp (note the similarity with *glup*). Thus at the end when *the Blob* is shown to mean *the Todal*, and the Duke's end is described with “Kropucha skočila a blabla,”<sup>111</sup> More important than its being a recurring syllable used both in English and in Czech, used to degrade the utterance of another speaker, is its resemblance to the word “dlatat”<sup>112</sup>, or “zdlábnout”<sup>113</sup>, meaning to eat (or eat something in its entirety very quickly). The word *blabne/blabla* might be modelled on this (“zdlábne”/“zdlábla”), with building stones the same as in the previous nonces: the sound *bl...b*, comical on its own, is therefore combined with “zdlábla”, and together they create *blabla*: a made-up verb comical and threatening at the same time.

Another translation of *gleep* Nenadál uses is *blepkáče*<sup>114</sup>. This nonce nicely combines the stickiness from “glue” with the similarity to “leap”. The result is slimy, sticky jumping.

The main terror in *The 13 Clocks* is *the Todal*, translated as *Kropucha*<sup>115</sup>. Aside from containing the obvious main part “ropucha” (a toad), it is also an interesting nonce indicating the beast's ability to spit (see *gleep*): derived from “kropit”, it is formed with the suffix *-ucha*, designating a bearer of a quality (*nominum attributivum*, e.g. “starucha” or “černucha”<sup>116</sup>), used in nouns denoting substances according to their dominating parts (e.g. “trnucha”<sup>117</sup>), or nouns reflecting similarity to other substances (e.g. “sviňucha”<sup>118</sup>). *Kropucha* may therefore be taken to mean “something whose most dominant characteristic or part is its spattering or an object used for spattering.” There is also a possible connection to the word “kropáč”, an old word for a holy water dispenser, used to repel evil spirits; this dimension might be linked to the *Todal's* role of killing mean men whose evil plans have failed.

In *The Wonderful O* one of the pirates threatens his parrot: “Stop his squawking! Or else I'll squck his thrug till all he can whupple is geep.” The Czech version reads “Zaražte mu to skřehotání! Nebo mu skrejhnou kejhář, že ze sebe nevyskřehouní ani cákraš.”<sup>119</sup> *Skřehotání* is a Czech word, just like *squawking* exists in English; and similarly, it carries the lexical meaning and illustrates the sound at the same time. *Skrejhnou* probably draws on the slang word *zkrouhnout*, meaning „to limit,

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111 *Třináctery hodiny* 44.

112 Jan Hugo, et al., *Slovník nespisovné češtiny* (Praha: Maxdorf, 2009) s.v. *dlatat*

113 Jan Hugo, et al., *Slovník nespisovné češtiny* (Praha: Maxdorf, 2009) s.v. *zdlábnout*

114 *Třináctery hodiny* 22.

115 *Třináctery hodiny* 19; 22; 24; 35; 44.

116 Fr. Daneš, M. Dokulil, et al., *Tvoření slov v češtině 2* (Praha: Academia, 1967) 396.

117 Fr. Daneš, M. Dokulil, et al., *Tvoření slov v češtině 2* (Praha: Academia, 1967) 408.

118 Fr. Daneš, M. Dokulil, et al., *Tvoření slov v češtině 2* (Praha: Academia, 1967) 432

119 *Báječné O* 138.

to restrain“.<sup>120</sup> *Kejhář* is a slightly more sonorous version of “kejhák”, a vulgar Czech term for neck<sup>121</sup> derived apparently from the sound a goose makes (notice the connection with bird sounds). *Cákraš* I have not been able to find even in the most peculiar collections of colloquial Czech,<sup>122</sup> and I assume therefore that it is simply a collection of sounds which it would be very difficult to produce if one's, say, beak, was slapped or tied. In this respect it is more difficult than the English version, *geep*, which can strictly speaking be pronounced even with one's teeth clenched.

In the case of some word plays based on letters the translator was forced to make some minor modifications in order to preserve both the nature of the play and its content: “take the F from life and you have lie“ became “přidejte ke slovu 'živé' jedno obyčejné l a je to hned 'lživé!'”<sup>123</sup> “the locksmith became lcksmith, and the bootmaker a btmaker” became “tak se z kováře stal kvář, z obuvníka buvník,”<sup>124</sup> simply because the exact translation of “locksmith” is “zámečník”, which contains no “o”. The implications are the same and the content almost precisely as well. Similarly, “Z novin se staly nviny a z Robina Hooda Rbin Hd”<sup>125</sup> as a translation of “Books became bks and Robinhood was Rbinhd“ preserves the original play and meaning, with a slight necessary change. Similarly, “Scribble, scrable, scrubble!” in *The White Deer* became “Škrabák, škrobák, škrubák!”<sup>126</sup> “A man named Otto Ott, when asked his name, could only stutter“ needs no special translation, either: “Když se jednoho člověka, který se jmenoval Otto Ott, ptali na jméno, mohl jen koktat” works just as well. Just like the “swain who praised his sweetheart's thrat, and said she sang like a chir of riles or a chrus of vires,“ and got slapped, was easily just as unlucky in Czech: “Jeden šohaj, který bájil své dívce, jaké má “bělučké hrdl” a že zpívá “jak klktavý pták,“ dostal facku.”<sup>127</sup>

Many word plays based on phonetics it is quite easy to convert to Czech: thus “in schl” turns into “ve škle,”<sup>128</sup> and when in the original there are random syllables in the place of names, carrying no implicit meaning, the translator altered them only slightly so that they could be taken for names in terms of construction when read by a Czech reader: thus *Rango, Rengo, Ringo, Rongo, Rungo* became *Rangl, Rengl, Ringl, Rongl, Rungl*.<sup>129</sup> There are even places where the original

120Jan Hugo, et al., *Slovník nespisovné češtiny* (Praha: Maxdorf, 2009) s.v. *zkrouhnout*.

