Non-Standard English Varieties in Literary Translation: The Help by Kathryn Stockett

Master’s Diploma Thesis

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I declare that I have worked on this thesis independently, using only the primary and secondary sources listed in the bibliography.

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Author’s signature
I would like to thank my supervisor, Mgr. Renata Kamenická, Ph.D., for her thorough feedback and valuable advice.
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1. Introduction

At present, non-standard language varieties appear both in literature and film or television series quite often. Such a tradition can be traced especially in the field of fiction—G. B. Shaw’s *Pygmalion* published in 1912, Zora Neale Hurston’s *Their Eyes Were Watching God* written in the 1930’s, or Harper Lee’s *To Kill a Mockingbird* published in 1960 can be named as a few examples; from a wide range of more recently published novels, *Trainspotting* by Irvine Welsh, or Peter Carey’s *True History of the Kelly Gang* can be listed.

In this thesis, I wanted to explore how Czech translators deal with this problem, and where they may seek guidance and advice, since translating dialect is a very complex problem which incorporates linguistic, stylistic, and cultural issues. For the purpose of my research, I have chosen a novel called *The Help*, which is a debut by Kathryn Stockett, an American writer. I believe that this piece of writing, which is set into the turbulent 1960’s in American Deep South, is a good research material, since it offers not only the dialect of mostly uneducated housekeepers of African American origin, but also the language of their well-off, well-educated white middle-class bosses. On that account, I wanted to find out how the translator resolved this issue of rendering two different dialects, and whether she adhered to methods recommended by translation theoreticians.

Given the fact that *The Help* has become an American best-seller, and a movie was based upon it (which was not only successful, but also nominated for Academy Awards 2012), the Czech publisher paid a great deal of attention to promotion of the translation. The novel has been presented as a drama narrated by three exceptional female characters, whose story gives the readers the idea of what life was like in the American South not so long ago. On that account, one of my research questions is whether Kniţní
klub (as the publisher) and Jana Kordíková (as the translator) realized the full potential of this piece of fiction; that is, to depict the issue of racism and life of lower-class African Americans during the tumultuous 1960’s, or whether they might have perceived it as just another book for women.

In order to set up the theoretical basis of this thesis, I examined the origin and features of both dialects under scrutiny, i.e. of African American Vernacular English, and American White Southern English, and how they manifest in their speakers’ use of language. From the point of view of translation theory, I examined several recommended general approaches to cultural items, because a novel with such distinctive temporal and local settings is imbued by various culture-specific concepts, and the above-mentioned dialects may be seen as culture-bound phenomena. The following chapter examines theoretical recommendations for translating dialects. First of all, several methods of finding equivalence, for example, by Nida and Levý, are presented. The next subchapter provides basis for translating style in general, i.e. what constitutes a specific style, and how translators should approach it. Moreover, it also contains several tips from the field of creative writing which could help mainly the less-experienced translators improve the overall quality of their stylistic choices. Further on, attention is paid to dialects and their roles as stylistic elements; above all, in which cases they are important, and how they should be handled according to translation scholars. This part draws principally on work of Kufnerová, Sgall and Hronek, and Berezowski. Berezowski’s division of dialectal elements in fiction (into groups of phonological, morphological, lexical, and syntactic features) serves as a foundation for the practical part of this thesis. However, before proceeding to the actual analysis of Czech translations, I will present Common Czech—a variation recommended by Czech
theoreticians for translating dialects. I will look at its origin and characteristics, and also on the range of features it offers.

For the purpose of comparison, four other Czech translations of novels containing African American Vernacular English and/or American White Southern English will be briefly analyzed; namely Josef Škvorecký’s translation of *The Cool World* by Warren Miller; Vladimír Vařečka’s transfer of *The Confessions of Nat Turner* written by William Styron; Alice Walker’s *The Color Purple* translated by Jiří Hrubý, and Mark Twain’s *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Jana Mertinová. Because I am interested mainly in modern solutions of the respective dialects, I start my analysis with Miller’s novel, because Škvorecký’s translation from 1963 is seen as a milestone, since he was the first Czech translator who abandoned the strategy of neutralization and Levý’s method of suggesting the dialect, and applied Common Czech elements consistently. Styron’s retelling of Nat Turner’s story is particularly relevant to *The Help*, as it also contains both of the above-mentioned dialects. Alice Walker’s *The Color Purple* was selected for the fact that its main character is, similarly to some of the protagonists of *The Help*, an uneducated African American woman. Twain’s satire is probably the most famous work under analysis; I wanted to explore Mertinová’s solutions mainly because her translation was published in order to bring readers a more modern transfer than František Gel had provided in his version from 1955. I will look at the degree of dialect rendering both in the original and translated versions of these novels, and inquire whether the translators’ solutions correspond with approaches suggested by theoreticians.

The principal part of the thesis, i.e. analysis of dialect rendering in *The Help*, will begin by introduction of the author and the translator, and also by a brief summary of the plot in order to outline the story and its main characters. Subsequently, their
Idiolects in English and Czech will be analyzed, so as to examine whether Jana Kordíková (the translator) rendered them successfully, and what linguistic means of Czech she utilized in order to arrive at her solutions. I will also compare her approach and method to those recommended in translation theory and to strategies applied in earlier translations of Southern literature. Furthermore, attention will be paid to cultural phenomena other than dialect, specifically to what Maria Tymoczko defines as signature concepts and overcodings.
2. (Non)Standard American English

As David Crystal points out in his encyclopedia of the English language, linguists had strived for many years to find a definition of Standard English (110). At present, Standard English is seen as a variety or a dialect; it includes grammar, vocabulary and orthography, and excludes phonetic features, because its speakers may use various accents. It is not a local variety, because one cannot tell from where the addresser comes (111). Since most people speak admixtures of local regional dialects and Standard English, it is considered a minority variety, although it carries the most prestige and is widely understood (112).

Even though some scholars argue today that the need for standardized language is connected to a certain ideology about “speaking properly”, a great deal of attention is still paid to language codification and standardization. Many native speakers and learners of various languages believe that there should be an institution, authority or at least a publication prescribing the correct way of speaking and writing (Milroy 532).

Even though the United States of America has no official language set by law, since the very beginning of its independence in the second half of the 18th century, Americans have felt the need to differentiate their language from British English. According to Crystal, as a sovereign nation with an independent government, they wanted their own, independent language (80). The first attempt to codify American English was carried out by Noah Webster, who proposed different orthography (he introduced a new spelling of words such as “defense”, “labor” or “theater”). Moreover, between 1783 and 1785, Webster published a speller, a grammar and a reader of American English. In 1828, he added a dictionary as well; not only to complete the above-mentioned works, but also because there was a need for codification of new vocabulary which was
necessary due to cultural and natural phenomena brought by newly discovered
territories (terms such as “tobacco”, “plantation” or “congress”, among others; Crystal 81).

However, as it was mentioned earlier, very few speakers of any language use only
its standard form; in the USA, the situation is not different. The fact that the North
American territories were settled by immigrants of diverse origins gave rise to many
dialects—language varieties, many of which may be observed till today. As Wolfram
and Schilling-Estes point out, “regional varieties of English arouse relatively early […],
in many cases as a direct result of regional dialect differences brought over from the
British Isles […], and these differences have been maintained since their initial
establishment” (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 116). For the purpose of this thesis, two
dialects will be examined in more detail: African American Vernacular English, and
American White Southern English. Furthermore, since the core of the practical part is
analysis and translation of their respective written forms, attention will be paid only to
their grammatical, lexical, semantic, and pragmatic levels; the phonology of these non-
standard varieties will be left out.

![Figure 1: Dialect Boundaries in the USA (Hurley)](image-url)
2.1. African American Vernacular English

African American (Vernacular) English, sometimes referred to as Ebonics, is “the paradigm case of ethnicity-based language diversity” (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 211), and also a controversial topic, because “race and ethnicity in American society remain highly contentious and politically sensitive” (212). Despite the fact that it is one of the most frequently discussed matters in linguistic-oriented academic papers (Mufwene 64), up to now, scholars have not reached an agreement about the origin of this dialect. They agree that African American English is “historically rooted in a Southern-based, rural working-class variety” (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 217); however, four different hypotheses about its early development have been established: the Anglicist, the creolist, the neo-Anglicist, and the substrate hypotheses (219).

The Anglicist hypothesis claims that African American English and the Southern American dialect share the same ancestry. According to supporters of this theory, slaves brought from Africa learned the regional and social varieties of White speakers with whom they were in contact, and only a few traces of African languages have been preserved in Ebonics till today (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 219). The creolist hypothesis, which was popular in 1970’s, maintains that African American English developed from a creole. This argument is supported by the fact that Ebonics and other English-based creoles, for example, in Jamaica or Barbados, have several features in common (220). Advocates of this hypothesis claim that as a result of close contacts with other English varieties, a process of decreolization took place, and this creole language became more similar to the aforementioned dialects. However, as new data emerged which indicated that “the distribution of slaves […] was not particularly advantageous to the perpetuation of a widespread plantation creole,” (222), the neo-Anglicist hypothesis was developed. It argues that earlier Ebonics was directly linked to the
dialect brought to North America from the British Isles, and the differences between the African American English and the Southern American dialect stem from Ebonics’ own, unique process of evolution (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 222). The African American community simply innovated specific features of their speech; as Labov puts it, “many important features of the modern dialect are creation of the twentieth century and not an inheritance of the nineteenth” (cited in Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 222). Nevertheless, some linguists refuse this theory about this dialect’s origin as well, because several differences which can be observed between Ebonics and other European American varieties are present also in enclave communities of Black expatriates (for example, in the Dominican Republic or in Canada; Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 221-222). On that account, the substrate hypothesis was established, which maintains that the language of slaves brought to North America had been influenced by contact with users of a creole (during their journey from Africa), and with speakers of other American English varieties (223). For example, Arthur L. Palacas argues in his paper that Ebonics is “rather a number of English words arranged according to the syntax of the Sudan languages (Palacas 337). However, neither this theory brings the definite answer about the roots of this dialect.

One certain fact about the origin of African American English is that it arose in American South, and during several migration waves, it spread throughout the United States. Therefore, it is now perceived as a supra-regional ethnic dialect, since it is connected to the African American community. As Wolfram and Schilling-Estes put it, “due to the legacy of slavery, Jim Crow laws and the consequent segregation, Ebonics has preserved several linguistic features” (225) which occur with most of its speakers till today: for example, the habitual “be”, absence of copula, absence of third-person –s in the present tense, absence of possessive and general plural –s, usage of “ain’t” for
negative forms of “do” or “be” in present and past tenses, or reduction of final consonant clusters in speech, the result of which may be phonetic writing (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 214).

Results of several surveys carried out among users of African American English showed that this dialect is connected to many cultural notions. For instance, these speakers perceive their dialect as a source of overt pride, and as a part of their cultural heritage. It also serves as a pillar of their oppositional identity; i.e., it also concerns how members of this community see themselves regarding the White society (226-227). According to John Ogbu’s research, even though more educated African Americans speak proper English outside their community, they often refuse to use is within their ethnic group, because it “signifies adopting White attitudes of superiority” and it is “puttin’ on”; i.e., such a person would be seen as “acting white”, since it is not the natural way of African Americans’ talking (Ogbu 170-171).

### 2.2. American White Southern English

American White Southern English, sometimes also called Southern White Vernacular English or Southern American English, is a regional dialect spoken from Virginia to Texas; from Kentucky and Missouri to the Gulf of Mexico (with one exception being Florida). Given the historical development of the American South, this area was under strong linguistic influence of French (especially around New Orleans) and Spanish (mainly in Texas). Nevertheless, settlers from the British Isles finally prevailed: the South was settled above all by the English and Scots-Irish (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 123). Considering the fact that the Southern economy was based on tobacco and cotton plantations where slaves of African descent used to work together with European immigrants, African American and White Southern Englishes were in a close contact. On that account, these dialects influenced one another to a great extent, and till today,
they share certain features (Mufwene 65); for example, completive “done” or absence of copula “be” (Bernstein 117).

Some linguists argue that Southern English is quite unique because it offers several grammatical structures which may fill gaps Standard English has (Bernstein 106). A few of these features have spread outside the South, and are adopted in other regions as well (107). For example, the addressing pronoun of second person plural—“y’all” (or “yall”)—has growing popularity. This mark of intimacy and informality functions well when one wants to distinguish whether they speak to an individual or to a group of people (108).

Another feature typical of Southern dialect is a combination of multiple modal verbs; as an example, Cynthia Bernstein uses “might could”. This phrase might have been brought to the USA by the Scots-Irish. It is used to express uncertainty and politeness at the same time; it means “maybe I could do it” (Bernstein 109). In contrast to “y’all”, this linguistic element is hardly used anywhere else; even more educated Southerners prefer the phrase “might be able to” (113).

Among lexical items which are characteristic of the White Southern Dialect, “fixin’ to” (meaning “to prepare” and marking an imminent action), “yonder” (meaning “over there”), or “awfully” (as an intensifier meaning “very, really”) may be mentioned (Bernstein 114, A Glossary of Quaint Southernisms).

However, a specific style is also a part of Southerners’ way of speaking (Johnston 189). For instance, when asked a yes/no question, a user of this dialect usually includes the address “sir/ma’am” into their answer. As Johnston puts it, their aim is to express emphasis and/or deferential politeness (190-191). Use of conditional syntax is also rather frequent; speakers may employ it to express requests, as a mitigation device, or in order to make a threat (194). Such linguistic structures create
distance and “mirror the awareness of culturally appropriate social boundaries” (Johnston 193).

