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Introduction

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0 Introduction

Although general problems of style, stylistically marked/unmarked means of expression, metaphors or tropes appear as early as in Aristotle's works (mainly in *Poetics* and *Rhetoric*, but partly also in *Organon*), modern stylistics as an autonomous theoretical discipline was not established until the first decades of the 20th century. Undoubtedly it would be very tempting to observe and compare the development of this discipline in various countries from the classical period through the Middle Ages up to the present, but the aim of this work is more modest. Its purpose is to provide a contrastive view of 20th century Czech and British theories of style and stylistics in general.

The period dealt with was chosen intentionally – stylistics during the 20th century, in the context of both Czech and British scholarly discourses, developed into an autonomous theoretical discipline, linked with numerous branches of linguistics and literary theory (discourse analysis, textual syntax, pragmatics etc.).

To avoid possible confusions, it is necessary to start by defining basic terms – the adjectives *Czech* and *British* used in constructions such as *Czech and British theories of style*, *Czech and British stylistics*. There are no major difficulties with the adjective *Czech* – books on stylistics written in Czech usually deal with stylistics of the Czech language, are aimed at a Czech audience and were published in the Czech Republic or in the former Czechoslovakia.

On the other hand, numerous works on style and stylistics written in English vary by many features: language whose stylistic features are being investigated, the country of origin, the audience at which they are aimed etc. and referring to all of them as simply *British* would be misleading. The use of the attribute *British* is therefore limited in this work to works

- concerning stylistics of the English language,
- written in English and aimed primarily at an English-speaking audience,
- published in the United Kingdom and/or having a considerable theoretical influence on style investigations there.

The nationality of the particular authors is not taken into account here – this criterion would exclude e.g. the works of Roman Jakobson, Nils Enkvist, M. L. Pratt, David Lee or G. W. Turner.

As there is only a small number of Czech works available in English translation, I start with a detailed survey of 20th century Czech theories of style; the following chapter deals with the most important British works on stylistics from approximately the last three decades of the 20th century.

In the study of Czech and British theories of style there are four main areas of comparison: 1) present-day definitions of style and stylistics, 2) the position of stylistics among other theoretical disciplines and its relation to them, 3) the stratification of stylistics into various branches and the criteria of the stratification, 4) the concept of function in studies of style. Further on, possible mutual influences of Czech and British theories of style will be briefly mentioned. After summarizing the facts emerging from the comparison, several possibilities for further research in this particular field of stylistic studies will be indicated.

This work focuses on Czech and British theories of style as they developed during the 20th century, and on their comparison. A survey of British theories of style is presented in the second part of the study; but as there are numerous general works on style and stylistics available, I have included only the most important theoretical works.

Surveys of this kind were necessary before I could begin comparing Czech and British theories of style; I have also attempted to find to what extent Czech and British theories of style influenced each other. Since research in the field of contrastive stylistics has till now focused mainly on comparing stylistic values of means of expression rather than on comparing theoretical approaches to style, I had also to develop a methodology for the comparison. In the last chapter I summarize the main results emerging from the comparison and to indicate several possibilities for further research in this particular field.