121Jan Hugo, et al., *Slovník nespisovné češtiny* (Praha: Maxdorf, 2009) s.v. *kejhák*.

122Not even in Patrik Ouředník, *Šmírbuch jazyka českého* (Praha: Paseka, 2005).

123*Báječné O* 138.

124*Báječné O* 136.

125*Bíječné O* 121.

126*Báječné O* 109.

127*Báječné O* 136.

128*Báječné O* 136.

1290 *bílé lani* 66.

was preserved exactly: *Santo, Sento, Sinto, Sonto, Sunto* remained *Santo, Sento, Sinto, Sonto, Sunto*.<sup>130</sup>

Also when it comes to word plays dependent on external context shared by the two cultures in question, the translation proves without greater difficulties: “No one could play *Othello* when *Othello* turned to *Thell*, and Desdemona was strangled at the start” easily turns into “Nikde se nehrál *Othello*, když o *Othella* se najednou stal *Thell* a Desdemonu uškrtili hned na začátku.”<sup>131</sup>

With a few necessary alterations to conform the story to the Czech literary tradition, even “Little Goody Two Shoes lost her O's and so did Goldilocks, and the former became a whisper, and the latter sounded like a jiggle in a lck” can be translated satisfyingly: “Pohádka O kočce Skočce ztratila všechna tři O, stejně tak jako je ztratila pohádka O Smolíčkovi a ten první název zněl, jako když se plaší vrabci, a ten druhý, jako když se někdo zalyká”<sup>132</sup> lacks only the missing “o” on the part of the narrator.

The word *obliterant* is used twice in the English version of *The White Deer*: first when the Royal Physician uses the word by mistake, feels unsure about it and is corrected by the Royal Recorder; there Nenadál used different words, because he could not find two words similar enough that the trick could be done with both. I will comment more on this later. However, Thurber uses *obliterant* once more, at the very end of the story, in a document bearing the king's seal, which states that the mean characters of the story were “removed completely from the world as by a strong and strange obliterated” by a sudden strike of lightning. In this case Nenadál employs complete coherence between the word-formation strategy in the original and the translation in construing the word *vymazovadlo*<sup>133</sup> on the same principle as *obliterant*: by wrongly used analogy based on, for example, “umývat” and “umyvadlo”, and derived from the word “vymazat”, which is the precise translation of “obliterate”. Nenadál has managed to preserve the content, the implications, and the manner of construction perfectly; only the kindly wink of the author about the erroneous word appearing in a royal decree.

#### **4. Translations Which Follow the Word-Formation Processes of the Original but Differ in Content and Implications**

Very often when he could not preserve both the form, point, and content of the word play, Nenadál opted for solutions which communicate the point of the play and the word-formation processes involved, preferring to sacrifice the specific expressions from which the original was

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1300 *bílé lani* 66.

131 *Báječné O* 128.

132 *Báječné O* 147.

1330 *bílé lani* 113.

derived.

The first time the word *obliterant* is used in the original (“Obliterant,” [the Royal Physician] repeated, frowning. “Is there such a word?” “You are perhaps thinking of 'eradicant',” suggests the Royal Recorder, making the same mistake), Nenadál could not find a combination of two Czech words which could be thus constructed and which would at the same time fit the context. That is why his translation reads “Šmankote, teď jsem ale spletenej, je to správně 'k amenci'?” ptal se zamračeně. “A je to slovo vůbec dobře?” “Nemyslel jste třeba demenci?”<sup>134</sup> In the original the word *obliterant* is meant to describe a potion which deprives the drinker of memory: „there is no evidence of a concussion severe enough to eradicate memory, and no marked dilation or contraction of the pupils of the eye to indicate the presence of a potion, philter, or other obliterants,”<sup>135</sup> in Czech the phrase is „jakéhokoli prostředku, jenž by mohl vésti k amenci.”<sup>136</sup> In Czech both men think of extant words, although the Royal Recorder makes himself look foolish by offering one which does not really fit the context: what the Royal Physician meant was a potion which causes confusion (amence), not dementia (demence).

In the case of *finickery*, the contemptuous term the older princes in *The White Deer* use for their young brother's poetic tendencies, and which through its ungrammatical form denotes both as uneducated fools, Nenadál decided to employ the same strategy by having them construct a word by misplaced use of analogy, which to stress further their barbaric nature is derived from a slang version of the word “to chew”, *žvejkat*. By analogy with the affinity between words like “běhat” and “běhy”<sup>137</sup> they construct “žvejky”<sup>138</sup>. The new word therefore maintains all the original implications and stresses even more strongly the low intelligence of the brothers, despite being derived from a word of different meaning than the original term.

When it comes to pronunciation-related word plays, there is a crucial difference between English and Czech in the vast gap between spelling and pronunciation present in English, which is not not there in Czech. Let us consider this in the context of *The Wonderful O*: when the letter „o“ is erased from Czech words, it is easier to fill in the missing letter than when the same happens in English: the divergence between the pronunciation of e.g. *cameos* and *comes* is significant, and misconception very likely; unlike with *okurka* and *kurka*.<sup>139</sup>

This is not so in Czech: a word does not crumble into another one upon losing a vowel, and we

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1340 *bílé lani* 100.

135 *The White Deer* 94.

136 *bílé lani* 100.

