

BEFORE ANTON POPOVIČ: SILENCED VOICES OF SLOVAK TRANSLATION STUDIES

MONIKA ŠAVELOVÁ*

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4443-2174>

CONSTANTINE THE PHILOSOPHER UNIVERSITY IN NITRA

Abstract: This article examines the formative but largely overlooked contributions of Zora Jesenská and Jozef Felix to the emergence of Slovak Translation Studies prior to the work of Anton Popovič. Situating their ideas within the political and cultural constraints of twentieth-century Slovakia, the study demonstrates how their practice-based reflections on translation anticipated key concepts later systematized by Popovič. By contextualizing their work within the socialist period and its ideological interventions, the article highlights these silenced voices as crucial predecessors whose theoretical and practical insights significantly shaped the development of Slovak Translation Studies.

Keywords: Nitra School; Slovak Translation Studies; Soviet-era translation theories; silenced voices

1. Introduction

Due to Slovakia's position in Central Europe, the country exhibits several specific characteristics that have shaped its translation landscape. Slovak translation historian Bednářová (2014) notes that these characteristics are closely linked to shifts in the geopolitical context and are therefore most clearly manifested in relation to the 'political gesture' that has profoundly influenced Slovakia's cultural, literary, and translational history. Systematic reflections on translation began to develop already in the first half of the twentieth century, most often articulated by translators with a philological background. Among the most prominent figures from the 1930s and 1940s – and especially the 1960s – were Zora Jesenská and Jozef Felix, whose approaches to translation will be examined in greater detail in the present study.

From the 1950s onward, the principles of translation were increasingly articulated through an emphasis on a conscious and methodologically grounded approach. Drawing on Russian formalism (Jakobson) and Czech and Slovak structuralism (Mukařovský, Bakoš), translation theory gradually moved to the forefront of these discussions. Rather than focusing primarily on how translation mediates contact

* monika.savelova@gmail.com



between two national literatures, scholars began to examine how a text is transferred from its original linguistic form into another language and what characterizes translated text (Valentová 2017: 50). In this period, two centres of translation thought emerged, in Slovak cities of Nitra and Bratislava. The Nitra School – represented primarily by Anton Popovič and František Miko – developed text theory from the perspective of communication and a theory of literary translation. The Slovak school of translation was associated with Bratislava and based its research on translations from Russian.

Anton Popovič (1933–1984) is known as one the most influential translation scholars internationally, and he remains the best-known representative of Slovak Translation Studies abroad (e.g. Bassnett-McGuire 1980; Stecconi 2007; Špírk 2009). Popovič foregrounded the semiotic, intercultural, and sociological dimensions of translation, thereby anticipating many features of contemporary translation studies (Gromová 2014). He developed the so-called communicative model of translation and significantly expanded Catford's originally linguistic concept of shifts to encompass textual, literary, and cultural differences, as well as 'expressive changes' (Popovič 1975, 1976). The term refers to changes in stylistic qualities in the target text occurring at the microstylistic level as a result of the translation process. These changes enable reflections on the stylistic unity of source and target texts, that is, the stylistic differences between the original and the translation. The three main categories are expressive emphasis, expressive correspondence, and expressive reduction.

Popovič's concepts were articulated primarily in *Preklad a výraz* [Translation and Expression] (1968) and *Poetika umeleckého prekladu* [The Poetics of Artistic Translation] (1971) and reached its most mature formulation in *Teória umeleckého prekladu* [The Theory of Artistic Translation] (1975).¹ This framework continues to be studied and applied in Slovak Translation Studies, particularly in translation criticism and in comparative analysis (Valentová and Čechová 2015, Bednářová 2017). Many of Popovič's concepts have become firmly embedded in translation discourse, forming a distinct scholarly tradition (e.g. Vilikovský 1984; Valcerová 2006).

What is less frequently emphasized, however, is that Popovič also drew substantial inspiration from scholars and translators working on Russian and Romance literature. Through these influences, theoretical reflection on translation in Slovakia developed largely in connection with translation of poetry, which represented both the most common and the most prestigious form of translation in the Slovak context. The most substantial and analytically precise contributions in this area were authored by practitioners who combined translation with theoretical reflections, most notably Jesenská and Felix.