The examples listed above should reflect several of the most frequently used features of American White Southern English. Nevertheless, since the American South covers rather a vast territory and a substantial percentage of population, there must be certain variation present; in different regional, ethnic or social groups, various dialectal phenomena occur in different combinations (Bernstein 118).
3. Translation of Cultural Items

Dialects, mainly those of geographical and ethnic nature, are a part of cultural heritage of their users. Language in general is bound up with culture; it is one of the means through which speakers identify themselves (Kramsch 3). Therefore, any dialect can be perceived as a symbol of social, regional, and/or ethnic identity, and also as a phenomenon which contributes to creating and shaping culture (10). It implies that every dialectal feature in fiction carries a certain cultural meaning. Since translation is, to a great extent, concerned with transfer of meaning rather than words, it can be argued that translators should bear such cultural implications in mind.

As Nida claims, “the role of language within a culture and the influence of the culture on the meanings of words and idioms are so pervasive that scarcely any text can be adequately understood without careful consideration of its cultural background” (3). Therefore, translators have to face a difficult task: they have to “understand thoroughly the designative and associative meanings of the text to be translated; that involves not only knowing the meaning of the words and the syntactic relations, but also being sensitive to all the nuances of the stylistic devices” (5).

Newmark sees such cultural items as parts of the social, and maintains that translators have to decide to what extent they want to or should explain them (74). If a translator renders dialectal features contained in the source text, it is, of course, impossible to put explanatory parentheses to every utterance made in this non-standard speech. However, even a brief explanation of the dialect speakers’ culture in the preface or introduction to the translated piece of fiction could be a good solution (75).

Maria Tymoczko suggests a holistic approach to cultures. She argues that translators should pay a great deal of attention to both the source and target cultures in which the translated text exists (236). However, since they are often immersed in their
own environment, it may be difficult for them to get an objective perspective. On that account, it is necessary for them to be aware of dispositions, presuppositions and practices of their own culture (Tymoczko 237). In addition to that, they have to keep in mind the historical and social aspects of the source culture they are dealing with (239).

Translators need to focus, above all, on so-called signature concepts, which are key to social organization, and involve “discourses of culture and its practices” (238). They are related to sets of cultural assumptions and connotations of the specific group’s members, and reflect economic and social structures. In fiction, signature concepts can contribute to the plot significantly. Within the framework of this thesis, segregation, Jim Crow laws or sharecropping farms could be seen as signature concepts. Another important cultural feature, on which the practical part of the thesis will focus later, is overcodings, i.e. rules of social interaction (243). Given the asymmetry between English and Czech terms of address, in the main part of this thesis attention will be paid to translators’ choices between T-forms and V-forms in interaction between Americans of European and African origins in translated discourse.
4. Theoretical Approaches to Translating Dialects

In case translators are supposed to deal with dialects in an assigned text, they face a difficult issue; i.e., how to create a corresponding solution which would function well in the target language and culture. In order to reach a successful outcome, they should:

1. Know the rules for creating an equivalent in translation,
2. Analyze the source text, and realize what (stylistic and/or cultural) purpose the specific dialect has in it,
3. Find out what linguistic means and features the target language offers.

All these aspects will be discussed from the prescriptive point of view in more detail in the following subchapters.

4.1. Basic Notions on Equivalence in Translation

The term “equivalence” was discussed widely during the 20th century. Some theoreticians strove to define equivalence, others to undermine their claims. However, according to Xiang, “equivalence should not be approached as a search for sameness, but only as a kind of similarity or approximation”; therefore, it is “possible to establish equivalence […] on different linguistic level and on different degrees” (Xiang 1). This scholar even sees this relationship of the target and source texts as a necessary requirement. Without it, a translated content could not be regarded as a translation (2). Anthony Pym agrees with these arguments, and claims that equivalence is by no means a dead concept in translation (101).

In Umění překladu, Levý promotes a functional approach. He says that a translator’s task is to express well not forms, but functions of structures used in the original text, and utilize elements which are offered by and can perform the same functions in the target language (Levý 29). That implies that the same artistic effect is
more important than identical literary devices (Levý 30). In order to achieve this goal, translator should apply the so-called “illusionistic methods”; i.e. they should make effort so that the literary texts look like non-translations. This requirement is insisted upon especially in Slavonic countries, where translations have a long tradition and an important position in the culture and also on the book market (38). Even though readers usually know they are reading a translation, they want it to keep the original’s qualities (40). Levý also argues that a translation should always be founded not on the text itself, but on its semantic and aesthetic values; in order to transfer the meaning well, it is necessary to preserve forms carrying semantic functions (45). On that account, a necessary requirement here is that the translator recognizes features which the author utilized to express the intended meaning (50), and then uses elements of the target language to imitate these semantic values. To sum his arguments up, Levý claims that the source and target texts should be equivalent on the level of semantic values (which are represented by stylistic features).

Eugene Nida claims that “there can be no absolute correspondence between languages; hence there can be no fully exact translations,” (Nida 156). This implies that no identical equivalents exist on any level. Nonetheless, he believes we can distinguish between formal and dynamic equivalence (159): the former concentrates on the form and content of the message (in consequence of which it brings some foreign elements to the target language and culture, and often requires a substantial number of explanatory footnotes), the latter on the relationship between the translated text and its recipients, which should be as close as possible to the relationship between the original and its readers1. According to Nida, the dynamic approach is more common, but translations

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1 Similar dichotomies can be found in the work of Peter Newmark (semantic vs. communicative translation), Juliane House (overt vs. covert translation), and Christiane Nord (documentary vs. instrumental translation).
usually gravitate towards the centre of this continuum, or at least contain several elements from both of these poles (Nida 160). Translators should, however, keep in mind that response of the target audience is one of the most important constituents of their work. As this scholar puts it, translators should focus more “on the sense, less on the syntax,” on the spirit of the text, “not only the letter;” they should convey the “truest possible feel of the original” (162).

As a result, translators should not look for equivalence only at the lexical level, but they should take into consideration the overall style of the individual texts, since it may carry semantic values as well.

### 4.2. Translating Style

#### 4.2.1. Basis for Stylistic Analysis of Fiction

In general, the main research questions of stylistics, the study which explains relation between language and artistic function (Leech and Short 13), are the following ones: what are the prominent, important, pervasive and/or recurrent features of a particular author’s style, and what he or she aims to express by utilizing these elements. There are several theories about the relationship of content and form; however, for the purpose of this thesis, the pluralist approach was chosen². Its advocates claim that “language performs a number of different functions, and any piece of language is likely to be the result of choices made on different functional levels” (24). There is no unified pluralist approach; many scholars distinguish between various types of functions or communicative purposes language can have (25). Nevertheless, for the purpose of this thesis, Halliday’s linguistic functions (ideational, interpersonal, and textual) were

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² The pluralist approach is an alternative to monism and dualism (Leech and Short 29). Monists believe that the form and content of a text cannot be separated, because it is one entity, and all choices made by its author are “equally matters to language (26). On the contrary, dualists claim that linguistic forms are only a mode of expression which does not reflect the content (20).
selected, and its implications on employing dialect as a stylistic feature will be discussed in Chapter 4.3.

While carrying out a stylistic analysis, one cannot rely on any objective criteria, but has to spot features which somehow deviate from relative norms (Leech and Short 51). Such elements in focus are called stylistic markers. Among them, features belonging to various linguistic and stylistic categories may occur (75). For example, stylistics markers can be of lexical kind (in that case, one may analyze whether the utilized vocabulary is simple or complex, whether the authors uses formal or colloquial expressions, idiomatic phrases, particular morphological categories, etc.), they can fall also into the category of grammar (such an analysis may focus on sentence types, their complexity, or on unusual sentence constructions), or belong to figures of speech (phenomena like graphological deviations, irony, or metaphors go here; 75-78).

Authors of literary texts may, of course, use the above-mentioned phenomena as they please. Since every piece of fiction is stylistically different, no universally applicable approach to translation of individual elements of style can be established. Nevertheless, various theoreticians suggest and recommend several general rules and procedures.

4.2.2. Style and Translation

Eugene Nida points out that some translators want to avoid, for example, features of slang, but forget what role these elements play: As a result of evading the style of the original text, its “grace and naturalness” may disappear, and missing the spirit and aesthetic character of the text is worse than several lexical errors (Nida 169). Therefore, translators should not focus solely on the message, but on the author’s stylistic selection as well (i.e. on their linguistic choices, for example, in terms of grammatical features, since they carry a certain meaning). The “tone must accurately reflect the point of view
of the author;” however, it is necessary to bear in mind that stylistic acceptability varies across languages—means for expressing e.g. irony in the source language, may not have the same effect in the target language (Nida 169-170).

According to Jiří Levý, authors are required to present aesthetically valuable stylization of reality, whereas translators are required to carry out aesthetically valuable re-stylization of the source text (Levý 63). During this process, several factors make the latter’s work harder: the inter-relationship between the two language systems involved, traces of the original’s language in stylization of the translation, and tension in style of the translation that is caused by transfer of ideas into languages in which they were not conceived (64). The first problem occurs because the source and target languages are not commensurable: “the verbal means […] are not “equivalent,” so they cannot be converted mechanically” (65). Levý suggests that translators should compare linguistic means of both of them, and establish features which can be seen as equal, elements of the source language missing in the target language (which should be compensated), and features of the target language which are not present in the source language (66):

![Figure 2: A Diagram of Overlapping and Different Linguistic Elements (Levý 66)](image)

As far as the influence or the source language are concerned, it may be direct (i.e., interference may occur), or indirect. In that case, translators use solutions which are
grammatical and acceptable in the target language, but often do not reflect the semantic or stylistic values of the original\(^3\) (Levý 70).

Anton Popovič is in agreement with Levý; he claims that first of all, the translator needs to understand and analyze the text as a whole, and its peculiarities as well (Popovič 38). In the course of these metalingual operations, the translator works similarly to a linguist and a literary scholar (39), because according to the principle of complementariness, linguistic elements create the basis for stylistic evaluation, and these two levels cannot be separated (21). Translators should always preserve invariant aesthetic information of the source text (54), which is represented by style. Style is seen as an agent integrating individual parts of the whole text; as such, it has to be reflected in the translation (64). Popovič even claims that equivalence should be sought at the stylistic level, because it is right there where the work of art is transferred from one language into another as a homogenous unity (69). In literary texts, such equivalence manifests at the syntagmatic (in terms of choice of stylistic means) and paradigmatic axes (in terms of choice of a specific solution). Within the framework of this thesis, choices on syntagmatic and paradigmatic axes can be illustrated as follows: if an author wants to foreground that a specific character is, for instance, less educated and of lower social class, they can decide to state this fact directly, or they can proceed indirectly and incorporate this trait into the character’s way of speech. This choice is made on the syntagmatic axis. If they opt for the indirect way, they have to decide which linguistic and/or stylistic means they will use for expressing this character’s idiolect (for instance, contracted forms, wrong spelling, vulgarisms, etc.). These choices and their combinations are made on the paradigmatic axis. The translator has to consider the

\(^3\) Levý delineates the issue of lacking unique items (Tirkkonen-Condit 209)—linguistic features present in the target language, which are usually utilized by authors of original texts, but which occur less frequently in translations due to influence of the specific source text language.
stylistic features chosen by the author, but given the differences between structures of any two languages, it is upon the translator’s discretion to find means which help them achieve equivalence between the source and target texts (Popovič 72).

4.2.3. Creative Writing: Tips for Translators

A great part of the publishing and bookselling industry in the Czech Republic is comprised of translated works. Notwithstanding the pressure on literary translators’ invisibility (i.e. translations should be natural, fluent, and come across as original text, as if there was no element standing between the author and readers of the translation), they have an important role in the Czech market. Since their work can have a significant impact on the target culture and artistic milieu, translators of fiction may benefit from a deeper insight into theory of literature and creative writing. Literary translators, especially those with formal education in the field, are usually familiar with principles of equivalence, of how to strive for naturalness in the target language, how to deal with culture-specific problems, etc. However, mainly the less-experienced translators may sometimes focus only on individual sentences or paragraphs, and not take into consideration important aspects of the plot.

Several tips for beginning writers, from which translators could also profit, include:

- What values are held in the given community (Kress 25)?
- Who is looked up to and why? How are people expected to behave (26)?
- How do the protagonists match or differ from the general community (26)?
- Characters should speak consistently; they should sound like real people (54).
- “Let them reveal themselves through what they say” (53).
- Characters’ speech (mind style) gives the readers a certain impression (63); therefore, translators should aim to preserve it in the target text as well.
- Dialogues should be artificially concise and well-flowing (65).
If in doubt about solving a specific problem the text brings, translators could ask themselves one of these questions. Of course, interpretation by the translator is always a part of the process and may influence the decision in a wrong way. But if translators find the right answers at higher textual units and consider the plot as a whole, it may help them solve problems at lexical or syntactic levels.

4.3. Translating Dialect

4.3.1. Dialect as a Stylistic Feature

In the previous subchapter, stylistic features and approaches to translation thereof were examined; now I will focus on the function of dialects as elements of style. Michael Halliday, one of the most famous advocates of stylistic pluralism, states that language has three distinctive functions: ideational, interpersonal, and textual. The ideational function is related to the way in which “language conveys and organizes the cognitive realities of experience” (Leech and Short 26); the interpersonal function “concerns the relation between language and its users,” i.e. communication of speakers’ attitudes and influence on the recipients of the message (27). Last but not least, the textual function refers to the general organization of a text (27).