137 Josef Holub and František Kopečný, *Etymologický slovník jazyka českého* (Praha: Státní nakladatelství učebnic, 1952) s.v. *Běžeti*.

1380 *bílé lani* 48.

139 *Báječné O* 136.

can pronounce even longer consonant clusters without greater difficulty. That is why in *The Wonderful O* the translator had to find other examples on which to show the vast extent of the mayhem caused by the deletion of “o”: when the boy tells his father that “mist is always mist, but what is mist isn't always mist,” in Nenadál's version he recites “nesmíme plést slova br a br a br a brd a brd a brk a brk a brk a brk.”<sup>140</sup> As there is no need to try to adhere to the original meaning, because the point lies elsewhere, Nenadál took advantage of the vast amount of short Czech words sharing the same consonant cluster and differing from one another only in “o”'s. Furthermore, while Thurber had the boy explain to his mother (and the readers) the actual version of what he had said (“mist is always moist, but what is moist isn't always mist”<sup>141</sup>), the translator had him recite the same unintelligible gibberish that he had told his father before, so that the real version of what he had said remains a mystery and a game for the reader to solve.

The boy's father's heated reply needed some changing in the choice of words he complains about: “Never hiss at me! When I want aloes, I don't want ales, I hate such names. And cameos are cameos, not comes. Yesterday I met a man who wanted four canoes-“ could not be preserved as it was, so that it became “Neopovažuj se mi pošklebovat! Když chci okurku, nechci kurku, ta zpotvořená slova nenávidím. A když chci něco opravit, nechci nic pravit. Včera za mnou přišel chlap a objednal si dvě kormidla.” The changes the translator made are not significant to the meaning, but preserve the point.

The sequences of comical words the Royal Recorder in *The White Deer* reads to the maiden to help her remember her family's name are a very specific group of nonces in the original, and perhaps even more so in the translation. “Paq, Pardo, Payorel, Pent, Perril, Peo, Pilligro. Piv, Podo, Polonel, Puggy” are variations of mostly noble words connected with aristocratic life (*Pardo* - “pardon”, *Payorel* - “bayonet”, *Pent* - “rent” or “tent”, *Perril* - “peril”, *Peo* - “Leo”, *Pilligro* - “filigree”, *Polonel* - “colonel”), with several instances of altered pejoratives (*Podo* - “dodo”) or syllables which simply sound funny without any lexical basis (*Paq*, *Piv*). Czech with its unaspirated /p/ lacks the fullness of the pomposity the English pronunciation offers, but the dimension of juvenile humour is still present.

In the context of humorous texts based on how funny actual last names can be I have mentioned Rowan Atkinson and Stephen Fry with Hugh Laurie; to give at least one example of the same tradition in Czech, let me mention one of the early plays of Ladislav Smoljak and Zdeněk Svěrák, *Vyšetřování ztráty třídní knihy*. Here the list of students goes: “Brázda, Budil, Crha, Čepelák, Dejmek, Hošek, Hrdlička, Chalupa, Jech, Jirotko, Klásek, Klempera, Matula, Nechutný, Nepevný,

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140 *Báječné O* 136.

141 *The Wonderful O* 44.

Netěšny, Nerez, Řezník, Říha, Smolík, Svist, Ševel, Tvaroh, Uřídil, Veškrna.“ In contrast to similar lists in the English tradition, the names included here do not follow a pattern (like obscenity in Rowan Atkinson's spot, for example) but imitate the curious word-formation strategies which are responsible for many strange Czech surnames. In keeping with this tradition, Nenadál did not bother with words connected with the aristocracy; he simply let his mind wander and chose the most comical words that came to him through association with the original.

This way he came up with “Paškal, Pardál, Pejrovec, Peržina, Pesstick, Pišingrán, Pivčo, Pivo, Podolleck, Polloměch, Pugét,”<sup>142</sup> and for the English “z”-sequence (“Zazo, Zat, Zawazaw, Zav, Zax, Zay, Zazir, Zazuno, Zyzz,”) with “Zaseyc, Zatloukall, Zawazel, Zayc, Zebroun, Žabec, Žebrack, Železnyck, Žillka, Župann, Žwára.”<sup>143</sup> Some of the words are taken from slang, and most are misspelled to resemble a foreign language, which is how (through the contrast between a quite unceremonious content and a lofty form) Nenadál achieved the mockingly aristocratic tone.

Among expressions derived from various dialects and slang there are a number of words which inspire laughter even in a native speaker, especially when they are used as names. Among these are *Paškal*, a derivation from “paškál” (“vzít na paškál”: to criticize<sup>144</sup>; with the short “a” it resembles a past tense of a nonsensical verb “paškat”); *Pejř* is used in the expression “mít hlavu v pejru,” meaning “to worry, or feel confused;”<sup>145</sup> in combination with the suffix *-ovec*, denoting an agent (as in *veršovec*<sup>146</sup>) or a circumstance (e.g. “kúrovec”<sup>147</sup>) this contains the implication that a person thus named is always worried and confused, or that he inflicts such disposition upon others. *Pivčo* is a colloquial expression meaning „a small beer“, a name quite unfit for a king; *Pugét* with a long “é” is a slang expression for a bouquet<sup>148</sup>. *Zawazel* comes from “zavazet”, meaning to hinder in the Moravian dialect; *Zaseyc* is a dialectal form of “zase” (again); *Žwára* is derived from “žváro,” which is a slang expression for a cigarette.<sup>149</sup>

*Pišingrán* is a combination of “pišingr” (a sweet biscuit<sup>150</sup>) and “filigrán”, an actual translation of the word “filigree”, mocked in the original by being turned into “Piligro”- together creating the image of an elaborate tart; *Zebroun* implies something very much resembling a zebra (the suffix *-oun* denotes similarity, as in “psoun” or “lvoun”<sup>151</sup>); *Žabec* presents the same likeness to a frog (*-ec*

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1420 *bílé lani* 58.