This paper acknowledges Popovič's Slovak predecessors and sources of inspiration as scholars whose work significantly shaped his understanding of translation as a creative process. Active mostly during the socialist period, these scholars engaged in reflections on existing translations grounded in their own practice and translation

¹ These works demonstrate the close interconnectedness between Popovič's research and the scholarship of Czech theorists (Levý, Vodička, Hausenblas, Čermák), Polish scholars (Balcerzan, Sławiński, Głowiński), Soviet theorists (Revzin, Rozenčevjg, Fiodorov, Etkind, Gačečiladze, Lotman), Ukrainian theory (Finkel'), as well as, in the case of his later monographs, Bulgarian (Ljudskanov) and some Western approaches (Catford, Nida, Mounin, Holmes, Reiss).

criticism. Their writing, though primarily essayistic rather than systematic or scientific like Popovič's texts, nonetheless displays clear conceptual affinities with his terminology. Direct references to these 'silenced voices' in Slovak Translation Studies (TS) remain sporadic, largely due to the political restrictions that partially or entirely limited their professional activities.

This paper focuses on aspects directly related to Popovič's later work. The aim is to highlight the significance of figures who, unlike Popovič, remain largely unknown internationally and are insufficiently recognized in the domestic context (Zambor 2000; Maliti-Frašová 2007), yet whose contributions to the field of translation studies merit acknowledgment and should no longer remain 'silenced.' Before examining the key ideas of Jesenská and Felix, the paper offers an overview of the Slovak historical context, focusing on the period preceding socialism and the socialist era itself. Although brief, this period is essential for understanding the broader historical circumstances that significantly shaped the professional careers of both theorists, as will be demonstrated in the penultimate section. At the same time, it helps to clarify the consequences of these events for translation practice and the social status of translators, while also explaining the exclusion and silencing of voices that played a crucial role in the development of TS in Slovakia.

2. A Brief Overview of Slovak History during the Socialist Period

Throughout the 20th century, translation practices in Slovakia were directly impacted by shifting political ideologies until the Velvet revolution of 1989. These shaped the country's cultural orientation, often resulting in the simple fact of non-translation; regulated the character and direction of translated literature; influenced translation decisions, including text selection and translation strategies; compromised textual integrity through censorship; erased parts of the existing translation corpus; and disrupted the continuity of translation development (Bednárová 2015). At the same time, it significantly affected the visibility, agency, and professional opportunities of intellectuals.

Despite these limitations, the cultural impact of translation and translation theory expanded and gradually became more emancipated over the course of the 20th century. Several milestones crucial to the development of literary translation and Slovak literature coincided with major political transformations. During the first Slovak Republic (1939–1945), translation activity was subjected to strong ideological pressures. Official cultural policy sought to regulate artistic production, including translation as a key medium of contact between Slovak culture and foreign literatures, by promoting nationalist attitudes and conservative traditionalism. This pressure manifested primarily in the selective control of themes, ideas, and authors, as well as in efforts to construct a nationalist concept of Slovak culture (Bednárová 2014, 2015; see also Djovčoš and Laš 2022).

Following the February coup of 1948, the communist regime consolidated its control. Between 1949 and 1989, Slovak literature was incorporated into a system of politically and ideologically regulated culture that mandated the principles of socialist

realism, along with the protection of its ideological ‘purity’ and proclaimed progressiveness. The year 1949 marked the culmination of the institutional restructuring of cultural life and ushered in the repressive 1950s, characterized by severe political pressure and far-reaching ideological constraints on culture.

Bednářová (2015) notes that political interventions and censorship after World War II intensified in successive waves that shaped the subsequent four decades up to 1989. Although four decades may seem a relatively short span in the history of translation as a cultural phenomenon, in the Slovak context nearly each decade constituted a distinct constellation, marked by continual change and repeated shifts in political conditions.

Between 1949 and 1956, translations of Russian and Soviet literature, along with works from other countries of the so-called socialist camp, became a dominant publishing priority (Marčok et al. 2006). While this period produced several high-quality translations of canonical texts, it also generated a considerable body of mediocre translations. This was largely a consequence of the early deployment of young and inexperienced translators, compelled to translate many ideologically prescribed works within a limited time frame. Long-standing calls for the development of a theory of literary translation and for sustained attention to translator education – already articulated at the end of the 1930s – gained renewed relevance with the sudden need for competent translators from Russian. This was reflected in 1949/1950, when Jesenská conducted a seminar on literary translation from Russian at the Comenius University in Bratislava. However, political repression intensified: in 1951, a decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia led to the suspension of several writers and scholars, including Felix, who was subsequently ‘assigned’ to the publishing house as a translator (Drug 2001), relegating him to a subordinate position.