However, as far as language of fiction is concerned, none of these functions can be labeled as universally prevailing. The prominent function of features employed by the author can always be determined only ad hoc (25), i.e. after thorough analysis.

In my opinion, dialectal features in fiction have, above all, the interpersonal function. Regional, social and ethnic dialects usually convey information about some of their speakers’ cultural attributes, for example, where they come from, or what social status they assume (Alsina 138). Even though writers do not aim to render the respective dialect with maximum precision (Ramos Pinto 290), they strive to trigger the readership’s assumptions, images, and stereotypes about speakers of that specific
variation (Ramos Pinto 290, Alsina 138). It follows that dialects carry this stylistic function because of the cultural meanings and connotations they imply.

However, when translators encounter a text containing a dialect, they have to deal with many difficulties. First of all, they should bear in mind what levels of tolerance towards written dialect exist in the target language and culture (Alsina 140). They also have to realize what kind of loss the text would suffer if they decided to omit the dialect, and normalized it; i.e. if they translated the respective passages with standard variety of the target language (141). Last but not least, they have to consider the intensity of rendering the dialect; it should be neither too emphasized nor underrepresented, since such changes could alter the narrative focus or ideological framework (143) and internal coherence of the text (Ramos Pinto 291). In other words, “each character must be permitted to have the same kind of individuality and personality as the author himself gave them in the original message” (Nida 170), but neither the protagonists nor the story shall be mocked (Epstein).

4.3.2. Recommendations for Translating Dialects

In the past, dialects were often seen as untranslatable not only due to discrepancies between language systems, but also because they are connected to extra-linguistic reality, and in readers’ minds, each dialect triggers different associations (i.e., prestige of the concrete linguistic variety, sociocultural or educational background of its speakers, etc.; Berezowski 28). On that account, dialects used to be normalized, which implies that non-standard markers present in the original text would be omitted and replaced with standard features of the target language (Kufnerová 68). Nevertheless,
this notion of dialect untranslatability was abandoned by most translators eventually⁴. 

Today, functionally equivalent solutions are sought for.

In general, achieving a solution in case of a social dialect can be easier, since it may be replaced with a corresponding socioeconomic variety (Epstein). However, preserving the author’s intended impact can be tricky if the target language is considered classless (Czech could fall into this category) or the target culture has different social system (Alsina 140; Epstein). On that account, such a solution is nearly impossible to find in the Czech language.

In case translators face a regional non-standard variety, Alsina claims that the transfer into another language is almost impossible, since American White Southern English cannot be simply substituted by a regional variety of another language (139). Epstein, on the other hand, suggests that if it is possible to find a roughly equivalent dialect of the target language (i.e., one that triggers similar stereotypes about its speakers), “translating geographically” is possible (Epstein). Levý argues that if a local non-standard variety serves to characterize a protagonist, it should be replaced with regionally unmarked linguistic features (117). Kufnerová is also against regional varieties of the target language, because they falsely localize the narrative, and make the text more difficult to read (69). Moreover, she claims that the Czech tradition shows a restrained approach to such solutions; instead of various regional dialects, translators usually use Common Czech (70).

In my opinion, due to a cultural gap, finding Czech regional or social dialects which would correspond to American White Southern English or the vernacular of

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⁴ However, there are still translation theoreticians who recommend neutralization. For instance, Landers states that because every dialect is “tied to geographical and culture milieu which does not exist in the target culture,” his “best advice” is to not translate the dialect at all (117). In my opinion, such oppositions between scholars might be related to the difference between translation traditions in cultures with languages with limited diffusion (i.e. requirements for translations into less translated languages are usually very high; Levý 65), and cultures with more translated languages, in which translations do not play such an important cultural role (e.g. in the United States, where original literary fiction gets far more attention).
1960’s underprivileged African Americans is absolutely impossible in Czech; therefore, “translating geographically” or “socioeconomically” is out of the question. On the contrary, Common Czech features seem to be a good alternative; this variation of Czech will be explored and elaborated upon in Chapter 4.4.

4.3.3. Strategies Applied in Translation of Dialects

Since dialects are always used in fiction in different ways (i.e. what they should indicate, how many of their features are depicted, how prominent the non-standard variety is in the narrative as a whole), no single strategy can be recommended as universally applicable. However, in order to find out how various non-standard features (in terms of phonology, morphology, lexis, and syntax) are most frequently handled by translators, Leszek Berezowski conducted a thorough study. He describes the following approaches as the most prominent:

- **Lexicalization**, which renders some qualities of the dialect present in the original but expresses it to a lesser degree. It is prominent on the lexical level, and omits any phonological, morphological or syntactic elements (Berezowski 53). There are four kinds of lexicalization: rural (which borrows vocabulary from regional dialects; 54), colloquial (which indicates social status of speakers; 56), diminutive (used mainly with very young or elderly characters, because these age groups tend to use diminutives the most; 58), and artificial lexicalization (which involves neologisms, and classifies members of fictive future social groups; 59).

- **Partial translation**, during which parts of the target text remain untranslated. These are usually very short, generally well-known or easily understandable phrases, sometimes even rendered in a third language (60).

- **Transliteration**, which means replacement of phonological and graphological features of lexical units (62).
• Speech defect is an approach affecting all four levels, since it causes distortion of grammar and orthography, and also brings non-standard lexical items (65). Ramos Pinto describes it as eye dialect (300).

• Relativization means reduction of source text forms into terms of address and honorifics; the translation then contains foreignizing expressions such as “massah” or “sir” (Berezowski 70-71).

• Creation of an artificial variety made up by the translator is also possible, but also rather risky in terms of losing some meanings and associations readers might make via a natural variety of the target language (76).

• Colloquialization takes advantage of lexical and syntactic features present in everyday, colloquial variety of the target text. It helps depict the social membership of its speaker; however, Berezowski points out that it usually makes it impossible to place such a protagonist into a specific geographic region (80).

• Rusticalization works again with all four types of dialect markers; it utilizes “a full non-standard target language regional variety” (81).

This categorization of translation approaches is, in my opinion, quite clear, with only one exception. The strategies of colloquial lexicalization and colloquialization seem to overlap. As it was stated earlier, the Czech language is considered classless—based on a person’s speech, we usually cannot tell determine their social background. Therefore, in my own analysis of Czech translations of African American Vernacular and American White Southern English, I will employ Berezowski’s categories, but all features of everyday, colloquial speech will be marked as examples of colloquialization. Moreover, I will avoid the label “speech defect,” and adopt Ramos Pinto’s term “eye dialect.”
4.4. Common Czech

4.4.1. General Characteristics

Common Czech is an interdialect based on Spoken Prague or Central Bohemian Czech (Kufnerová 74), which has spread out from its centre to the whole of Bohemia and Western Moravia (Sgall and Hronek 22). Along with Literary Czech and Spoken Czech, it is one of the varieties of the Czech national language (12), and some scholars perceive it as the first variation of a majority of Czech native speakers before they enter the process of education, and encounter norms and prescriptions of Literary Czech (18).

Approximately at the beginning of the 1960s, some authors and translators started to feel that fictional dialogues should sound more natural, and should express real situations better (Nedvědová 65). On that account, norms of Literary Czech were deemed inappropriate for fiction by many writers (Townsend 96); firstly Common Czech appeared only in dialogues, but today it is part of narrative voices as well (Kufnerová 73). Moreover, it has become a norm for translation of any dialect (74), mainly because it has spread into a rather vast territory, and, therefore, is acceptable to a great deal of readers (Sgall and Hronek 23). It also offers various linguistic elements in categories of grammar, lexis, phonology and morphology, which are discussed below in Chapter 4.4.2 of this thesis. Nevertheless, translators always have to assess the “individual microsituation of the original” (Kufnerová 73), and decide what amount of Common Czech features is appropriate for the given text, since readers should not be disturbed by this non-standard variety (72).

4.4.2. Features for Possible Use in Translation

Elements of Common Czech can be defined when this variety is compared to Literary Czech. The following paragraphs are based on Sgall and Hronek; however, they contain
merely examples, since full listing of all qualities of Common Czech would be beyond the scope of this thesis.

Phonological features include:

- Diphthongization present in word stems is a very common phenomenon; in such cases the monophthong -i/-ý- turns into the diphthong -ej- (e.g. “vozejk,” “rejže”).
- Prothetic v- occurs in stems beginning with o- (“vokno,” “voběhnout,” “povobědvat”).
- Vowel -ě- often changes into narrower -i- (“mlíko,” “oblíct”).
- Longer vowels -i- and -ů- may shorten into -i- and -u-, respectively (“nevím,” “letím,” “jdu domu”).
- Last but not least, simplified phonetic writing is commonplace in this variety (“dycky,” “rači,”” kerej,” “páč”).

Morphological features may cover these changes:

- With nouns, suffix -ma is used in plural instrumental case of all grammatical genders (“s růžema,” “staveníma,” “panama,” “strojema”). Suffix -ách can be used in plural locative case with animate masculine and neutral genders (“o klukách,” “městách”).
- As for hard adjectives, the vowel -ý in suffixes may change into diphthong -ej (“novej stroj”), or -é in into narrower -ý (“čistý moře”).
- In the category of pronouns, shortening of vowels is possible (“muj,” “s nim”). The deictic pronoun “ten” offers many different variations (“tenhle, tendle, támhleten”).
- In terms of numerals, declination of dva can be non-standard as well (“ke dvoum,” “se dvouma”).
- The class of verbs is probably the most productive one. For example, the suffix of plural neutral gender can be the same as that of feminine (“města slavily,” “stavení se...”)
krčily”). Suffixes may also be omitted, such as -l in the past tense (“pek,” “nes”) or -i in the third person plural in the present tense (“dēlaj,” “koukaj”). Another available device is diphthongization of -i into -ou/-ej in the third person plural of the present tense (“dēkujou,” “malujou,” “vařej”), or when monophthong -ý in the stem turns into -ej (“krejt,” “bejt”). The first person singular in conditional can utilize the form “aby jsem” instead of “abych”; in plural it can use “bysme/aby jsme” instead of “bychom/abychom”.

- Comparative adverbs often take advantage of some strategies mentioned above, such as changes in suffixes (“pěkněj,” “častěj”), sometimes even in combination, for instance, with diphthongization (“vejš”) or narrowing (“miň, lip”).

Lexical elements are basically a matter of stylistic differentiation (Sgall and Hronek 69). Most expressions belong to all main variations of Czech (70). Among the most frequently used types, we can find stylistically neutral vocabulary, emotionally charged phrases (“zvorat něco”), pejorative words (“slejvák”), higher slang formulations (belonging both to Common and Spoken Czech; “prašan”), lower slang expressions (which are only part of Common Czech; “lanařit”), words typical of Common Czech (“šuple”), as well as substandard formulations and taboo words (71). As two of the most prominent ways of creating neologisms and new meanings, univerbization (“jánabráchismus,” “jidelák”) and shift of meaning can be listed (“bábovka,” “špaček;” 73).

In terms of syntax, Common Czech prefers compound sentences; its users avoid archaic conjunctions (such as “nýbrž” or “nebot”). To illustrate other syntactic features, usage of jak as a temporal conjunction (Sgall and Hronek 63), or “co” in the sense of “why” can be named (64). Proclitics (enclictics put at the beginning of a sentence with
omitted personal pronoun; “se ti divim”) occur rather frequently (Sgall and Hronek 65). Moreover, periphrastic imperatives are also popular (“koukej to uklidit;” 67).

Even though these lists cover only a part of Common Czech features, it is obvious that this language variety offers a wide range of possibilities for translating texts containing non-standard elements. Translators always have to consider the degree of dialect rendering in the original, and adjust the use of Common Czech elements to it. However, they must proceed cautiously; if a character uses, for example, only two morphological features of a dialect, the translator probably cannot use only two morphological elements of Common Czech, because they often come in clusters. To put it differently, if a protagonist uses diphthongization in hard adjectives, he or she should also employ narrowing in this part of speech, and in addition to that, they should utilize non-standard declination suffixes; otherwise such a character would sound unnatural or even strange. Phrases such as “s malejmi dětmi/s malejma dětmi” would be absolutely unacceptable. On that account, translators should pay attention whether such clusters would not lead to overrepresentation of the particular character’s dialect. If a protagonist of African American origin uses merely the auxiliary “ain’t” and omits possessive –s, instead of using the above-mentioned group of morphological features, the translator might consider expressing the non-standard elements e.g. on the lexical level.

I believe that this chapter lays sufficient theoretical foundations of how dialects ought to be approached in translation; therefore, I will now proceed with the practical part, and analyze several pieces of fiction in terms of translation strategies and linguistic features applied in their Czech versions.
5. Southern Literature in Czech Translations

In this chapter I will focus on a more or less brief analysis of four American novels which contain African American Vernacular and/or American White Southern English. The purpose of this part of my research is to find out how Czech translators dealt with these dialects in the past, what strategies they applied in the process, and whether translators’ methods in general change substantially (e.g. whether translations from the 1960's render dialect more on the morphological level, whereas the more recently published ones express it rather on the lexical level). As a result, I will start with the oldest translation, and move gradually to the latest ones, even though the originals were written and published in a different temporal sequence.

With the exception of the first analyzed novel, Warren Miller’s *The Cool World*, all of these narratives take place in the Deep South. However, Miller’s book will be included for two reasons: first, its main character speaks African American English (and is, as a matter of fact, a native of Alabama living in Harlem); second, the translation significantly changed the generally accepted method of translating dialect into Czech. That is also why I will not analyze any older translations of Southern literature, which mostly employed neutralization, and why this novel gets a greater deal of attention than others.