1430 *bílé lani* 58.

144Jan Hugo, et al., *Slovník nespisovné češtiny* (Praha: Maxdorf, 2009) s.v. *paškál*.

145Jan Hugo, et al., *Slovník nespisovné češtiny* (Praha: Maxdorf, 2009) s.v. *pejř*.

146Fr. Daneš, M. Dokulil, et al., *Tvoření slov v češtině 2* (Praha: Academia, 1967) 764.

147Fr. Daneš, M. Dokulil, et al., *Tvoření slov v češtině 2* (Praha: Academia, 1967) 765.

148Jan Hugo, et al., *Slovník nespisovné češtiny* (Praha: Maxdorf, 2009) s.v. *pugét*.

149Jan Hugo, et al., *Slovník nespisovné češtiny* (Praha: Maxdorf, 2009) s.v. *žváro*.

150Jan Hugo, et al., *Slovník nespisovné češtiny* (Praha: Maxdorf, 2009) s.v. *pišingr*.

151Fr. Daneš, M. Dokulil, et al., *Tvoření slov v češtině 2* (Praha: Academia, 1967) 429.

playing the same role here, like in the words “jehlanec”<sup>152</sup>; or suggesting a pejorative meaning, as in e.g. “zobec”).

*Peržina* is a perfect example of how the errors in pronunciation illustrate the ridiculous royal pomposity: the original word “peřina” (a duvet) is as far from a noble name as can be; but this particular mistake, the substitution of “ř” with “rž” is exactly an error a lofty French aunt might make. This way the ordinary word is made to sound foreign, and lo and behold – a king's name is born.

*Pesstick* is a similar case, although here the original word is not so much ordinary as strange, and completely unconnected with royalty. “Pestík” (a pistil) has little to do with anything (besides the unforgettable association with the comic word “blizna” engraved in the mind of anyone who has studied secondary-school biology); but spelled this way, it looks foreign (and sounds strange as well, when this spelling is read aloud).

*Podolleck* is a “foreign” version of “podolek”<sup>153</sup> (protruding underwear) – a quite unceremonious object to use for a royal name; *Polloměch* is so comical and strange that its curious spelling does little to amend it: seeming almost until the end like “poloměr” (radius), the changed last letter suddenly turning it into something like “half a bellows”, implying perhaps that the original bearer of this name was quite overweight.

*Zawazel* comes from “zavazet” (literally it would mean “he hindered”<sup>154</sup>); *Zaseyc* (spelled “zasejc”) is a seldom used expression meaning “again”; *Zatloukall* with a more conventional spelling means either “he hammered” or “he withheld information”; *Zayc* is a differently spelled “zajíc” (a hare); *Žebrack* is a misspelled “žebřák” (a beggar); *Župann* means a bathrobe.

Just like in the original there are several words which do not have any meaning, nor do they inspire any association chains which would lead us to some comical – or any – meaning, in Czech there are a few words used for kings' names which do not strike the reader as odd; but in the context carry some witty aspects nevertheless. Among these are *Pardál* (a panther; like *Perril* in the original, it might be the boastful name of a knight designed to accentuate his fearlessness), *Pivo* (beer; right after *Pivčo* creating the image of a king taller than the last king mentioned, and implying the closeness of kings to beer).

The overall implications imitate those employed in the original, with the exception that the translator takes greater advantage of the comedy of alternative spelling; but even if the strategies used to transform the words differ, the types of words are similar: there are fewer expressions actually connected with aristocracy (possibly *Pardál*, *Pišingrán*, *Pugét*, or *Železnyck*, if we see the

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152Fr. Daneš, M. Dokulil, et al., *Tvoření slov v češtině 2* (Praha: Academia, 1967) 430.

153Jan Hugo, et al., *Slovník nespisovné češtiny* (Praha: Maxdorf, 2009) s.v. *podolek*.

154Jan Hugo, et al., *Slovník nespisovné češtiny* (Praha: Maxdorf, 2009) s.v. *zavazet*.

word's unspecified connection with railways as an implication of ownership), but a greater number of implicitly pejorative words (*Pivčo, Pivo, Podolleck, Polloměch, Zatloukall, Zawazel, Žebrack, Žwára*). Instead of adding words which simply sound funny without any lexical connotations, Nenadál includes several comically transformed names of everyday objects or animals: *Peržina, Pesstick, Zayc, Zebroun, Žabec, Žillka, Župann*. The rest are taken from slang language, which of course makes for wholly unsuitable royal names.

For the part of *The Wonderful O* where the lawyer explains the possibilities of new varieties of plants by crossing not only the plants genetically but also their names to avoid having an “o” in them, Nenadál created “Když se zkříží blatouch a libeček lékařský, může z toho být blbeček lékařský bez O. Nevěstin závoj s šalvějí dá nevěstinu závěj. Zajímavý nový druh by byl šť ovík zkřížený s vikví – štikev, taky bez O. Třapatka srstnatá zkřížená s kokoticí dá krásnou střapatíci, pivoňka s bodlákem je pidlák.”<sup>155</sup> He preserved the nature of the word play, used extant Czech plant names, and created very comical results. Keeping any closer to the original would be pointless and it would probably ruin the humour and elegance of the puns.