Between 1949 and 1963, translation was expected to serve a normative model of socialist realism by supporting canon formation and influencing patterns of thought (Pašteková 1998). The years 1956–1963 were also marked by the second and third congresses of the Union of Czechoslovak Writers, which was a powerful political and ideological institution with a direct impact on the literary field. In this period, cultural and literary life began to cautiously reopen to Western literature (Marčok et al. 2006).

The ‘Golden Sixties’ (1963–1969) were marked by gradual political liberalization and partial democratization that opened the translation space to Western literature (Bednářová 2015). Although Russian and Soviet works remained dominant, Slovak translators increasingly published authors marginalized or suppressed in the Soviet Union and, by the late 1960s, even texts banned there altogether (Solzhenitsyn, Pasternak). The Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 marked a radical rupture in cultural life. Numerous translators were banned from any public activity because of their political views or the authors they had translated, and previously published translations were withdrawn from official circulation. Jesenská was among them. Between 1969 and 1971, the cultural sphere was restructured again and censorship intensified. High-quality translations associated with politically disfavoured authors or translators were systematically removed from official literary circulation (Pasternak’s *Doctor Zhivago* was withdrawn in 1969 because of both the author and its translator, Jesenská) (Maliti-Fraňová 2007).

The period 1971–1980, known as Normalization, was marked by systematic ‘purges’: politically undesirable translations were removed to library depositories, and unwanted translators were reassigned to non-cultural work. Verification mechanisms strictly regulated who could translate and what could be published. This period nonetheless saw a high level of translation quality, supported by sustained reflection in periodicals and theoretical discourse. The Perestroika years of 1980–1989 brought a gradual easing of political control and the return of some previously banned authors and translators (Bednářová 2015).

3. Zora Jesenská (1909–1972)

Zora Jesenská, writer, translator, and translation theorist, did not live to see the post-1989 rehabilitation. She published several theoretical and practice-oriented essays on translation already in the 1940s and 1950s, and while many of her ideas were later stylistically reformulated, the underlying theoretical framework remained essentially unchanged. This chapter builds primarily on works republished in her book *Vyznania a šarvátky* [Confessions and Skirmishes] (1963), which falls within the examined period.

Jesenská compares languages from a grammatical standpoint, arguing that some changes in translation are unavoidable: her description of these as “inevitable [grammar] deviations from the original” and explanation that “a poetic work in another language must necessarily be somewhat different, because the spirit of the language is different” (Jesenská [1950] 1963: 176–177) corresponds with Popovič’s ‘constitutive shift.’ Although ideas about this shift are apparent in Popovič’s work already in 1968, the term itself is first used in 1971, perceived as “an inevitable shift that takes place in the translation as a consequence of differences between the two languages, the two poetics and the two styles of original and translation” (Popovič 1971: 157).

A significant portion of Jesenská’s writing focuses on linguistic and stylistic problems. Along with Felix, Jesenská ([1950] 1963) highlights the need to understand the author’s style and to capture the character of the original. She pays attention to emotionally charged words, where the translator needs to understand their expressivity and thematise the translator’s individuality, anticipating Popovič’s 1975 ‘individual shift’ and ‘translator’s idiolect/poetics.’ Jesenská stresses the importance of maintaining the stylistic nuances in translation, particularly when the author uses an artificially constructed diminutive not used in everyday language that already sounds unnatural in the original. Their constant omission can be seen as a precursor to Popovič (‘expressive lessening/weakening’ in 1968, later called ‘expressive reduction’ in 1975). Similarly, Jesenská ([1950] 1963) suggests that if a translator does not want to systematically ‘impoverish’ their work, the stylistically untranslatable expressions need to be replaced by stylistic innovations elsewhere in the text – once again anticipating Popovič, who argues in favour of ‘stylistic compensation’ (Popovič 1968, 1971), later called ‘expressive inversion’ (Popovič 1975).