The second book under scrutiny will be *The Confessions of Nat Turner*, one of William Styron’s less famous novels. Its merit to my thesis lies mainly in the fact that, similarly to Kathryn Stockett, the author lets the characters speak not only African American Vernacular English, but also American White Southern English.

Alice Walker’s well-known novel *The Color Purple* was selected as the third work for my analysis, above all because its protagonist shares several attributes with the main characters from *The Help*—Miss Celia is also a poor, uneducated woman of African
American origin, who is trying to find her own voice and get other people’s respect. Moreover, I will examine how the Czech translator dealt with overcodings, i.e. terms of address, and compare his solutions with those utilized in the Czech version of *The Help*.

The last piece of fiction covered in this chapter will be also probably the most famous one—Mark Twain’s *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. I chose this satire because a new translation was published in 2007. Its purpose was to replace an outdated Czech version, in which the dialect had been neutralized to a great extent. Since the language of Jim, an escaped slave, is full of dialectal features, I will explore the degree to which it is rendered in Czech in order to see whether Jana Mertinová managed to express the character’s idiolect well, or whether she might have used several additional Common Czech elements.

### 5.1. Warren Miller: *The Cool World*

#### 5.1.1. The Author and the Translator

Warren Miller, an American novelist, was born in 1921. He interrupted his studies at the University of Iowa in order to enlist. After the World War Two, he came back to receive his degree, and stayed at his alma mater for several years to work as a writing instructor (Masnerová 231). Unlike many of his contemporaries, the main topic of his prose was not painful memories of war. As an East Harlem resident, he was more interested in current racial, social, and political issues (232). Given the problems with publishing his first novel, *The Sleep of Reason*, which is a satire of McCarthyism, Miller decided to take on pseudonyms for several years (234). *The Cool World*, which was published in 1959 under Miller’s real name again, is probably his best-known book. The novel won critiques’ praise, and was made into a play, and in 1963 also into a movie (233).
The Cool World was transferred into Czech rather early—the first edition was published as soon as 1963 under the title Prezydent Krokadylů. Its imprint and afterword state that it was translated by Jan Zábrana (1931 – 1984), poet, novelist and translator from English and Russian. Due to the political situation, the first edition was not for sale in regular distribution network. Since the novel is rather naturalistic, and contains explicit sexual and violent scenes, only a limited number of copies for study purposes were issued (Schonberg 77).

However, after the Velvet Revolution, the authorship of the translation was claimed by Josef Škvorecký (1924 – 2012), who had been prohibited from publishing due to his attitude to the socialist regime, and to whom Zábrana had offered to lend his name for this purpose. Since Zábrana had died years before the Velvet Revolution, he could neither confirm nor disprove Škvorecký’s assertions. Czech literary scholars argued for several years whether only one of these translators had transferred the book into Czech, or whether they had cooperated. Eventually, the dispute came off in favor of Škvorecký. In the 2010 bilingual edition of The Cool World, he is listed as the only translator.

5.1.2. A Brief Summary of the Plot

The main character and only narrator of the novel is Richard “Duke” Custis, a fourteen-year-old African American who is forced to enter the world of adults too soon. As a small boy, Duke moved from Alabama, and now he lives in the Harlem ghetto (Miller 67). It is a neighborhood of impoverished, disadvantaged people; many of its inhabitants try to find their way of revolt. Duke is a member of the Royal Crocadilles, a fighting gang of underprivileged teenage boys who battle with others for power over ghetto streets. Duke has rather a high rank among his friends (123). He desperately wants to buy a gun (on the black market, of course) so that he could get even more respect and become the “President of the Crocadilles” (23). In order to obtain his goal
and get the money, he deals drugs and prostitutes himself to adult men in Central Park (103). He is willing to pay this price; all he is dreaming about is that his gang would crush the competing packs, and the Crocadilles would rule Harlem.

However, Duke lives in a cruel environment, and has to face his friend’s falling into drug addiction and his untimely violent death, other friends’ going to jail, and his mother’s decease. After several violent events, Duke is taken care of by social services. In a juvenile center, he becomes attached to gardening and rose growing, and he is learning how to live his life without violence or drugs.

5.1.3. Style and Translation

The novel is actually a frame story of a youngster who is writing his narration probably as a part of therapy. Therefore, it is written in the first person; Duke sometimes even addresses the target reader, who is Doctor Levin (Miller 107). Miller wanted to depict the character of a young gang member as realistically as he could; however, the protagonist’s rather grotesque language is in sharp contrast with the violence, hopelessness, and despair contained in his words. To illustrate Duke’s being semi-literate, Miller decided to let him speak in African American Vernacular and use phonetic writing. To amplify the main character’s lack of education, Miller did not use any punctuation marks except for full stops between sentences. Among the typical grammatical features occur missing possessive pronouns (“I aint you nothing Blood;” 130), missing copula (“Bebop never even with us;” 122), missing -s in the third person singular of the present tense (“Blood say;” 62). When Duke describes the world surrounding him, he sometimes struggles not only with spelling, but also with lexical boundaries; therefore, some more complicated expressions are divided into two words (such as “super market,” “side walk” (136), “War Lord,” or “evry one;” 114). While
talking about his gang, their meetings and plans, he uses ghetto vocabulary very often; for example “piece” for gun, “bread” for money, or “boppin” for fighting.

In the afterword to the first Czech edition of *The Cool World*, the translator (under the name of Zábrana) states that he refused to employ the strategy of merely suggesting the dialect, which was promoted by Levý (98), and used in Czech translations till 1960’s (Zábrana 221). Škvorecký felt that any level of normalization would harm the novel, and impact its aesthetic and ideological effect (227). On that account, he tried to apply such linguistic features which would render Duke’s character and world best. Škvorecký claims that he had to imagine how “young hooligans from Žižkov” would speak about events similar to those depicted in the book (228). Miller’s intention was to get his readers outraged and reflect upon both the form and the content; therefore, the translator felt obliged to preserve these qualities of the novel (229).

In order to do that, Škvorecký adopted colloquialization and eye dialect as translation strategies. He combines Common Czech, which is a part of everyday speech of many Czechs, and distortion of orthography and grammar, which helps depict the protagonists’ lower status.

In terms of syntactic features, the translator omitted punctuation to maintain the impression of the uneducated narrator. Moreover, Škvorecký kept the ampersands in the texts, which can be seen as a distinct foreignizing element in a Czech text:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Warren Miller</th>
<th>Josef Škvorecký’s Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“That is what I wanta do Duke. Man when you President of the Club I gonna change my name.” (Miller 58)</td>
<td>„To bych chtěl Duku. Vole až ty budeš prezidentem Klubu já si změnim méno.“ (59)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broken up pieces of chocolate &amp; gum drops &amp; sour balls &amp; jaw breakers that change they color.</td>
<td>Za kusovou čokoládu &amp; žvýkačku &amp; kyselý bonbóny &amp; cucací špalky kerý měněj barvu. (105)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As for lexical items, Škvorecký claims that he had to find a way to express phenomena which did not exist in the Czech society at the beginning of 1960’s; for instance, Czech had no equivalents of words such as “zip gun” (translated as “rourák”) or “reefers” (“maríjánka”) so the translator had to come up with new vocabulary (Zábrana 226). In order to render Duke’s idiolect, the translator used mostly lower slang and pejorative expressions, some of which were created by shift of meaning; for example, “mydlit” (“boppin”), “mergle” (“bread” meaning money), “stříkačka” (“piece” meaning gun), “chlupatý” (“cops”), “žvára” (“smokes”), “bengál” (“rumble”), “šmejkat” (“push around”), or “fasuňk” (“supplies”). He also uses emotionally charged words, such as “bábrlinka” for “gramma”. On the other hand, the translator dared to use vulgarisms as well (“sráčí” for “motherens,” or “doprdele” for “shitman”).

As far as morphology is concerned, Škvorecký used the full range of possibilities Common Czech offers. His approach can be illustrated by the following extract:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Waren Miller</th>
<th>Josef Škvorecký’s Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Nobody push you when you got a piece. […] You know what I'd like Duke? You</td>
<td>„Dýž máš stříkačku nikdo se na tebe nevytahuje. […] Viš co bych chtěl Duku?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>know what? I wanta get me a rifle with tele scopic sights an a box ofammo an</td>
<td>Viš co? Chci si vopatřit flintu s tele</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lay out on the roof. Jus you know be there with it an kill people walkin down</td>
<td>skopyckým hledím a bedýňku munice a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the street. Bam. An they dead with out known it. No body ever catch me.</td>
<td>lehnu si na střechu. Viš prostě tam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man I wanta be the Black death an live on the roof &amp; bam put holes in em.</td>
<td>budu ležet s ní a budu zabijet lidi dole na ulici.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kill and disap eer. Special hidin place for my rifle an the tele scopic</td>
<td>Prásk. Svalej se mrtvý k zemi a ani vo tom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sights. Cops never find it. Goddam headbreakers.” He put his hand on my arm.</td>
<td>nebudou vědět. A mě jakživo nikdo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“That is what I wanta do Duke. Man when you President of the Club I gonna</td>
<td>nechytné. Vole já chci bejt Černej Smrťák</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>change my name. Black Death. Black Death. That what I wanta be called.”</td>
<td>a bydlet na střeše &amp; prásk prásk vrtat do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Miller 58)</td>
<td>lidi díry. Zabít a zmizet. A mít špecijální</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>skrejš pro flintu a pro tele skopycký hledí.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chlupatý jí jakživo nenajdou. Pendrekáři</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>zasraný.“ Veme mě za rameno. „To bych chtěl Duku. Vole až ty budeš prezidentem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Klubu já si změním méno. Černej Smrťák.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Černej Smrťák. Každej mi tak musí říkat“</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(59).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Škvorecký took advantage of prothetic v- (“vo tom,” “vopatřit”); diphthongization both in word stems and in suffixes (“bejt,” “skrejš,” “černej,” “kařdej”); shortening (“zabijet,” “tele skopyckym hledim”) and lengthening of vowels (“jí nenajdou,” “dôle”); and changes in declension suffixes (“svalej se mrtvý,” “pro tele skopycký”) and in verb endings (“veme,” “svalej”). In accordance with the author, the translator utilized defective orthography and lexical boundaries as well (“tele skopycký”); although due to structural differences between Czech and English, he sometimes uses compensation and shifts the distortion to a more suitable word (one cannot divide the Czech equivalents of “with out” or “no body,” so e.g. a spelling mistake in “prezydent” is a good solution). Another unusual feature is use of numbers in numerical form; “so I got the 12 a day to get rid of which is actually 8 or 9” is translated as “a tak se denø musim zbavit 12ti teda vlastnø 8mi nebo 9ti paklø” (Miller 86-87). Regarding phonological features, the translator also uses simplification present in the original text; expressions such as “dyţ,” “méno,” “kerý,” or “ňáký” may serve as examples.

To sum it all up, Škvorecký employed Common Czech features abundantly; moreover, he used defective orthography to better outline the setting and characters of the novel. Furthermore, as Ouředník points out, this translation was a turning point in the Czech translation tradition, because Škvorecký changed the perception of dialect translation, and came up with solutions which had never been used before (117). Even though a few of Škvorecký’s expressions sound rather outdated today (e.g. “milánku” as a form of address), he managed to find functionally equivalent solutions and captured the dialect very faithfully; thus the text reads well even after fifty years.

5.2. William Styron: The Confessions of Nat Turner

This Pulitzer-Prize-winning novel by William Styron was first published in 1967 and is based on a true story. The author’s guide was The Confessions of Nat Turner, the
Leader of the Late Insurrection in Southampton, VA, a first-hand account of a slave rebellion which took place in 1831 recorded by Thomas Gray. Styron took the liberty to use the main character as a first-person narrator. Although this slave leader is depicted as a rather sympathetic personality, Styron was heavily criticized for supporting the stereotypes of violent, rapist African American men. The Czech translation was carried out by Vladimír Vařecha and published in 1972.

Nat Turner is rather educated, used to studying the Bible; in order to contrast his inner thoughts and interaction with other people, Styron had him speak both in standard English (for his inner voice) and in African American Vernacular.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>William Styron</th>
<th>Vladimír Vařecha’s Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hark’s expression grew hurt, downcast; he moped disconsolately at the ground, saying nothing but moving his lips in a moist, muttering, abstracted way as if filled with hopeless self-recrimination. “Can’t you see, miserable nigger?” I persisted, boring in hard. “Can’t you see the difference? The difference betwixt plain politeness and bootlickin’? He didn’t even say, ‘Get me a drink.’ He said just, ‘Where the press?’ A question, that’s all. And there you is, already: scramblin’ and scroungin’ like a bitch pup, massah this and massah that! You enough to make a man chuck up his dinner!” (48)</td>
<td>Hark vypadal dotčeně, sklesle; zkroušeně těkal očima po zemi, ani nedutal, jen si nepřítomně olizoval rty a něco mumlal, jako když si to najednou sám všechno vyčítá. „Copak to nepoznáš? Nerozeznáš obyčejnou zdvořilost od podlízání? Dyť ani neřek ‚Podej mi něco k pití!‘ Řekl prostě ‚Kde je tu lisovna?‘ Jen se tak ptal. A co ty? Hned se plazíš a lisáš, a jako to štěně, vašnosti sem, vašnosti tam! Jeden by se z tebe poblíž!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To render Nat’s use of dialect, the translator used simplified phonetic writing (“dyt”) and very few morphological features of Common Czech—narrowing (“podlízání”) and omission of verbal suffix (“neřek”). However, I find it very interesting that Vařecha used lexical features (“vašnosti”) to substitute for phonological features (“massah”).