With some word plays concerning the deletion of “o” it was simply not possible to find such Czech words which would work the same way, while preserving the meaning exactly. This is the case of “Taking a letter from hoarder makes it harder:” “Lhář a žhář není jedno.”<sup>156</sup>

Some of the o-related plays in *The Wonderful O* are translated with a slightly different point: for example, when “The author of a book Flamingo Stories read Flaming Stries aloud to his wife, and gave up writing,” he did so because the title's meaning had changed, while in Czech when “Autor studie zvané Rokoko a baroko předčítal z knihy nahlas ženě, a když titul vyslovil nahlas, nechal psaní vůbec,”<sup>157</sup> it was because he could no longer pronounce the title out loud. Similarly “At this the women rose in anger and dismay and left the curt without a curtsy” required an alteration of the point for the sake of preserving the comical effect of the lost “o”: “Na to se však již ženy zvedly a opustily s „rzhřčením sud“.”<sup>158</sup> To preserve the implications in the translation is very difficult: thus “court/curt” became “soud/sud” (it is a literal translation missing the hidden meaning in the original pair), “owed/wed” turned to “pouch/puch” (illustrating further the confusion the o-lessness is causing but losing the implications completely)

On the other hand, Nenadál even found ways to improve another word play: when „Ophelia Liver repeated [her name], and vanished from the haunts of men,” the implication in English is not particularly clear; but in the Czech version, the translator was able to find a real Czech

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155Báječné O 127.

156Báječné O 137.

157Báječné O 128.

158Báječné O 127.

surname which, having lost its “o“, gives “Lehká” (“easy”, also in the sense of a woman's morality): “Když se Ofélie Lehocká představila bez o, páni, kteří četli ck jako k, o ni ztratili zájem.”<sup>159</sup> He also found ways to expand on some of the puns: the ambivalence between “oft” and “foot” is in the Czech version handled as follows: “obrok, brko, brok a brk”<sup>160</sup>, just as “odd/dodo” is “Kolo, okolo, a básnické kol.”<sup>161</sup>

When it comes to “made-up” royal names in *The White Deer*, the same as has been said about the popularity of repetition with children in the English culture applies, of course, for Czech children. The only difference between the original and the translation is that while Thurber's list contains no lexical words or affiliations to them (or I have not been able to find any, at least) and in the rare cases when the Royal Recorder's random babbling happens by some mistake to form a word, it is some foreign name (whether it truly is coincidence or the author's design is difficult to say), which means that however random the syllables he uttered, the Royal Recorder was not completely crazy when making up these names: at least some of them are considered names in some part of the world. In Czech, however, the translator decided on a much more surreal perspective: his lists of names are partly also random syllables, but where his Royal Recorder stumbles upon a word, it is very far from anything resembling an aristocratic name: *Rapl*<sup>162</sup> denotes “a fit of rage;”<sup>163</sup> *Rupl* is slang for “[he] broke;” *Tadlenctát* and *Todlenctát* are constructed around the slang determiners “tadlencta” and “todlencto” - and the rest of the sequence is merely a variation on the theme: “Tadlatát, Tedetát, Tendlenctát, Todlenctát, Tudletát, Tydlitát.”<sup>164</sup> Similarly, the line “Udendán, Urdndán, Udundán, Udyndán, Undundán” draws on the fourth word, *Udyndán*, which if understood literally would mean “made to do something by excessive begging” - based on the similarity with the slang verb “dyndat;”<sup>165</sup> just like the following lines are variations on one or two words in their midst, which are quite offensive: “Važralár, Vežralár, Vožralár, Vužralár, Vyžralár”<sup>166</sup> stand on “Vožralár” and “Vyžralár”, the first implying heavy drinking and the second a tendency to illegal and immoral ways of providing money (by affiliation with “vyžírka”<sup>167</sup>); “Žabouch, Žebouch, Žibouch, Žobouch, Žubouch”<sup>168</sup> are a variation on the first word, which contains some frog-like qualities; and “Papek, Pepek, Pipek, Popek,

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159Báječné O 147.

160Báječné O 128.

161Báječné O 128.

162O bílé lani 66.

163Jan Hugo, et al., *Slovník nespisovné češtiny* (Praha: Maxdorf, 2009) s.v. *rapl*

164O bílé lani 66.

165Jan Hugo, et al., *Slovník nespisovné češtiny* (Praha: Maxdorf, 2009) s.v. *dyndat*

166O bílé lani 66.

167Jan Hugo, et al., *Slovník nespisovné češtiny* (Praha: Maxdorf, 2009) s.v. *vyžírka*

168O bílé lani 66.

Pupek” contains two unflattering words: “Pepek” is a highly colloquial version of the name Josef, and “Pupek” is a slang term for a huge belly. To conclude, while in the English version randomness combines with actual names, in Czech randomness spins around slang and offensive words, keeping in tone with the lists of the “actual” names. The similarity of the words is based only on their sound, not on their meaning.

Some plays concerning the lost “o” in *The Wonderful O* could not be preserved, especially in the case of short words, so the translator had to think of an alternative way to express the difficulties with which the people were suddenly faced: “Anon is ann, and moan is man“ turned to “Ne je pořád ne, ale ano není ano,” which ignores the implicit complaint of the transformation of *moan* into *man*, but presents a new kind of hardship, not mentioned in the English version. “When coat is cat, and boat is bat, and goatherd looks like gathered, and booth is both, since both are bth, the reader's eye is bothered” was turned into “Když otrok je trk, obrok je brk a horko je hrk, pak taková četba čtenářův zrak snadno unaví:“<sup>169</sup> not as well done as the original, but conveying the message nonetheless.