Jesenská opposes self-serving ornamentation from a stylistic standpoint, labelling this “[stylistic] deviation from the original” (Jesenská 1942: 10) and “[stylistic] erasure of the work’s character” as well as a “tampering with the author’s style” (Jesenská

[1950] 1963: 177, 182). This idea anticipates some already mentioned concepts used by Popovič in determining the measure of the stylistic (expressive) change in translation. In 1968, Popovič worked with the following concepts in relation to deviation from the original: stylistic (expressive) levelling (a simplification of the original expressive elements leading to a diluted style, which is understood as the contemporary configuration of expressive characteristics), stylistic emphasis (the exaggeration of expressive elements of the original) and stylistic modification (a modification in the expressive element of the original in translation). All these concepts were revised and finalised in 1975 (cf. Šavelová 2026).

Jesenská is critical of what Popovič would later term ‘overinterpretation,’ criticising translations that engage in wilful ‘enhancing’ or ‘embellishing.’ Moreover, in cases where the Slovak language “has no perfectly overlapping expression,” or where the original refers to “an element that is not found in our culture,” Jesenská ([1950] 1963: 186) suggests that translators use “original wording in the translation.” In Popovič’s terms (1975: 275), this is a case of ‘exoticism in translation’ – “a choice of elements that are typical of the culture of the original while being atypical of the style (topic and language) of the translation,” thus a non-traditional choice of expressive elements from the original work.

Jesenská reflects on how the requirement to capture both the full semantic scope of the original and its linguistic character may compel the translator to consciously deviate from normative usage in order to achieve true accuracy. Translation, in her view, must convey not only lexical meaning but also the ‘atmosphere’ or ‘colour’ of the source text in another language and for a different audience, evoking the associative and emotional undertones that are central to meaning making (1942, [1950] 1963). In doing so, she anticipates later reflections on intercultural differences between the source and target text.

The inter-temporal (‘period difference’ in Jesenská 1961: 247) and intercultural differences are also thematized in her later works:

“Both the translator and the reader are children of their generation, which displays its own character in its manner of perception and expression. And the older the work we translate and the more distant the culture which produced it, the more crucial is the question of how to preserve the temporal and national features of the original and to make them accessible to the actual perception of the present-day reader” (Jesenská [1956] 1963, in Popovič 1970: 81).

Similarly,

“[t]here are archaic words (and where to find them with the Slovak language barely a century old?) and neologisms. There is the question of older literary works that used to sound modern, but that are now stained with the patina of old age that offers its own aesthetic pleasure; to translate that patina, or to make it sound modern as the work was at its inception? Both are equally justified... if the translation succeeds!” (Jesenská [1950] 1963, in Šavelová 2026: 280).

Jesenská clearly discusses ‘modernization’ and ‘historization’ in translation (English terms in Popovič 1976). According to Jesenská (1961), the degree to which temporality is transposed in translation corresponds to the translator’s underlying ‘concept,’ understood in the sense of Levý’s ‘translator’s decision-making processes’ (in Popovič 1976).

Jesenská ([1956] 1963) also reflects on different rhyming functions and conventions, anticipating Popovič’s thinking on ‘rhythmic shift.’ According to Popovič (1968), the issue of meter substitution was already known to Slovak scholars in the 1930s from the history of Czech translation, and he refers directly to Jesenská, among others.² Rhythmic shifts are “shifts in rhythm [that] affect the extent of verse, metrical arrangement, rhyme ending, euphonic construction, intonation, the strophic structure of the verse, prosodic systems, etc.” (Popovič 1968: 168).

Jesenská elaborates on what Popovič would later call ‘negative shift’ (first conception 1968; as a term 1975): she gives concrete examples of translations with elements missing or with the wrong word choice, of bad translations, average translations or of wrong interpretations caused by the lack of understanding of the original, deeming such translations ‘harmful.’ If the interpretation contradicts the author’s intention or aesthetic orientation – one of the characteristics of a negative shift in Popovič 1975 – the resulting translation is arbitrary and unjustified. Comparable views, emphasizing that translation must be grounded in the original text, are repeatedly articulated by Felix, as will be demonstrated in the following chapter.