With illiterate slaves, Styron used non-standard English features more densely:
“’Tain’t nothin’, Nat,” he said weakly. “Hit jes’ de misery I gits ev’ry springtime. I gwine be awright come next week.” After a pause he went on: “But nem’mine dat. Marse Samuel done told me I gots to take dem four boys up to whar de trace begins at two in de mawnin’. What time hit now?”

The translator noticed this strategy of the author, and used more Czech non-standard elements as well. Apart from morphological features, such as diphthongization (“tejden, ouplně”), non-standard variations of adverbs (“taklene,” “teďkonc”) and choice of declination suffixes (“každý jaro”), Vařecha used phonological features quite extensively (“vodvízt,” “čtyry,” “kolipak”), and utilized also interesting vocabulary (“neřád,” “nýčko,” “naporučil”).

As the following paragraph containing Thomas Gray’s speech shows, educated white Southerners utilize certain dialectal features as well:

“No, důstojnosti, to se musí nechat,“ pravil pochmurně, „když už jste si ten masakr zamanul, tak jste vlastně odved čistou práci. Totiž až na jedno. Dlouho jste se skrýval a tak jste skutečně cifry ani neznal. […] A jen sám Pámbu ví, kolik ubohých duší bude až do konce života trvale poznamenáno zármutkem a děsivými vzpomínkami. To se musí nechat, v mnoha směrech jste byl náramně důkladný. […] A navíc jste, jak jsem vám už tuším naznačil, tak vyděsil celý Jih, že z toho mají takřikajíc pině kalhoty. Tohle před váma žádný negr nedokázal. (353-354)
Similarly to previous extracts, the translator used phonological (“Pámbu”) and various morphological (“odved,” “před váma,” “žádnéj”) non-standard features. Moreover, unusual lexical choices (“zamanul,” “cifry,” “náramně”) add well to depiction of the lawyer’s idiolect. In summary, Vařecha correctly noted that Styron works with various degrees of dialect rendering, and reflected this matter of style in his transfer. Although he used rather an extensive range of Common Czech features, I what I appreciate most in his translation is the lexical choices with individual fictional characters—mainly the above-mentioned compensation of phonetic writing at the lexical level with Nat, and vocabulary employed in the white lawyer’s speech.

5.3. Alice Walker: *The Color Purple*

Alice Walker, born in 1944, is an African American author, poet and Pulitzer Prize winner. *The Color Purple*, an epistolary novel published in 1982, is her most famous novel; it was translated into Czech by Jiří Hrubý, who is an experienced translator (Obec překladatelů), in 2001 under the title *Barva nachu*. It earned Walker not only accolades, but also heavy criticism for depiction of incest, domestic violence and alcohol abuse (Association of Black Women Historians).

It is a story of a young, uneducated woman who is struggling to find her place in Southern racist, patriarchal society of the 1930’s. At the age of fourteen, Miss Celia was first raped by a man who had raised her as his own daughter; in the following years, she gave birth to two children who were taken away from her. Eventually, she marries a widower who abuses and treats her very badly. Miss Celia becomes ever more reclusive; in order to not feel so alone, she writes letters addressed to God. The following extract illustrates her use of dialect:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alice Walker</th>
<th>Jiří Hrubý’s Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I’m gitting tired of Harpo, she say. All he</td>
<td>Začínám mít Harpa fakt plný zuby,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
think about since us married is how to make me mind. He don’t want a wife, he want a dog.

He your husband, I say. Got to stay with him. Else, what you gon do?

My sister husband caught in the draft, she say. They don’t have no children, Odessa love children. He left her on a little farm. Maybe I go stay with them a while. Me and my children.

I think bout my sister Nettie. Thought so sharp it go through me like a pain. Somebody to run to. It seem too sweet to bear. (68-69)

In this particular paragraph, Hrubý took advantage of non-standard declination suffixes (“plný zuby,” “jinýho”), shortening of vowel (“povidá,” “zustat”), vowel narrowing (“malým,” “utýct”), omission of verbal suffixes (“nemaj”), and prothetic v- (“vostrá”). An interesting feature is his deliberate use of incorrect pronoun declination (“nechal jí”), which cannot be seen as typographical error, because it is present in other places in the translation as well: “Harpo se jí snaží praštit” (44); “pak jí díky nám přestěhovali” (171).

Moreover, the translator used also phonological elements of Common Czech, and utilized phonetic writing in suitable places: “dobrejtro” (156); “dyž pak Sofii vidím tak nevim proč eště žije” (84); “ten Bůh ke kerýmu sem se dycky modlila” (166). These examples also contain a significant syntactic feature—omission of commas between sentences. In summary, Hrubý’s strategy of applying eye dialect seems to be a good one; he rendered the main character’s dialect very well.

As it was mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, Walker’s novel is included in my analysis also because I want to explore how Hrubý dealt with overcodings, i.e. culture-bound forms of address. Regardless of their marital status, the female characters
are addressed with the title “Miss” plus their first names (e.g. Miss Celie, Miss Sofia, etc.). Such addresses are common across the American South; they express distance and formal politeness (Harmonicpies). However, the situation in very different in Czech; the title “Miss” is used only for young, unmarried women. Therefore, the target readers might find addressing a married woman “Miss” rather confusing. On that account, Hrubý had to make a decision whether to preserve such a foreignizing element, or whether to apply a “cultural filter” (House 29), and adapt the forms of address according to Czech conventions. He opted for the latter, and applied the addresses based on the characters’ marital status—“Miss Celie,” a married woman, is addressed as “paní Celie” (Walkerová 182), whereas “Miss Nettie,” her unmarried sister, as “slečna Nettie” (114). I appreciate this solution, because the address form “slečna” for married women is unacceptable in Czech, and “paní” for a very young girl would sound odd.

In my opinion, Jiří Hrubý managed to translate the novel very well, both in terms of dialect rendering and culture-bound forms of address. On that account, I think that any translator who has to deal with these two phenomena can use the Czech version of The Color Purple for reference, and they will find examples of appropriate translation strategies.

5.4. Mark Twain: The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

Among books mentioned in this chapter, this satiric novel is probably the most famous one. It was first published in 1885; the first Czech translation was carried out in 1953 by František Gel (Obec překladatelů). Since language in translations becomes obsolete more quickly than in original works, a new translation by Jana Mertinová appeared on the market in 2007. In one of her interviews she mentioned that while reading the English original, the story seemed completely different from what she had read as a
child in Gel’ translation. Therefore, she decided to take a diverse approach, and render the characters’ idiolect in a more colloquial way (Mrázek).

Let us now take a look at how she dealt with the strong manifestation of African American dialect in the speech of Jim, an uneducated slave.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mark Twain</th>
<th>Jana Mertinová’s Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Well, den! Warn' dat de beatenes' notion in de worl'? You jes' take en look at it a minute. Dah's de stump, dah—dat's one er de women; heah's you—dat's de yuther one; I's Sollermun; en dish yer dollar bill's de chile. Bofe un you claims it. What does I do? Does I shin aroun' mongs' de neighbors en fine out which un you de bill do b'long to, en han' it over to de right one, all safe en sour', de way dat anybody dat had any gumption would? No; I take en whack de bill in two, en give half un it to you, en de yuther half to de yuther woman. Dat's de way Sollermun was gwyne to do wid de chile.” (155)</td>
<td>„No tak vidíte! Není to největší pitomost na světě? Jen si to zkuste představit. Tendlecten pařez – to je jako ta první žencká, a tady jste vy – to je jako ta druhá. Já sem Šulimon a tendle papírovej dolar je to dítě. A vy ho vobě dvě chcete, že to dítě je vaše. Co udělám já? Poptám se u sousedů, kerý z vás ten dolar dovopravdy patří, a vrátím jí ho celej a nepoškozený, jako by to udělal kaţdej, kdo má trochu soudnosti? Ne, já tu dolarovku vemu, roztrhnu ji a jednu půlku dám vám a druhou tý druhý žencký, no ně? A takhlenc to chtěl Šulimon udělat s tím děckem.“ (113)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the repertoire of phonological features, Mertinová used simplified writing (“žencká,” “kerý”), and, similarly to Twain, corruption of words (“Šulimon”). She also took advantage of prothetic v- (“dovopravdy”). As far as morphological elements of Common Czech are concerned, the translator exploited various non-standard forms of pronoun “ten” and adverb “takto;” for example, “tendlecten” or “taklenc.” And last but not least, diphthongization (“papírovej,” “kaţdej”) and non-standard declination suffixes (“tý druḥy”) are present in her version of Jim’s dialect. In my opinion, Mertinová might have used plenty of other features as well; however, in comparison with Gel’s translation, which neutralized all these distinctive components, her attempt was a successful one. This new edition was highly praised by critiques, and Mertinová was awarded the Josef Jungman Prize for her translation in 2007 (Obec překladatelů).
In summary, for rendition of dialectal features of African American Vernacular English, translators employed mostly colloquialization and eye dialect. In the latter category Common Czech elements such as diphthongization, narrowing and non-standard declination suffixed prevail (which confirms the claim that such features often have to occur in clusters). On the whole, all translations analyzed in this chapter can be considered great sources in which less experienced translators facing a text with dialectal elements can look for inspiration and good, practical examples.

I will now proceed to analyze the Czech translation of *The Help* in order to find out whether it could rank among the above-mentioned novels and become a book in which others could seek advice as well.
6. The Help/Černobílý svět

6.1. The Author and the Translator: Kathryn Stockett and Jana Kordíková

Kathryn Stockett was born in 1969, and raised in Jackson, Mississippi. She earned her degree in English and Creative Writing at the University of Alabama. Stockett started writing her first novel in 2001 while living in New York; it took her five years to write it, and five more to find a publisher. She was turned down nearly sixty times before The Help was published by Penguin Books in 2009 (Day).

Despite the fact that the book has become a best seller, and more than five million copies were sold in the United States, it aroused mixed reactions. A part of the African American community maintains that a middle-class white woman has had no right to speak for black domestic workers. Ablene Cooper, a former employee of Stockett’s family, filed an unsuccessful lawsuit against the author, because she thought Stockett used her name and image in one of the main characters, and she was also upset about the author’s depiction of black maids (Chaney). An open statement on The Help was issued, which claims that the novel distorts, ignores, and trivializes the experience of African American housekeepers, gives hardly any attention to civil rights activism or sexual harassment, which these women were often subject to. According to them, the speech and culture of the black minority are misrepresented in a “child-like, over-exaggerated dialect”. Moreover, African American men are depicted only as drunkards, abusive or absent. Overall, the Association sees the novel as a coming-of-age story of a young white girl who only uses “myths about the lives of black women to make sense of her own” (Association of Black Women Historians).

Stockett has responded to such criticism arguing that she has written The Help as a tribute and memory to her grandparents’ maid by whom she was raised (Day), and that
she wanted to tackle the issues of race, privilege, and mutual relationships, which were “not ladylike subjects to discuss” when she was growing up in the South (Calkin). In one of her interviews, the author mentioned that she used the African American dialect which she remembers from her childhood; however, had she known the indignation it would cause, she would have probably left it out (Day). Nevertheless, not all Americans of African origin rejected the book; some of them have recommended it after getting positive feedback from their white friends who “grew up isolated in their whiteness,” and appreciated the novel as a view into a “world that is known to them but not felt” (Carmichael).

The novel was translated into Czech by Jana Kordíková and published under the title Černobílý svět. According to an Internet bookshop, she translates children’s books or non-fiction, but her main focus seems to be English-written fiction for women (Kosmas.cz). However, no background information, for example, on her formal education, can be retrieved. It may seem surprising that Knižní klub chose Kordíková as a translator of fiction which is promoted on the book sleeve as an American best-seller and a very successful novel; a novel which gives the Czech readers the idea of what life was like in the American South not so long ago. Therefore, the following analysis will focus not only on rendering the dialectal features, but also on the general impression the translation gives the readers.

6.2. Narrative Structure and Summary of the Plot

The novel is narrated by the distinctive voices of three first person narrators—all of the main characters, i.e. housekeepers Aibileen and Minny, and by Skeeter, a young white woman. They take turns rather regularly. In addition to that, one chapter is narrated in the third person from the point of view of a detached observer. According to Adam Brackin’s scheme, it is a non-cohesive multi-linear type of narrative (25), because the
narrators take turns, and each of them describes the given stretch of time from their own perspective, mixing the everyday events with their inner thoughts and memories.

The story itself is set in Jackson, Mississippi, at the beginning of the tumultuous 1960's and civil rights movement. However, things in the strictly segregated Deep South are changing very slowly, if they do change at all. For Aibileen Cooper and Minny Jackson, maids in homes of middle-class whites, and friends of African American origin, life goes on as usual. They clean up, cook, take care of the households, and endure hardships of the despised people who, on the one hand, are obliged to take care of white children, but who are not allowed to keep their own food in the employers’ refrigerators, and are constantly looked down upon. In this mixed atmosphere of concern and hopes brought about by civil right activists, Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan is returning home after graduation from the University of Mississippi. Unlike her peers, she is not interested in finding a husband, settling down, and starting a family; she dreams about becoming a writer. Skeeter starts writing a housekeeping column for the local newspaper, and asks Aibileen for advice, since the Phelans’ maid who raised Skeeter is not around anymore. Nevertheless, the column serves the young white lady merely as a pretext; she is interested in writing something more profound—about what is feels like to be an African American maid in Southern white households.