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169Báječné O 139.

## 5. Translations Preserving the Content, Not the Form

In very few cases did the translator give precedence to the content at the expense of the form, or the point, of a word play. It is the case of “the Orchard of Chardor,” which became “Čarodórský třešňový sad:”<sup>170</sup> the factual content is preserved, but the sound word play is lost.

Homophony in one language cannot be transformed into another without losing the meaning, and sometimes the meaning is more important than the form. Thus the brilliant pun “not from regions which are wholly land” has become “nikoli z krajů, jež jsou pouze pevná svatá země;”<sup>171</sup> conveying the meaning, but losing the form. Similarly „woe is we“ was translated as “Jen žal je žal a ten nám zůstal,”<sup>172</sup> which again does not preserve the form, but communicates the meaning. Also the pirate's sneer “You are both pets now!” turned into “Z poesie vám zbyla už jen pesie,”<sup>173</sup> which retains the point of the word-play, but not its form precisely.

## 6. Translations Preserving Neither the Form Nor the Content of the Original

There are several instances, though not very many, for which Nenadál had to invent completely new versions: for example, the Czech version of *The 13 Clocks* contains a remarkable translation of the word *cockahoopatrice*, which given its thoroughly nonsensical nature is very difficult to find a Czech equivalent for, while at the same time offering a wide range of possibilities to give form to any word play the translator can think of. What the combination of *cock-a-hoop* (“in high spirits”) and (probably) *cockatrice* (a mysterious term designating either a prostitute, a baby, or a mythical monster) would result in if translated precisely is very hard to imagine. Nenadál's solution, *nadutost z plantáží silénky naduté*<sup>174</sup>, is a genuinely Czech word-play stemming from associations triggered by the previous nonce in the sentence, *poppycockalorum*. *Nadutost* (“arrogance”) is the result of *cockalorum*, meaning “a self-important little man” - and the second part of the phrase is a free association on the strangeness of some Czech plant names, which was probably caused by the mention of *poppy*. The real plant on which the play is based is *Silene vulgaris*, “silenka nadmutá” in Czech. With a tiny modification this name can be transformed into *silénka nadutá*, which implies power through resemblance to the word “síla” and

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1700 *bílé lani* 68.

171 *Báječné O* 118.

172 *Báječné O* 139.

173 *Báječné O* 125.

174 *Třináctery hodiny* 29.

corresponds nicely with *nadutost* in the first part. The whole sentence is “Vyprávěl jí o žábách na fóru a o ropuchách v rýži, které zničily celé blbotřeskopleskoviště a požraly všechnu nadutost z plantáží silénky naduté.”<sup>175</sup> The suggestion then is that the adjective forming the specific epithet of the plant designates its actual attribute. The similarity of the plant's “property” to a human characteristic creates the humorous vision of an arrogant plant, and what is more, its arrogance is so palpable, indeed materialized, it can be eaten.

It was not possible to preserve the implications of lunacy suggested in *Moondays* and *Feydays*. The translator settled for “mimo pandělků a plátků,”<sup>176</sup> where the word *pandělky* resembles “padělky” (forgery) and “panděro” (a slang term for a big belly), and the word *plátky* means not only petals but also tabloids. Unlike in the English version, where the author inserted full lexical words into the names of days on the principle of partial homonymy, in Czech the whole day names are transformed to resemble other words. Instead of stressing how insane every character around that place is, like the original does, Nenadál's version emphasizes the falsehood and rapacity; a warning which proves sound when the many characters the prince meets from that place on only try to swindle some money out of him.

Similarly, in the complaint “worst of all, a hero's her” the translation failed to communicate either the content or the form: “a když obelhat je belhat.”<sup>177</sup>

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175 *Třináctery hodiny* 29.

176 *bílé lani* 83.

177 *Báječné O* 139.

## 5. Conclusion

Having closely examined the neologisms and complex word plays in Thurber's children stories I have divided them into subtypes according to their lexical or phonologically/morphologically associative motivation (in case of neologisms), complex word plays created by shifting letters and parts of words, and those presenting the reader with peculiarities and difficulties of pronunciation. I have discussed at length various possible approaches to the problematics of association and the construction of new words. The main stress however was put on the analysis of the particular examples from the selected texts. I have striven to determine the function of the words' construction and their individual parts, wherever possible. I have discussed the word-formation strategies applied by the author and their effects on the reader.

Using this first part of the thesis as a pillar for the second, I subsequently considered the mentioned words and phrases as they have been translated by Radoslav Nenadál. For the purposes of my study to use the same division as in the first part would be inapplicable; I have therefore used the structure which offered itself naturally from the nature of the results: there proved to be several instances of neologisms which Nenadál chose to translate by an extant Czech word, or an explanation using usual Czech words; these appeared most frequently in *The 13 Clocks*, together with the second type, neologisms translated by creating new compounds from existing Czech words. The third category are translations in which the translator has managed to preserve both the form and the content of the original, as well as the point of most of the word plays. Considering the complexity of the word plays and the diversity of the two languages the large number of words and word plays falling into this category is indubitably impressive, as is the fact that most of them come from *The Wonderful O*, a story filled with puns on missing letters.

When Nenadál could not translate a word or a phrase precisely, he chose to sacrifice the exact meaning for the sake of preserving the form, or the point, of a pun. These translations form the fourth category. None of the words included here come from *The 13 Clocks*, in which the number of the word plays was apparently not high enough for the translator to go on a search for newly formed words.