4. Jozef Felix (1913–1977)

Jozef Felix was a literary scholar, translator, historian, and translation critic, and the first Slovak scholar to engage systematically with Romance literature. He also played a pivotal role in the history of Slovak translation by fostering collaborative models of translation. Felix acted as the scholarly partner, providing ‘podstročnik’ and extensive interpretative materials (often amounting to dozens of pages) based on international scholarship. This well-founded combination of philological expertise and poetic skill resulted in outstanding poetry translations, most notably of Villon and Dante. These translations are still regarded as milestones in Slovak poetic translation, having shaped – and continuing to shape – the principles of translating poetry and interpreting works of earlier literary periods.

Another major contribution of Felix’s work lies in his extensive use of paratexts. Through detailed afterwords, commentaries, analytical studies of authors and works, and translation criticism, he established a robust literary-historical and textological framework that continues to inform both scholarly research and general readership.

² This is probably one of only two direct references to Jesenská in Popovič’s work (the first cited above as a direct quotation, reproduced by Popovič himself in English), likely related to her post-1969 ban. Although Popovič’s 1974 book *Umelecký preklad v ČSSR* [Literary Translation in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic] mentions her translation of Sholokhov’s *And Quiet Flows the Don*, Jesenská’s name is missing.

Felix's approach was characteristic in that it proceeded from close engagement with concrete literary material which led toward theoretical reflection.

In connection with the publication of Slovak literary classics at the turn of the 1950s and 1960s, Felix initiated a debate on 'intralingual' and 'intraliterary translation' and its principles, a discussion closely linked to his experience as both a translator and editor (Bednářová 2014b). Intralingual and intraliterary translation subsequently entered translation theory as a distinct type of translation and became an object of systematic research within TS (Popovič 1970, 1975).

In his analytical and critical essays, translation practice emerges as inseparable from the development of translation theory. Felix consistently emphasizes the necessity of translating "with quality and responsibility" (1968: 32). He understood a responsible approach to translation as the "maximum effort to achieve adequacy in translation" ([1939] 1987: 431; [1953] 1980: 103), that is, as a commitment to producing a genuinely creative equivalent of the original and to making a sustained effort to capture and articulate all aspects of the "author's verbal artistry" ([1953] 1980: 104). Such an approach, however, is unattainable without "proper philological or theoretical preparation" (1972: 121–122). In contemporary Romance studies, Felix's approach to translation and interpretation is described as the 'historical translation method.' This is grounded in an effort to render the author and the author's world in their entirety through the reconstruction of all relevant qualities of the original text, based on meticulous and erudite philological, poetological, literary, and historical analysis. Its aim is to translate the work not only at the level of meaning and form, but also across literary, aesthetic, historical, philosophical, and even metaphysical dimensions (Truhlářová 2014).

Felix's credo was "to be faithful to the wording and meaning of the text" (1986: 562), rejecting random or arbitrary solutions both in translation practice and in the evaluation and analysis of literary works. He therefore insisted that translation must be grounded in correct and accurate interpretation, arguing that it should be based on "the deeper intention of the work" (1962a: 69; later 'depth recoding' in Popovič 1976). In Felix's (1977) view, a successful translation can only arise from proper interpretation, understood as an accurate comprehension of the work's ideological and artistic meaning. According to Felix, the aesthetic value of a translation of a classical work is inseparable from accuracy (1987). The translation therefore requires the highest degree of precision (1962a). This requirement, however, does not imply slavish fidelity to the source text or literalism, but rather an engagement with the original's precise meaning. Consequently, it is not individual words that should be translated, but ideas and single "poetic emotions" (1962a: 69), a position likewise emphasized by Jesenská.

Felix also addresses the 'coming on to the reader' ('confrontation of communicative attitudes in translation' in Popovič 1976: 1, in Slovak in 1975). He was well aware of the difficulty of translating allusions and acknowledged that translators must sometimes sacrifice certain allusive nuances of the author's style for the sake of understandability in the target language, even though such a compromise is a form of loss (1962b: 196) (in 1975 conceptualized by Popovič as an 'expressive loss'). In his own translation practice, Felix therefore employed strategies such as generalization when dealing with references unlikely to be familiar to the target audience (1962b,

termed a ‘topical shift’ by Popovič 1976: 17, in Slovak in 1975), or the substitution of an “adequate expression” (Felix [1964] 2005: 299) with one more accessible within the receiving culture. Felix was thus fully conscious of the resulting deviation from strict accuracy in favour of readerly reception.