A New York publisher encourages her to pursue the subject; however, black women fear to talk to Skeeter about how her friends’ and acquaintances treat their employees. In the end, the turbulent events in Jackson prompt a dozen of domestic workers to contribute to Skeeter’s testimony on Southern society. The resulting book causes a great deal of turmoil not only in Jackson. Even though its protagonists do not take part in the actual civil rights movement, at least some of them manage to make a change in their own lives thanks to the feeling of empowerment the book gave them.
6.3. Characters and Their Idiolects

Given the narrative structure of the novel and combinations of rather long stretches of the protagonists’ inner speech and dialogues, an attentive reader can notice that each character has a unique way of speaking. With each of them, Stockett employed certain dialectal and stylistic features quite consistently; in other words, each of her characters uses a distinct idiolect. David Crystal defines an idiolect in the following way: it “refers to the linguistic system of an individual—one’s personal dialect” (302). It is related to individual’s use of registers, and choices of linguistic structures and elements. The following subchapters will focus on the characteristics of the respective protagonists’ speech, and examine whether their individual styles were preserved in the translation.

6.3.1. Aibileen Clark

Aibileen is a fifty-three year old woman (Stockett 258), a daughter of a maid, granddaughter of a house slave. She has worked in white households since the age of fourteen, when she had to drop out of school and help her family out. In the course of her carrier, she has raised seventeen white children. At present, she is working as a maid in the Leefolt family, and takes care of their little girl.

As for her personal life, Aibileen did not have much luck; her husband left her when her son Treelore was born. She was trying to raise him well, to provide him with a good education; however, several years ago, a white driver ran her son over, and none of the witnesses of the accident helped him get to the hospital. Since then, Aibileen feels a “seed of bitterness” in her. Nevertheless, she did not renounce people in her community; she is a very religious person, and an active churchgoer whose prayers are seen as very powerful. Despite her past losses, she is trying to find happiness in looking
after the baby girl, regardless of the fact that the Leefolts pay her very little and often treat her unjustly.

Aibileen does not use irony or sarcasm in her mind style. It seems that she has only one register—African American Vernacular English, because both her inner thoughts and interaction with people, no matter whether black or white, put down in this dialect.

Probably the most prominent syntactic feature of hers is omission of subject in many sentences, which contributes to the illusion of oral narrative: “I think this chapter is right good. Read just as well as the slow-wrote ones” (Stockett 355); “a lot a colored womens got to give they children up, Miss Skeeter. Send they kids off …” (358).

Among the phonological features which occur in Aibileen’s speech, wrong spelling and omission of syllables can be found: “raise you chilluns” (2), “be deaf as a doe-nob” (7), “bout Law” (meaning “about Lord;” 27), “a young’un” (meaning “a young one;” 109), “I’m on ask em again” (161).

Such misspelled elements are often intertwined with dialectal morphological features, mainly with forms of various tenses: “she would a just shown up,” “she gone get him” (102). Aibileen also omits copulas very often—“he dead” (85), “I know you honest” (21)—and uses the plural -s quite freely: “mens” (101), “womens,” “white peoples” (102). Another morphological feature is double negatives, often with “ain’t” as the auxiliary verb: “I don’t mean nothing disrespectful” (84); “there ain’t nothing Miss Leefolt scared of more” (99). Overall, Aibileen uses various verb forms quite freely; sometimes she uses the third person singular “is” for various persons and multitudes (“I’s” “you is kind,” “ladies is here,” 93-95; “here we is,” 408), sometimes she omits the third person singular suffix –s in present tense (“she don’t reach you,” “she look after you kids;” 25). Moreover, she uses habitual “be,” and the past participle to create various forms of past tense—“I be hurting” (92), “her face be the same shape” (2), “I
done won the game” (5), “I seen plenty a womens” (1). Another suffix she omits is the adverbial suffix “-ly”—“we gone have to be real careful” (121); “he whisper real loud” (400).

In terms of lexis, Aibileen uses the pronoun “them” as a deictic expression very often, for example in “she had all them books” (154) or “they got towels down in them black iron chairs” (185). Her lexical choice often includes rather colloquial expressions—“I reckon,” “she gobble it up” (3), “flock of maids” (103), “I fish in my pocketbook” (22), “she done plopped herself down,” “right to barge in on me” (102), “umpteen years ago” (23). To sum it all up, Stockett used a combination of eye dialect and colloquialization.

The following three paragraphs are examples of Aibileen’s original idiolect and its Czech translation. The underlined expressions and spaces indicate distinctive features of the character’s speech, i.e., dialectal and idiolectal elements such as omitted copulas or words.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kathryn Stockett</th>
<th>Jana Kordíková’s Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>But Miss Leefolt, she got her lips sticking out and she hmphing and frowning down at her. Before I can get her diaper on again, Baby Girl run off as fast as she can. Nekkid little white baby running through the house. She in the kitchen. She got the back door open, she in the garage, trying to reach the knob to my bathroom. We run after her and Miss Leefolt pointing her finger. Her voice go about ten pitches too high. “This is not your bathroom!” (98)</td>
<td>Ale paní Leefoltová má vystrčený ret, mručí a mračí se na ní. Než holčičce stihnu nasadit plenu, uteče mi. Domem pobíhá nahý bílý děcko. Už je v kuchyni. Otevře si zadní vchod, zmizí v garáži a zaútočí na dveře mýho záchodu. Běžíme za ní a paní Leefoltová ukazuje prstem. Najednou má hrozně vysoký hlas. „Tohle není tvůj záchod!” (88)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sho nuff they’s a big pink polky-dot box. Got cellophane across the front, and inside they’s the doll baby tall as Mae Mobley. Name Allison. […] Evertime the commercial come on the tee-vee Mae</td>
<td>Vevniti nejspíš bude krabice s růžovejma puntíkama. Přes přední část bude celofán a uvnítř je panenka velká jako Mae Mobley. Jmenuje se Allison. […] Pokaždé když na ní dávaj reklamu v televizii, Mae</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mobley run over to the set and grab the box on both side, put her face up to the screen and stare so serious. Miss Leefolt look like she gone cry herself, looking down at that toy. I reckon her mean old mama never got her what she wanted when she little (Stockett 283).

I cry and cry right there in front a everbody. I look over at Minny, and she _ laughing. _ Funny how peoples show they feelings in different ways. I wonder what Miss Skeeter would do if she was here and it kind a makes me sad. I know ain’t nobody in town gone sign a book for her and tell her she _ brave. Ain’t nobody gone tell her they look after her (398).

In terms of ways of rendering dialects described by Berezowski, Kordíková used eye dialect and a certain degree of colloquialization as well. However, looking briefly at both columns, one can see that the original text contains a significantly higher number of dialectal features. Moreover, Stockett used several different types of identifying elements: lexical items (expressions such as “tee-vee,” “hmphing,” or “reckon”), phonetic writing, omission of copula, of syllables or even whole words, omission of the verbal suffix in the third person in the present tense, double negatives, and non-standard forms of various tenses (“she gone cry”). Kordíková, on the contrary, made use of only four non-standard features: narrowing (“e” changed into “i/y”), change in declination suffixes, diphthongization, and colloquial lexis (“děcko,” “telka”). In my opinion, this character’s African American Vernacular is not rendered properly; had the translator used other means as well, for instance, prothetic “v-” (“vobličej,” “vohlídnu se”), shortening of vowels (“vsadím se,” “rozbrečím se”), and maybe even phonetic writing (“zvlášní”), she would have achieved better results. Apart from these means, she could have used more informal lexis as well (e.g. “upřeně na ni kouká,” “domem peláši”).
6.3.2. Minny Jackson

Minny Jackson, Aibileen’s neighbor and best friend, is a woman in her late thirties. Although also working as a maid, her mother was educated and demanded her children to speak properly (Stockett 39). Minny’s husband is a violent drunkard; in spite of the fact that she is usually not a fearful person, she is afraid to leave him (127), because as a single African American mother, she and her children could hardly get by. Minny has a strong sense of irony; her grievance against the strictly segregated society propels her cheeky mouth. Albeit she is trying to keep her unflattering remarks about her bosses to herself, occasionally slipped-out comments made her lose her job several times in the past (40). On that account, Minny finds it hard to believe that Skeeter would like to hear maids’ stories without revealing them to other white ladies (128).

This character’s mind style is probably the most interesting one. Owing to her upbringing, Minny’s inner voice is much closer to Standard English than Aibileen’s. However, her dialogues both with members of her community and white bosses are lead in African American Vernacular:

*I tell her about the bottles I found. I don’t know why I hadn’t told her a week and a half ago when I found them. Maybe I didn’t want her to know something so awful about Miss Celia. [...] But now I’m so mad I let it all spill out. “And then she fired me.” “Oh, Law, Minny.” “Say she gona find another maid. But who gone work for that lady? [...] I ain’t apologizing to no drunk. I never apologized to my daddy and I sure ain’t apologizing to her.”* (Stockett 226-227)

She switches between these two codes probably because she wants neither to act white, nor to give the impression of posing herself at a higher social rank. For the former, she would be looked down upon by her own community; for the latter, white
people would mock a poor African American housekeeper, who would, in their opinion, be trying to elevate herself to a place where she does not belong.

Similarly to Aibileen, one significant syntactic feature of Minny’s speech is omission of subject: “Ordered a book in the mail to learn the game, Bridge for the Beginner. Out to call it Bridge for the Brainless” (Stockett 213); “Course I’s happy. You happy too. Big house, big yard, husband looking after you” (49). One of her peculiarities is also the fact that she sometimes talks about herself in the third person: “Oh now, Minny, don’t go on that way” (132); “I’ll make of a Minny’s famous caramel cakes” (140).

Her use of various morphological features in her inner speech differs greatly from her dialogues. In her thoughts, Minny uses contracted forms prevalent in common informal discourse: “she’s calling up another name […] it’s the newsletter from the Ladies League” (214), “she won’t even get the mail” (215). The only two dialectal morphological features she uses occasionally are “ain’t” and double negatives: “she’s skinny in all those places I ain’t” (31); “I ain’t burning no chicken” (44).

In dialogues with other people, regardless of their origin, Minny utilizes morphological elements of African American Vernacular basically to the same extent as Aibileen.

As far as her lexical choices are concerned, Minny employs many colloquial expressions, especially verb phrases; to name a few examples: “their doodied up home” (32); “her Yes-ma’am-ing, No-ma’am-ing” (39); “there ain’t nothing to boo-hoo over” (134); “making my life a vacuuming hell” (135); “without yacking on the floor” (232); “he don’t make a stink about it” (403); “I crank out a big smile” (315); “to peel her off” (134); “I’ll fix him a knuckle sandwich” (135); “I potato sack her back to the table” (220); “he’s chomping on his gums” (308). She is not afraid to use taboo words either:
“only six more days of this shit” (Stockett 125); “she didn’t take no shit from nobody” (309). Overall, Minny’s perception of people and events around her is pervaded with subtle irony:

I nursed a worthless pint drinker for twelve years, and when my lazy, life-sucking daddy finally died, I swore to God with tears in my eyes I’d never marry one. And then I did. And now here I am nursing another goddamn drinker. [...] Now I know she’s as much a fool as my daddy was and as Leroy is when he gets on the Old Crow, only she doesn’t chase me with a frying pan. (Stockett 222)

For analysis of features used in Minny’s idiolect both in English and Czech, the following excerpts were selected. The first one renders the character’s inner speech, thus the only non-standard feature is contracted forms. The second example is Minny’s telling a story, in which she employs elements of African American Vernacular. The purpose of the third extract passage is to show the subtle irony of her mind style, and how she uses colloquial expressions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kathryn Stockett</th>
<th>Jana Kordíková’s Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I walk in the church on Wednesday night. It’s not but half full since it’s only a quarter to seven and the choir doesn’t start singing until seven thirty. But Aibileen asked me to come early so here I am. I’m curious what she has to say. Plus Leroy was in a good mood and playing with the kids so I figure, if he wants them, he can have them. (126)</td>
<td>Ve středu večer se vypravím do kostela. Je teprve tři čtvrtě na sedm, takže není zaplnění ani z poloviny, sbor začíná zpívat až v půl osmý. Ale Aibileen mě požádala, abych přišla dřív, tak jsem tady. Jsem zvědavá, co mi chce. Kromě toho měl Leroy dobrou náladu a hrál si s dětmi, tak jsem si řekla, když o ně stojí, má je mít. (117).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Oh Minny,” she cat-calls. “you _ the best help we _ ever had. Big Minny, we _ gone keep you on forever. Then one day she _ say_ she _ gone give me a week _ a paid vacation. I _ ain’t had no _ vacation, paid or unpaid, in my entire life. And when I pull up a week later to go back to work, they _ gone. _ Moved to Mobile. She tell _ somebody she _ scared I’d find new work</td>
<td>„Ach, Minny,“ pitvoří se. „Ty jsi ta nejlepší hospodyně, jakou jsme kdy měli. Naše zlatá Minny, tebe si necháme navždycky. Pak mi jednou řekne, že mi dá tejden placenýho volna. V životě jsem neměla volno, placený ani neplacený. A když o tejden pozdějí dorazím do práce, jsou pryč. Přestěhovali se do Mobilu. Prej se bála, že bych si našla novou práci ještě</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
before she move_. Miss Lazy Fingers couldn’t go a day without having a maid waiting on her.” (165)

For a while, Miss Celia was working in the backyard all the time but now that crazy lady’s back to sitting around the bed again. I used to be glad she stayed holed up in her room. Now that I’ve met Mister Johnny, though, I’m ready to work. And damn it, I’m ready to get Miss Celia in shape too. [...] I know it’s time to pull out the big guns. “When you gone tell Mister Johnny about me?” Because that always gets her moving. Sometimes I just ask it for my own entertainment. (212)

Even though the first paragraph does not contain features of African American Vernacular, Kordíková applied the strategy of eye dialect in her translation, and used diphthongization, narrowing and change of a declination suffix; i.e. morphological structures. This approach can be seen as a type of compensation—the translator might have decided to use a smaller range of Common Czech elements, but to put them into the text more often, even to paragraphs where are not present in the original. However, such a solution is highly questionable, since it gives the impression that the character is using only one code. Minny’s switching between Standard and African American English carries a meaning; it is part of her personality, of her worldview, of her culture, in which not acting white is very important. In my opinion, by erasing these differences Kordíková erased significant attributes of one of the main characters as well. I think that a better approach would be to avoid the most of the eye dialect, and to employ colloquial lexical items. In this particular case, I would keep only non-standard declination suffixes and attempt to find more informal vocabulary (for example, “jdu”
instead of “vypravím se;” “mě poprosila” for “mě požádala;” or “hrál si s děckama” instead of “s dětma”).