The fifth category comprises translations which could retain the original content but lose the form. Of these, there are very few. The last category includes three instances to which Nenadál could not find a Czech equivalent preserving either form or meaning, and was therefore forced to create solutions imitating neither.

*The 13 Clocks* contains fewer word plays than the other two stories. This being the case, Nenadál

turned to Czech words instead of creating his own. *The White Deer* and *The Wonderful O*, however, contain so many word plays and neologisms that the whole Czech vocabulary proved insufficient for their satisfactory translation, and they are so important a part of the stories that to translate them without creating similarly inventive and rich counterparts would not do the tales justice.

In the process of forming new words and phrases by analogy with the original, Nenadál found surprisingly many Czech counterparts conveying all the layers of sound and meaning implications; and in those cases where he could not, he strove to preserve the form rather than the meaning.

In spite of the difficulties which the translation of such a complex text presents there are still those willing to take the trouble and ensure that “the language does not crack like a dry stick, leaving us all miserably muddling in a monstrous miasma of mindless and meaningless mumbling;”<sup>178</sup> and Radoslav Nenadál is undoubtedly one of them.

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178A. Ross Eckler, “The Wordplay of James Thurber,” *WORD WAYS* 6.4 1973: 247.

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## Appendix

WO = <i>The Wonderful O</i> ; BO = <i>Báječné O</i> ; 13C = <i>The Thirteen Clocks</i> ; 13H = <i>Třináctery hodiny</i> ; WD = <i>The White Deer</i> ; BL = <i>O bílé lani</i>			
<b>Neologisms translated by using extant Czech words</b>			
guggle	13C 24; 26	chřtán	13H 10; 11
zickering	13C 42	Zvuk svištivého letu	13H 17
thlup	13C 123	sajrajt	13H 43
squutched	13C 124	čvachtlo	13H 44
Ixxyz!	WD 60	Mírnyks, týrnyks, iksviks, piksviks	BL 81
The tove, the mome rath, and the borogove, the whiffenpoof and wogglebug and Dong, the Pod, the Todal, and the gorm.	WO 42	Broučci, brouk Pytlík, kocour v botách, kačer Donald, Mickey Mouse, pták Ohnivák, liška Bystrouška a kůň Zlatohřívák nebo třeba opičák Fuk.	BO 135
<b>Neologisms translated by creating new compounds</b>			
zatch	13C 24; 26	břichonoží	13H 10; 11
The thorny Boar of Borythorn	13C 24	Trnitý kanec z Trnokančí	13H 10
lip	13C 59	smrdočepeleň	13H 22
poppycockalorum	13C 80	blbotřeskopleskoviště	13H 29
The blessed isles of Ever After	13C 120	Blažené ostrovy Ažnavěky	13H 42
The wuffing-puffing of the surly Nacilbuper	WD 69	Strašlivé odcfukování Ōbrhórbalónoidu	BL 86
<b>Translations preserving both form and content of the original</b>			
The Todal	13C 50; 58; 59; 66; 97; 123	Kropucha	13H 19; 22; 24; 35; 44
A blob of glup	13C 50; 66; 123	blebanicovej blebanec; blebanec udělanej z bleptanice	13H 19; 24; 44
The Blob will glup him	13C 51	Blebanec ho blabne	13H 20
gleep	13C 59	blepkákat	13H 22
the Todal gleeped	13C 123	Kropucha skočila a blabla	12H 44
Rango, Rengo, Ringo, Rongo, Rungo	WD 34	Rangl, Rengl, Ringl, Rongl, Rungl	BL 66
Santo, Sento, Sinto, Sonto, Sunto	WD 34	<i>Santo, Sento, Sinto, Sonto, Sunto.</i>	BL 66

Scribble, scrable, scrubble!	WD 108	Škrabák, škrobák, škrubák!	BL 109
obliterant	WD 115	vymazovadlo	BL 113
And so the locksmith became lcksmith, and the bootmaker a btmaker	WO 9	tak se z kováře stal kvář, z obuvníka buvník	BO 121
Books were bks and Robinhood was Rbinhd	WO 9	Z novin se staly nviny a z Robina Hooda Rbin Hd	BO 121
No one could play <i>Othello</i> when <i>Othello</i> turned to <i>Thell</i> , and Desdemona was strangled at the start.	WO 26	Nikde se nehrál <i>Othello</i> , když o Othella se najednou stal Thell a Desdemonu uškrtili hned na začátku.	BO 128
A swain who praised his sweetheart's thrat, and said she sang like a chir of riles or a chrus of vires, was slapped.	WO 45	Jeden šohaj, který bájil své dívce, jaké má „bělučké hrdl“ a že zpívá „jak klktavý pták“, dostal facku.	BO 136
In schl	WO 44	Ve škle	BO 136
Take the F from life and you have lie	WO 46	Přidejte ke slovu 'živé' jedno obyčejné l a je to hned 'lživé'.	BO 137
Stop his squawking! Or else I'll squck his thrug till all he can whupple is geep.	WO 48	Zaražte mu to skřehotání! Nebo mu skrejnhnu kejhář, že ze sebe nevyskřehouní ani cákraš.	BO 138
Little Goody Two Shoes lost her O's and so did Goldilocks, and the former became a whisper, and the latter sounded like a jiggle in a lck.	WO 69	Pohádka O kočce Skočce ztratila všechna tři O, stejně tak jako je ztratila pohádka O Smolíčkovi a ten první název zněl, jako když se plaší vrabci, a ten druhý, jako když se někdo zalyká	BO 147
A man named Otto Ott, when asked his name, could only stutter	WO 70	Když se jednoho člověka, který se jmenoval Otto Ott, ptali na jméno, mohl jen koktat	BO 147

