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## A COMPARISON OF 20TH CENTURY THEORIES OF STYLE (IN THE CONTEXT OF CZECH AND BRITISH SCHOLARLY DISCOURSES)

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I am greatly indebted to all friends and colleagues who kindly agreed to read and proof-read the following pages and to provide me with their valuable advice and commentary; needless to say, the responsibility for all faults and mistakes remains entirely mine. This work is a revised version of my previously unpublished UK dissertation (Křístek, 1999); and although time passes very quickly, the subject matter of this work (i.e. the development of stylistic theories) does not change – in fact, could not have changed indeed. Therefore I believe that members of the academic community, focusing either on Czech studies or on English studies (students, teachers, translators), will find this small book a useful guide providing a basic orientation in one of the scholarly disciplines as well as a possible impulse for their future professional career (and since this work deals with stylistics, I cannot resist the temptation to stress that some medieval and even antique traditions relating to this discipline are still in use these days, namely, *captatio benevolentiae*).

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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.