Quite contrarily, the second instance contains one phonological feature and a high percentage of various morphological elements from African American English: omission of the copula; missing –s in the third person singular of the present tense; auxiliary “ain’t;” double negative; “gone” plus infinitive for future tense; and omission of subject. Its Czech counterpart employs diphthongization, narrowing, and a changed suffix, i.e. morphological features, but to a lesser degree. Therefore, I would suggest employing them in more places in the text, plus finding appropriate colloquialisms: “ty seš ta nejlepší hospodyně, co jsme kdy měli;” “že bych si našla nový místo.”

The third paragraph is written in basically standard, though informal English. The colloquial aspect is rendered, again, by means of contracted forms and choice of vocabulary. Although I appreciate solutions “zalezlá u sebe” and “vytáhnout kalibr,” which sound idiomatic in Czech, I think that the colloquial nature of other verbs was omitted in the translation, and that Kordíková opted for more standardized expressions. My suggestions would be as follows: “pořád pracovala na dvorku;” “zase vysedává v posteli;” “jsem připravená makat;” “chystám postavit do latě.” Moreover, I would use “někdy se ptám jen tak” instead of “říkám,” because if a person asks something, they expect a response, but saying something does not have to mean that a reaction is required. Last but not least, I would use prothetic v- in the single sentence uttered in African American English (“kdy vo mně řeknete”) to vocalize a different code.

6.3.3. Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan

Eugenia Phelan is a young woman from a respected white family and a fresh graduate of the University of Mississippi (Stockett 54). Unlike most Southern women of the same age, she does not search for happiness in a serious relationship; she refuses to give
up on her dreams, settle down and start a family (Stockett 55). Moreover, she wants to become a respected author (57). Although Skeeter is trying to reunite with her friends, she finds it hard to fit in the so-called Junior League of young, white members of Jackson middle class (54). As a child, she had a great relationship with her family’s maid Constantine; however, after returning home, Skeeter finds out that Constantine had left the Phelans (68). The atmosphere of civil rights movement, her own memories of the person she misses so much, and apparent inequity in Jackson society give her the idea to pursue the issue of relationships between African American housekeepers and their white employers. This path is a dangerous one, and Skeeter has to pay a price—she loses not only her longtime friends, but also the only man she has ever loved (276). However, as one door closes, another opens, and the success of Skeeter’s book wins her a working position in a respected publishing house.

As a professional writer and prospective novelist, Skeeter is very eloquent, and her vocabulary is rich. However, this born and raised young Southerner preserves very few lexical features present in American White Southern English; for example, she uses the pronoun “y’all” (78, 271), summarizing “is all” (“mother’s just... protective is all;” 243), or “Missus” for elderly respected ladies like “Missus Walters” (72) or “Missus Stein” (369). The only morphological non-standard feature this character uses is contracted forms.

The fact that Skeeter does not use many features of American White Southern English is related to her aim for proper speech. Moreover, she uses many infrequent words and rather fresh collocations; to name a few, “wait for her to elucidate” (144); “vapid, toothy smile” (Stockett 147); “let parcel of time pass” (153), “pass through a leaden gate of confidence” (153), “it’d be hot as Hades” (238), “dichotomy of love and disdain” (258), “this seems to placate her” (276), “Mother chides me“ (361).
The following paragraphs show Skeeter’s mind style and the translator’s approach:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kathryn Stockett</th>
<th>Jana Kordíková’s Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>And so, as July wanes on, I am forced from my attic bedroom to a cot on the screened back porch. When we were kids, Constantine used to sleep out here with Carlon and me in the summer, when Mama and Daddy went to out-of-town weddings. Constantine slept in an old-fashioned white nightgown up to her chin and down to her toes, even though it’d be hot as Hades. [...] It’s just unreal to me that she was here, right here on this porch, and now she’s not. (238)</td>
<td>A tak jsem koncem července nucená opustit svůj půdní pokoj a přestěhovat se na lůžko v uzavřené zadní verandě. Když jsme byli malí, Constantine tam v létě spávala se mnou a Carltonem, kdykoli rodiče odjeli na svatbu mimo město. Constantine spala ve starodávné bílé noční košili až ke krku a ke kotníkům, i když jí v tom muselo být příšerné vedro. [...] Stále nemůžu uvěřit tomu, že byla přímo tady na téhle verandě a teď je najednou pryč. (216)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They’d killed Carl Roberts for speaking out, for talking. I think about how easy I thought it would be, three months ago, to get a dozen maids to talk to me. Like they’d just been waiting, all this time, to spill their stories to a white woman. How stupid I’d been. (239)</td>
<td>Carla Robertse zabili za to, že mluvil. Myslím na to, jak snadné mi před třemi měsíci připadalo sehnat dvanáct hospodyně, aby si se mnou promluvily. Jako by celou tu dobu čekaly, až budou moci všechno vyklopotit nějaké bílé ženě. Jak jsem byla naivní. (217)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The underlined words and phrases indicate stylistically important expressions and their Czech counterparts. Although I like “vyklopit” for “spill,” I think that Kordíková’s translation shows a tendency towards using rather frequent lexical items instead of rarer ones. For this reason, and for omission of any repetition, she tones the text’s emotionality down, which causes a certain loss in meaning. In summary, she turned textemes into repertoremes; therefore, the Czech solutions confirm the law of growing standardization in translation (Toury 263).

### 6.3.4. White Middle Class Members

Dialectal elements of American White Southern English are more prominent in speech of the more peripheral characters—Skeeter’s mother, friends and acquaintances. The
following passages illustrate types of non-standard features used to render the dialect and their Czech translation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Kathryn Stockett</th>
<th>Jana Kordíková’s Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Phelan</td>
<td>Don’t be frugal, now. (379)</td>
<td>Nemusíš šetřit. (342)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senator Withworth</td>
<td>Wassa matter, you lost? […] You having a good time? […] Look a here! We’ve had a real hard year with Stuart. […] I see it, is all. (270)</td>
<td>Copak, zabloudila jsi? […] Baviš se dobre? […] Koukní! […] Tenhle rok jsme kvůli Stuartovi měli opravdu náročný. […] Prostě to vidím. (245)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hilly Holbrook</td>
<td>I sure do thank y’all for coming tonight. _ Everybody enjoying their dinner? (325)</td>
<td>Moc vám všem děkuji, že jste dnes dorazili. Chutnala vám večeře? (294)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hilly Holbrook</td>
<td>Why, Mae Mobley […] You can sit in the shades back _onder […] (203)</td>
<td>Teda, Mae Mobley […] Můžete si sednout dozadu do stínou […] (185)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Phelan</td>
<td>fix our good-luck peas for us (375)</td>
<td>přišla nám uvařit čočku pro štěstí (339)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Leefolt</td>
<td>y’all cannot powwow on this today (148)</td>
<td>dneska to probírat nemůžete (135)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Phelan</td>
<td>he said y’all have spent an evening together awhile back (167)</td>
<td>prý jste spolu před nedávněm strávili večer (153)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Phelan</td>
<td>she went to live with her people (81)</td>
<td>odjela za svou rodinou (76)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It can be argued that the dialect of middle-class white Southerners manifests mainly at the lexical level; there are very few morphological features (omission of copula; missing adverbial suffix “-ly”). The structure “is all” can be seen as a borderline case between syntactic and morphological elements. Stockett was criticized for the fact that her characters’ of African American origin use more dialectal features in their speech, and also for depicting white people of higher social rank with lesser degree of non-standard elements (Day). However, she claims that she based this linguistic aspect of the novel on her memories, and that it is up to an author’s sole discretion (Carmichael).

Given the fact that Stockett used mere hints of American Southern White English, I would apply the strategy of colloquialization. Kordíková seems to have used it as well;
however, it can be seen that she did so selectively, and was not consistent in her choices. Therefore, the same element (e.g. omission of copula) is made up for by Senator Withworth in more colloquial lexical choices, but with Hilly, it is not compensated anywhere else.

To conclude, while translating dialectal elements present in speech of various protagonists, Kordíková employed the strategies of colloquialization and eye dialect. However, it seems to me that hardly any character’s idiolect is rendered appropriately.

Aibileen’s dialectal features are, in my view, rather underrepresented; as it was mentioned earlier, the translator might have used several more Common Czech features and also more informal vocabulary. In case of Minny Jackson, Kordíková’s compensation of dialectal features in passages which are closer to Standard English erased important personal attributes of this protagonist. Instead of adopting such a needless strategy, the translator should have used more colloquial lexis in Minny’s inner speech, and focused more on this character’s dialogues lead in African American Vernacular, which she could have rendered with more Common Czech features. Since Skeeter employs very few elements of American White Southern English, her idiolect is mostly based on more general stylistic features, e.g. contracted forms and less frequently used expressions. However, Kordíková failed here in my view as well, since she turned such textemes into repertoiremes. As far as other characters from the Jackson middle-class are concerned, I appreciate that Kordíková did not adopt Common Czech features for this dialect, since it would blend with African American English. However, since White Southern English elements are mainly of lexical nature, it could have been rendered with more informal Czech vocabulary as well. Unfortunately, this list of shortcomings implies that Kordíková did not deal with any of these dialects very well.
6.4. Other Important Points to Consider

6.4.1. Cultural Items

Peter Newmark defines cultural items as follows: “culture-bound terms […] are those which are particularly connected to the way of life and its manifestations that are peculiar to a community that uses a particular language as its means of expression” (94). The Help is predetermined both by local and temporal settings to contain a high number of culturally-specific items. Many of them, such as names of retail networks or various kinds of meals can be neutralized (since they do not play any important roles) or their descriptive equivalents can be found (e.g. “five-and-dime stores” can be translated as “obchod s levnými potravinami;” or “sorority” as “studentský klub”). However, there are concepts which require holistic approach.

The most important of them is, in my opinion, the concept of racial segregation, because the whole plot of the novel is connected to it. The “colored situation” is mentioned as early as on page 12 of the translation; however, principles of segregation are explained as late as on page 158, when Skeeter is reading a brochure with Jim Crow laws. She points out: “We all know about these laws, we live here, but we don’t talk about them.” However, I think that the concept of segregation and pervading white supremacy is a phenomenon rather unfamiliar to most Czechs. Therefore, I am afraid that offering an explanation in Chapter 13 is tardy. Many readers may ask themselves questions such as why African American maids are actually afraid to talk about their situation, or why they simply do not defy their bosses when being treated unjustly. They can be confused because they are unaware of the dangers civil right activists had put themselves and their families in, of violence against people and their property.

Another example can be the Junior League, an association of well-off white women. One of the unwritten rules of Jackson society is that the League president has
the most power, and is seen a leading figure and role model. Those who fall from her grace cannot become or very quickly cease to be active members of this club; moreover, such women usually lose all their friends, because others are afraid that friendships with the president’s foes might cause them problems. The chairperson’s word is law; therefore, Skeeter does not challenge Hilly Holbrook’s paradoxical intention to raise money for poor people in Africa when there are poor African Americans in their own town (Stockett 331), because it would be an unacceptable violation of social conventions.

The civil rights movement is another signature concept, although critics of *The Help* claim that the book hardly pays any attention to it. However, the main character is encouraged to pursue her topic mainly because it corresponds to a highly topical issue of early 1960’s. To emphasize the spirit of that time, Stockett incorporated references to real-life civil rights activists into her narrative; namely Rosa Parks (68), Medgar Evers (194), Martin Luther King (159), and John F. Kennedy (385). I dare to say that except for the last one, these names are not familiar to average Czech readers. However, Kordíková failed to give them any idea about who these figures were, and how their personal stories relate to the book:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kathryn Stockett</th>
<th>Jana Kordíková’s Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>She’d tell me that Daddy had a chest cold or that Rosa Parks was coming to her church to speak (68).</td>
<td>Psala mi, že táta má nastydlé průdušky a že do jejího kostela přijede promluvit Rosa Parksová (61).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Medgar Evers,” he say, his voice sound like it’s rolling backwards, “NAACP Field Secretary, is dead.” (195)</td>
<td>„Medgar Evers,“ spustí se zvláštním přízvukem, „terénní tajemník NAACP, je mrtvý.“</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Martin Luther King, dear. He just announced a march on D.C. and invited every Negro in America to join him.” (159)</td>
<td>„Martin Luther King, drahoušku. Právě vyhlásil pochod na Washington a vyzval každého černocha v Americe, aby se k němu připojil.“ (145).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Such solutions may give rise to various questions: Who is Rosa Parks? Why is she suddenly mentioned in the text? What does “terénní tajemník” mean? What is NAACP and why is this reference here? Who exactly was Martin Luther King, and was he important? By definition, the above-mentioned figures and concepts cannot evoke the same notions and effects in readers of the target text as they evoked in recipients of the original version. Without any explanation, such phenomena and names may be very confusing to people who do not have sufficient knowledge of American history and society. Nevertheless, extensive footnotes might come across as disruptive. On that account, a preface written by an expert in the field, who read the novel and could bring these concepts closer to readers of the translation, could be a good solution.