In his analysis of the French translation of the Slovak poetic composition *Marína*, Felix identifies the translation strategy of ‘compensation’ (1968: 36; ‘stylistic compensation’ in Popovič 1968), whereby a motif omitted at one point in the text is reintroduced elsewhere. Characteristically, Felix places strong emphasis not only on respect for lexical meaning or the preservation of ‘colour’ (the “colour of the times,” [1939] 1987: 299; also, in 1962a; 1968b), but also on the formal, rhythmic, and visual properties of the text (Felix [1964] 2005). He approaches literary works through the prism of the specific features of the author’s writing; in a broader sense, this corresponds to style. Such specificity must be respected in translation, as failure to do so results in serious distortions of the author’s ideas, language, poetic imagery, and the poetic work as a whole (1962a).

According to Felix (1962c: 37), translators must avoid “overexposing the author of the original,” as this risks turning poetic images into caricatures; at the same time, they must not ‘flatten’ them, for instance by softening passages that are intentionally harsh. These two positions rephrase what Popovič (1968) theorized as ‘overinterpretation’ and ‘underinterpretation’ (terms originally by Josef Čermák). The conceptual relationship between Felix and Popovič, however, operates also in the opposite direction. When Felix defines translation as “expressing something by other means, yet with the same effect” (1977: 111), he effectively uses Popovič’s notion of expressive substitution (1975). Similarly, Felix’s characterization of the translation of poetic images as being “relatively accurate and faithful, almost indistinguishable from the original,” yet realized in a “more expressive” or “more refined” form (1977: 111–113), corresponds to Popovič’s 1975 system of expressive changes. Felix’s assertion that “something will always inevitably remain unexpressed in translation” (1977: 118–119) aligns with Popovič’s definition of a translation shift (1975). At the same time, Felix explicitly warns that translators must not substitute the author’s poetic images with their own, as this would result in a “foreign contamination of two entirely different poems” (1962c: 37).

Felix was well acquainted with Popovič’s theoretical work, although he did not explicitly reference it in his own writings; notably, he reviewed Popovič’s *Preklad ako výraz*. Popovič (1975: 84) in turn cites Felix’s translation of Dante as an exemplary case of the necessity of the translator’s knowledge of the “deep structure” of the original, which “enables the translator to realize the meaning-making principle of the author’s poetics in translation.” According to Palkovičová (2014), Felix was receptive to and appreciative of the theoretical contributions of the younger generation of Czech and Slovak scholars, particularly Levý and Popovič, whose work in many respects developed and systematized Felix’s own practice-based reflections on translation, rooted in rigorous comparative analysis of both texts. Felix’s unpublished notes further attest to this conceptual proximity: they contain a diagram later adopted in Popovič’s terminology: *original text – reconstructed reality – translation text*, rather than a simplified *original text – translation text* model. This schema reflects Felix’s

conviction that, to grasp the reality represented by the original author, the translator must first come to understand both that reality and the author himself – an understanding achievable only through thorough scholarly inquiry and the systematic search for contextual and interpretative connections (Palkovičová 2014).

Many of Felix's writings from the 1960s address 'translation errors' or 'incorrect translations,' defined as solutions that contradict the meaning of the original. Felix highlights their consequences, such as unintelligible or unintentionally comic effects, the impoverishment of the poem, and the devaluation of the author, which may alienate readers and undermine trust in Slovak translations. He also criticizes stylistic clumsiness, calques, poor or unsystematic selection of authors, and fragmentary or improvised poetic translation. Omissions, false lexical substitutions, and distorted poetic images resulting from faulty interpretation are likewise treated as serious errors. In this respect, Felix's evaluative framework anticipates Popovič's (1975) 'negative shift' in translation.

A fundamental requirement Felix formulated for the development of translation criticism was the systematic comparison of the translation with the original text (1962b), a principle that is described by Popovič in 1975. An examination of Felix's scholarly output confirms his sustained effort to approach literary phenomena contextually, thereby integrating literary studies, translation studies, and editorial practice into a coherent analytical framework.

5. Jesenská and Felix, Silenced

After taking part in public celebrations of the Czechoslovak ice hockey victory over the Soviet Union in March 1968, during which Jesenská was beaten by state police, she published an article openly criticizing police practices. As one of the first Slovak intellectuals to voice such criticism publicly, she was banned from translating and writing, gradually excluded from all organizations that professionally and politically supported her existence, and had her translations removed from libraries. Jesenská was an exceptionally prolific translator, but due to the ban, a significant part of her Russian classics and Shakespeare's plays were absent from the national literary corpus.