**Translations which follow the word-formation processes of the original but differ in content and implications**

finickery	WD 6	žvejky	BL 48
Paq, Pardo, Payorel, Pent, Perril, Peo, Pilligro. Piv, Podo, Polonel, Puggy	WD 22	Paškal, Pardál, Pejrovec, Peržina, Pesstick, Pišingrán, Pivčo, Pivo, Podolleck, Polloměch, Pugét,	BL 58
Zar, Zazo, Zat, Zawazaw, Zav, Zax, Zay, Zazir, Zazuno, Zyzz	WD 24	Zaseyc, Zatloukall, Zawazel, Zayc, Zebroun, Žabec, Žebrack, Železnyck, Žillka, Župann, Žwára	BL 59
Rappo, Reppo, Rippo, Roppo, Rupp	WD 34	Rapl, Repl, Rippl, Rupl	BL 66
Talatar, Teletar, Tilitar, Tolotar, Tulutar	WD 34	Tadlatát, Tedetát, Tendlenctát, Todlenctát, Tudletát, Tydlitát	BL 66
Undan, Uden, Undin, Undon, Undun	WD 34	Udendán, Urdndán, Udundán, Udyndán, Undundán	BL 66
Varalare, Veralare, Viralare, Voralare,	WD 35	Važralár, Vežralár, Vožralár, Vužralár,	BL 66

Vuralare		Vyžralár	
Waxy, Wexy, Wixy, Woxy, Wuxy.	WD 35	Žabouch, Žebouch, Žibouch, Žobouch, Žubouch	BL 66
Pap, Pep, Pip, Pop, Pup	WD 35	Papek, Pepek, Pipek, Pipek, Pupek!	BL 66
eradicant	WD 94	demenci	BL 100
obliterant	WD 94	k amenci	BL 100
Court/curt	WO 19	Soud/sud	BO 125
“Forget-me-nots, when crossed with madwort, lose their O's. I get a hybrid which I call regret-me-ers. Love-in-a-mist, when crossed with bleeding hearts, results in sweethearts' quarrels. Black-eyed susans, crossed with ragged sailors, give me ragged susans. Jack-in-the-pulpit, crossed with devil's paintbrush, should give me devil-in-the-pulpit. And think of the fine satanic chimes that will emerge from hellebore crossed with Canterbury bells.“	WO 23	Když se zkříží blatouch a libeček lékařský, může z toho být blbeček lékařský bez O. Nevěstin závoj s šalvějí dá nevěstinu závěj. Zajímavý nový druh by byl šť ovík zkřížený s vikví – štikev, taky bez O. Třapatka srstnatá zkřížená s kokoticí dá krásnou strapatci, pivoňka s bodlákem je pidlák.	BO 127
At this the women rose in anger and dismay and left the curt without a curtsy.	WO 23	Na to se však již ženy zvedly a opustily s „rzhřčením sud“.	BO 127
Owed/wed	WO 26	Pouch/puch	BO 128
Foot/oft	WO 26	obrok, brko, brok a brk	BO 128
Odd/dodo	WO 26	Kolo, okolo, a básnické kol.	BO 128
The author of a book <i>Flamingo Stories</i> read <i>Flaming Stries</i> aloud to his wife, and gave up writing.	WO 27	Autor studie zvané Rokoko a baroko předčítal z knihy nahlas ženě, a když titul vyslovil nahlas, nechal psaní vůbec,	BO 128
Never hiss at me! When I want aloes, I don't want ales, I hate such names. And cameos are cameos, not comes. Yesterday I met a man who wanted four canoes...	WO 44	„Neopovažuj se mi pošklebovat,“ rozkřikl se otec. „Když chci okurku, nechci kurku, ta zpotvořená slova nenávidím. A když chci něco opravit, nechci nic pravit. Včera za mnou přišel chlap a objednal si dvě kormidla-“	BO 136
mist is always mist, but what is mist isn't always mist	WO 44	nesmíme plést slova br a br a br a a brd a brd a brk a brk a brk a brk.	BO 136
Taking a letter from hoarder makes it harder	WO 46	Lhář a žhář není jedno.	BO 137
When coat is cat, and boat is bat, and goatherd looks like gathered, and booth is both, since both are bth, the reader's eye is bothered	WO 50	„Když otrok je trk, obrok je brk a horko je hrk, pak taková četba čtenářův zrak snadno unaví.“	BO 139

Anon is ann, and moan is man	WO 50	Ne je pořád ne, ale ano není ano	BO 139
Ophelia Oliver repeated [her name], and vanished from the haunts of men.	WO 69	Když se Ofélie Lehocká představila bez o, páni, kteří četli ck jako k, o ni ztratili zájem.	BO 147
<b>Translations preserving the content, not the form</b>			
Orchard of Chardor	WD 39	Čarodórský třešňový sad	BL 68
not from regions which are wholly land	WO 3	Nikoli z krajů, jež jsou pouze pevná svatá země.	BO 118
You are both pets now!	WO 18	Teď už vám zbyla jenom pesie!	BO 125
Woe is we	WO 50	Jen žal je žal a ten nám zůstal.	BO 139
<b>Translations preserving neither the form nor the content of the original</b>			
cockahoopatrice	13C 80	nadutost z plantáží silénky naduté	13H 29
Moondays and Feydays	WD 63	Pandělký a plátky	BL 83
Worst of all, a hero's her	WO 50	A když obelhat je belhat.	139