6.4.2. Overcodings

As it was mentioned in previous chapters of this thesis, overcodings are culture-bound principles of social interaction (Tymoczko 243). Jana Kordíková had to solve issues caused by two types of such rules—forms of address, and adoption of T-forms or V-forms.

Similarly to characters in Walker’s The Color Purple, Kathryn Stockett’s protagonists employ the Southern address “Miss” plus first name, regardless of the particular woman’s marital status. On that account, Skeeter, who is single, is referred to as a Miss, and so are her married friends. It follows that Kordíková faced the same dilemma as Jiří Hrubý. Unfortunately, she made a less successful choice, and did not apply the method of cultural filter. As a result, Skeeter is addressed as “paní”; however, this contradicts the fact that her not being married is one of her many personal attributes in which is differs from her peers; moreover, Skeeter is addressed as “slečna Phelanová” (Stockettová 83) in a letter by her editor, which implies a strong discrepancy. Kordíková might have wanted to preserve a certain unity of forms of
address; however, in my opinion, in this case it would have been better to attune them to the Czech convention.

On the other hand, I think that Kordíková managed to capture the characters’ relationships in terms of T-forms and V-forms well. Most white middle-class members and housekeepers of African American origin use reciprocal V-forms in mutual interaction; this way they can express politeness, but also social distance (Wardhaugh 259). One exception is Hilly Holbrook, who addresses all African Americans with T-forms, which projects her racist attitudes (Stockettová 103, 185). However, there are also situations in which members of both social groups use reciprocal T-forms to express intimacy and solidarity (Wardhaugh 260); for example, Skeeter and her nanny Constantine were very close, so Kordíková used T-forms in their conversations and letters consistently (Stockettová 59, 64).

Similarly to translation of dialectal and stylistic features present in the characters’ speech, the quality of Kordíková’s transfer of overcodings varies significantly. T-forms and V-forms are used very well and wisely, but forms of address should have been solved differently. Had the translator looked up Hrubý’s translation, she would have found a good source of inspiration.

6.4.3. General Issues of the Translation

However, it is impossible to finish the enumeration of translation flaws with the above-mentioned features. Kordíková topped her numerous inappropriate linguistic choices and the underrepresentation of narrative elements with plenty of clumsy solutions, strange-sounding collocations, and with many cases of interference. The following examples were chosen in order to illustrate a few of these mistakes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kathryn Stockett</th>
<th>Jana Kordíková’s Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Also, there’s a slight bump of cartilage along the top of my nose. But my eyes are Kořen nosu mi zdobí malý chrupavčitý hrbol. Ale oči mám chrpově modré, po</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
cornflower blue, like Mother’s. I’m told that’s my best feature. (56) matce. Říká se, že jsou na mém vzhledu to nejhezčí. (53)

In Czech, “zdobit” has positive connotations; on that account, it should not be used in a sentence in which the narrator complains about her appearance. The second underlined phrase is very clumsy and unidiomatic; I would suggest e.g. “prý jsou na mě to nejhezčí.”

Mister Johnny’s eyes are clear and wide. He’s smiling with every part of his face. (140) Oči pana Johnnyho jsou jasný a vykulený. Směje se každou částí obličeje. (129)

The first translated sentence is, in my opinion, an example of syntactic interference, whereas the second one sounds very strange. Moreover, “vykulený” has rather negative connotations in Czech, hence it does not fit in this positive description. As Stockett’s original phrase may not be very idiomatic either, I would try to make it smoother in Czech. “Oči má pan Johnny velké a jasné. Směje se celým obličejem” seems more natural to me.

“What those other people can and cannot do and frankly,” she hiss, “I think it’s downright pig-headed of you.” (205) “Co ti druzí lidé mohou a nemohou dělat, a otevřeně řečeno,” sykne, “je to podle mě od tebe velká umíněnost.” (187)

The phrase “otevřeně řečeno” in this context looks like a wrong choice of register, because it sounds like a highly formal collocation. In conversation among friends, “upřímně” is used more frequently.

And it’s thinking of that tinkling sound that makes me wonder if those boxes don’t have something to do with her sneaking up to those rooms every other day. (222) A když si pomyslíš na to cinkání, napadne mě, jestli ty krabice náhodou nesouvisej s jejím neustálým mizením tam nahoru. (201)

The verb “pomyslet si” does not collocate with any prepositions in Czech; a better solution would be “když si vzpomenu,” or “když myslíš na”. The phrase “S jejím mizením” is strongly influenced by syntactic interference, and “every other day” does
not mean “all the time”. I would suggest “jestli ty krabice náhodou nesouvisí s tím, jak každý druhý den mizí tam nahoru.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blow it, big girl! (283)</th>
<th>Tak foujej, velká holko! (258)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This address to a three-year-old child sounds truly strange; “velká slečno” would be more natural in Czech.</td>
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“I pay you twenty-five more cent a day than mama.” A dangling carrot she call it, like I was some kind a plow mule. (338)

„Zaplatím ti o pětadvacet centů na den více než máma.“ Říkala tomu mrkvička, jako bych byla nějaká tažná mula. (305)

This is an example of lexical interference; “mrkvička” does not express the meaning: to lure somebody, sometimes also promising something without any intention to keep one’s word. A better choice would be “vábnička,” or “návnada.”

Such mistakes usually sound awkward and confirm the law of growing interference (Toury 274), but probably do not affect readers’ overall capability to comprehend the text. Nonetheless, the target audience may be under the impression that the translation was not subject to thorough proofreading. The last but not least sign that the translator and the editor in charge did not pay enough attention to this novel is the way Kordíková dealt with book titles. I found it striking that there is an obvious discrepancy between the title of the actual book written by Stockett and the fictional book of stories written by its main characters. In English, both publications are called *The Help* (Stockett 393); however, in Czech, the fictional work is called “Hospodyně” (354), but the translation was published as Černobilý svět.
7. Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to examine both theoretical (prescriptive as well as descriptive) and practical approaches to translation of dialects, namely of African American Vernacular English and American White Southern English. Today, most translation scholars claim that dialect should not be neutralized; i.e. an appropriate degree of rendition is necessary. However, the concept of substituting a target language dialect for the source language dialect has been abandoned as well. Czech translators are advised to use features of Common Czech, which is a colloquial variety offering a wide range of linguistic elements for various degrees of dialect rendering.

Before examining *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett, I explored four older Czech translations of works from Southern literature which contain the above-mentioned dialects. Colloquialization and eye dialect were the two most frequently used translation strategies. All books analyzed in the respective chapter proved to be reliable sources for anybody who has to deal with the task of transferring African American English or White Southern English into Czech. In addition to appropriate rendition of dialects, these novels can also help translators make decisions about culture-bound forms of address, i.e. overcodings. In summary, had Jana Kordíková sought practical advice, she would have found reliable guidance in any of these translations.

As far as Kordíková’s rendering of the individual dialect, the analysis revealed that in order to express features of African American Vernacular, she utilized various numbers of lexical and morphological elements of Common Czech; in Berezowski’s terminology, she employed colloquialization and eye dialect. However, elements of American White Southern English were usually basically omitted, and not represented in any way; such an approach can be seen as neutralization.
In my opinion, with Aibileen Clark, Kordíková could have used more colloquial expressions and more morphological (maybe even phonological) features of Common Czech. On the contrary, with Minny Jackson the translator should not have used morphological features of Common Czech (perhaps with the exception of declination suffixes) in passages which are very close to Standard English. Such compensation suppresses Minny’s upbringing, her strategy of linguistic solidarity, and the African American cultural concept of not acting white. On the other hand, her strongly dialectal dialogues should contain a higher percentage of Common Czech morphological and/or phonological features.

As it was mentioned before, the dialect of well-off white characters was ignored to a great extent; I think that rendering it with colloquial lexical items and maybe non-standard declination suffixes (i.e. colloquialization and eye dialect) would be a good strategy in this case as well.

In general, it cannot be claimed that Kordíková arrived at successful solutions. She confirmed both Toury’s universal laws of translation—the law of growing standardization, because she often did not find corresponding solutions and turned Stockett’s textemes into repertoiremes, and the law of growing interference, because many sentences and expressions show a significant English influence. In my view, Kordíková failed to render not only the dialectal features of characters’ idiolects, but also important underlying concepts of the temporal and spatial setting. She might have understood the narratives herself, but she did not consider the target readers and differences between cultural knowledge of American and Czech audiences. As a result, Czech readers may be confused or annoyed, because in order to fully understand the principles of Southern society and importance of figures mentioned in chapter 6.4, they need to look for information somewhere else. However, it should be pointed out that she
managed to express the characters’ mutual politeness and social distance very well, and applied T-forms and V-forms successfully.

To sum it all up, the Czech version of this novel gave me the impression that it did not get a proper amount of attention neither from the translator, nor from the publisher. It was probably treated as simply another cheap story for women, because the author and most characters are female. I presume that such an attitude is unfortunate; although Kathryn Stockett will not receive any respected awards for *The Help*, her best-seller has a potential to bring Czech readers closer to some aspects of American history which they used to be unfamiliar with. Had the publishing house added a preface introducing the atmosphere of the Deep South in 1950’s and 1960’s to the target audience, I would not see it as spoon-feeding, but as a good way of helping them understand the narrative as a whole.
8. Bibliography

8.1. List of Primary Sources


8.2. List of Secondary Sources


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Hurley, Pat Kamalani. Regional Identity: American Regional Dialects.


9. English Resume

This thesis deals with non-standard English varieties in literary translation; namely with rendition of African American Vernacular English and American White Southern English in the Czech version of Kathryn Stockett’s *The Help*.

The theoretical part places focus on typical features of these language varieties; it deals with translation approaches to cultural items, and defines basic notions of translation equivalence. The following subchapters summarize theoretical approaches to translating dialect and style (since dialect is perceived as a stylistic feature which conveys meanings connected to its speakers’ culture). Given the fact that Czech translation scholars recommend employing Common Czech features in non-standard varieties of source languages, the end of this part pays attention to possibilities offered by this dialect.

The beginning of the practical part is focused on previous Czech translations of novels from Southern literary tradition. Analysis of four pieces of fiction, all of which contain at least one of the respective dialects, revealed that colloquialization and eye dialect are the most frequently applied translation strategies.

The central part of the thesis consists of analysis of the Czech translation of *The Help*, which was carried out by Jana Kordíková. However, the quality of her solutions proved to be very variable. With one of the African American characters, the translator could have used more Common Czech elements; with another, Kordíková uses inappropriate compensation and applies non-standard features in passages which gravitate towards Standard English. Elements of White Southern English could have been rendered by means of a higher degree of colloquialization at the lexical level. Regarding the fact that Kordíková did not deal properly with cultural phenomena present in the story either, her translation can be considered unsuccessful.
10. Czech Resume

Diplomová práce se věnuje literárnímu překladu nespisovných variet angličtiny, konkrétně afroamerického a bělošského jižanského dialektu v českém převodu románu Kathryn Stockettové Černobílý svět.

Teoretická část práce se zabývá charakteristickými prvky těchto jazykových variet, zmiňuje možné uchopení překladu kulturních prvků a také vymezuje základy ekvivalence v translatologii. Následující podkapitoly obsahují shrnutí teoretických přístupů k překladu dialektu i stylu (neboť dialekt je chápán jako stylistický prvek, který v sobě nese významy související s kulturou svých mluvčích). Vzhledem k tomu, že čeští teoretikové překladu shodně doporučují pro překlad nestandardních variet zdrojových jazyků prvky obecné češtiny, věnuje se závěr této části právě možnostem, které tato nabízí.

Praktická část se nejprve zaměřuje na starší překlady do češtiny z oblasti jižanské literatury. Analýza českých vydání románů, v jejichž originálech se objevuje alespoň jeden z výše uvedených dialektů, prokázala, že překladatelé nejčastěji využívají strategie kolokvializace a pravopisných morfologických či fonologických odchylek (eye dialect).

Stěžejním bodem práce je analýza překladu knihy Černobílý svět Kathryn Stockettové, kterou do češtiny převedla Jana Kordíková. Kvalita jejích řešení se však ukázala jako velmi kolísavá; u jedné z postav, která mluví afroamerickým dialektem, mohla překladatelka využít více prvků obecné češtiny, u jiné Kordíková nevhodně kompenzuje nespisovné prvky i v pasážích, které se blíží více spisovné angličtině. Prvky bělošského jižanského nářečí mohly být vyjádřeny vyšší mírou kolokvializace na lexikální úrovni. Vzhledem k tomu, že si autorka překladu přišla neporadila ani s kulturními jevy obsaženými v příběhu, je překlad celkově hodnocen jako nezdařilý.