Jesenská fundamentally redefined the role of the translator in national literary history, rejecting the view of translators as mere intermediaries and instead conceiving them as linguistically sensitive creative co-authors, with translation understood as a distinct art form intrinsically bound to language. The principles of the Slovak school of translation are frequently attributed to the Slovak scholar and translator from Russian Ján Ferenčík, regarded as its principal founder (*Biografický lexikón Slovenska* [Biographical Dictionary of Slovakia] 2004), as he also claims in his publication *Kontexty prekladu* [Contexts of Translation] (1982). Jesenská's name is not mentioned by Ferenčík, despite the fact that she largely shaped the school and its principles: she authored both the translation that sparked contemporary debates on translation principles, and a text that defended her translation strategies through a view that a translation should remain artistically faithful to the original. Maliti-Fraňová (2007) has demonstrated that the principles of the Slovak school of translation were the result of

their shared intellectual contribution. For the sake of transparency, however, it should be noted that the omission of her name was also influenced by the fact that she had been banned since the late 1960s.

Felix's life and scholarly work were likewise repeatedly shaped by adverse political conditions. In February 1945, after the failure of the Slovak National Uprising, he was imprisoned in a German prisoner-of-war camp in Nováky; fortunately, his shared passion for French literature ultimately saved him from deportation to Nazi Germany. However, political circumstances affected his 1950's translation of Cervantes's *Don Quixote*. Although Felix had prepared extensive annotations and a scholarly afterword drawing largely on French sources, ideological constraints led the publisher to replace it with an afterword by the Soviet Hispanist Smirnov, allowing Felix only a brief translator's note.

In 1951, while Felix was working on Villon, a campaign against cosmopolitanism and 'decadent' Western culture was launched and, consequently, he was dismissed from the Slovak Academy of Sciences and assigned the work of an editor. Political constraints prevented him from pursuing a career in academia until the period of political liberalization in the 1960s. Even then, his career was repeatedly impeded by a combination of factors, including "artificial bureaucratic obstacles" (Jurovská 2014: 35), health problems, and the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968.

An opportunity for Felix's rehabilitation emerged in 1970; however, the sociopolitical climate of the period of Normalization proved fundamentally unfavourable, and in 1973 Felix was again denied a professorship, as ideological authorities remained inflexible. This refusal may be attributed to Felix's unwillingness to join the Communist Party or his disagreement with Marxist doctrine (Pašteka 2014), as well as to the fact that his participation in the Slovak National Uprising was held against him in official records of the regime (Palkovičová 2014).

6. Conclusion

Both 'silenced voices' of Jesenská and Felix shared closely aligned views on interpretation and translation, as well as similarly shaped fates. Following the occupation of Czechoslovakia, they were expelled from the Union of Slovak Writers, deprived of their professional positions, subjected to severe career restrictions, and forcibly reassigned to other posts, with Jesenská completely excluded from social life. Jesenská was politically rehabilitated posthumously in the early 1990s, but even today, her contributions remain largely overlooked, as confirmed also by Zambor (2000) or Maliti-Fraňová (2007): her theoretical works have not been republished, and only a small number of her translations have been returned to libraries, as her language is already considered archaic.

Felix in contrast made a substantial contribution to the advancement of translation and publishing practices in Slovakia, primarily as a translator, but also as an editor and publisher. He initiated and supported numerous translations from literary classics, particularly from Romance traditions and including *Hamlet*, translated by Jesenská in 1946. His extensive literary-historical and interpretative studies, especially those

devoted to translation criticism, exerted a significant influence on domestic translation theory and practice, as already noted by Popovič (1968), however, unlike Popovič, he remains unknown on a global scale. Despite the political circumstances that shaped his professional trajectory throughout his life, and notwithstanding the adversities he faced during the 1950s and 1970s, Felix consistently succeeded in making a productive use of the positions to which he was assigned, benefiting not only his own scholarly work but Slovak culture more broadly (Bednárová 2014b).

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Conflict of Interests

The author(s) declare no ethical issues or conflicts of interest in relation to this research.

Ethics Statement

The author(s) confirm that this study was conducted in accordance with the Journal's Research Ethics and Integrity Statement and that all ethical requirements applicable to the study have been fulfilled.