

Jules Verne in Central Europe: The Reception of His Works in the Czech Lands in Comparative Perspective

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Abstract

This article offers a theoretical overview of the reception of Jules Verne's works in the Czech lands in comparison with selected Central European contexts. Its main aim is to examine how Verne's works were integrated into Czech literary culture and to identify the factors that contributed to their long-term visibility, popularity, and canonization. The study approaches reception as a dynamic literary and cultural process shaped by translation, retranslation, republication, adaptation, educational mediation, and reading culture. Within this framework, the Czech case emerges as particularly significant due to the combination of a stable and well-developed reading culture and a strong tradition of literary translation, which together created favourable conditions for the sustained presence of Verne's works in both educational and recreational reading. The article further argues that Verne's enduring reception in Central Europe is closely linked to his ability to mediate key ideas of modernity, especially science, progress, discovery, and imagination, while remaining adaptable to changing literary and cultural frameworks. A comparative perspective on Poland, Hungary, and Slovakia shows that Verne's works circulated across Central Europe through similar mechanisms of translation and adaptation, yet the Czech reception appears to have acquired a particularly durable and culturally stabilised form. The article therefore interprets the Czech reception of Verne as a particularly revealing example of the interaction between translation, cultural memory, and canon formation in Central European literary history.

Keywords: Jules Verne, reception, Czech literature, Central Europe, translation.

Ο Ιούλιος Βερν στην Κεντρική Ευρώπη: Η πρόσληψη του έργου του στις τσεχικές χώρες υπό συγκριτική προοπτική

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Περίληψη

Το παρόν άρθρο προσφέρει μια θεωρητική επισκόπηση της πρόσληψης του έργου του Ιουλίου Βερν στις τσεχικές χώρες σε σύγκριση με επιλεγμένα κεντροευρωπαϊκά συμφραζόμενα. Κύριος στόχος του είναι να εξετάσει τον τρόπο με τον οποίο τα έργα του Βερν ενσωματώθηκαν στην τσεχική λογοτεχνική κουλτούρα και να εντοπίσει τους παράγοντες που συνέβαλαν στη μακροχρόνια παρουσία, δημοτικότητα και κανονικοποίησή τους. Η μελέτη προσεγγίζει την πρόσληψη ως μια δυναμική λογοτεχνική και πολιτισμική διαδικασία, η οποία διαμορφώνεται από τη μετάφραση, την επαναμετάφραση, τις επανεκδόσεις, τις διασκευές, τη διαμεσολάβηση της εκπαίδευσης και την αναγνωστική κουλτούρα. Στο πλαίσιο αυτό, η τσεχική περίπτωση αναδεικνύεται ιδιαίτερα σημαντική, καθώς συνδυάζει μια σταθερή και ανεπτυγμένη αναγνωστική κουλτούρα με μια ισχυρή παράδοση λογοτεχνικής μετάφρασης, στοιχεία που δημιούργησαν ευνοϊκές συνθήκες για τη διαρκή παρουσία των έργων του Βερν τόσο στην εκπαιδευτική όσο και στην ψυχαγωγική ανάγνωση. Το άρθρο υποστηρίζει επίσης ότι η διαχρονική πρόσληψη του Βερν στην Κεντρική Ευρώπη συνδέεται στενά με την ικανότητά του να διαμεσολαβεί βασικές ιδέες της νεωτερικότητας, όπως η επιστήμη, η πρόοδος, η ανακάλυψη και η φαντασία, ενώ ταυτόχρονα παραμένει προσαρμόσιμος σε μεταβαλλόμενα λογοτεχνικά και πολιτισμικά πλαίσια. Μια συγκριτική προσέγγιση της Πολωνίας, της Ουγγαρίας και της Σλοβακίας δείχνει ότι τα έργα του Βερν κυκλοφόρησαν στην Κεντρική Ευρώπη μέσω παρόμοιων μηχανισμών μετάφρασης και διασκευής· ωστόσο, η τσεχική πρόσληψη φαίνεται να απέκτησε μια ιδιαίτερα σταθερή και πολιτισμικά εδραιωμένη μορφή. Το άρθρο ερμηνεύει συνεπώς την τσεχική πρόσληψη του Βερν ως ένα ιδιαίτερα εύγλωττο παράδειγμα της αλληλεπίδρασης μεταξύ μετάφρασης, πολιτισμικής μνήμης και συγκρότησης του λογοτεχνικού κανόνα στην κεντροευρωπαϊκή λογοτεχνική ιστορία.

Λέξεις-κλειδιά: Ιούλιος Βερν, πρόσληψη, τσεχική λογοτεχνία, Κεντρική Ευρώπη, μετάφραση.

Introduction

More than a century after his death, Jules Verne remains one of the most recognisable and widely circulated authors in world literature. His works have long exceeded the boundaries of nineteenth-century French fiction and have entered a transnational cultural sphere shaped by translation, republication, adaptation, educational mediation, and cultural memory. In this respect, Verne is not only a foundational figure in adventure fiction and an important precursor of modern science fiction, but also an author whose literary afterlife has depended on the ways in which different national cultures have received, reformulated, and canonised his works.

The reception of Verne's writings should therefore be understood not as a passive record of readership, but as a dynamic literary and cultural process. This process includes translation, republication, abridgement, adaptation, and the production of versions for younger readers, all of which shape how Verne is transmitted and interpreted in different cultural settings. As Commère (2023) shows, Verne's works have circulated in various forms, including complete editions, abridged texts, and adaptations for young readers, which demonstrates that reception is inseparable from broader processes of literary mediation and canonization.

Within this wider European framework, the Czech reception of Jules Verne deserves particular attention. The reception of his works in the Czech Republic may be described as notably continuous and culturally influential, a fact closely connected with the country's strong and well-developed reading culture (Rogoż, 2024; Rogoż, 2023). This continuity has enabled Verne's works to retain a significant place in Czech literary life and to influence both educational and recreational reading practices (Rogoż, 2024; Rogoż, 2023). At the same time, the Czech literary environment has long displayed a marked openness to translated literature, which has facilitated the sustained circulation of foreign authors and their incorporation into national literary culture.

This situation becomes especially visible in comparison with Poland, where reading is less prevalent (Rogoż, 2023). Such a contrast is relevant not because it establishes a simple hierarchy between national cultures, but because it helps explain differences in the broader literary environments through which translated authors such as Verne are received and maintained. In the Czech context, the combination of a vibrant reading culture, a strong tradition of translation, and sustained publishing activity has created favourable conditions for the long-term presence of Verne's works in both public and educational literary consciousness.

At the same time, the Czech case should not be isolated from the broader Central European context. The circulation of Verne's works in countries such as Poland, Hungary, and Slovakia suggests that his regional reception was shaped by shared mechanisms of translation, adaptation, publishing, and cultural mediation, even though these processes took nationally specific forms (Monok, 2016; Kiss, 2024). In the Czech case, this broader

regional pattern intersected with a strong reading culture and a durable tradition of literary translation, which together supported the long-term visibility and cultural legitimacy of Verne's works (Rogoż, 2023; Kolmanová, 2016). From this perspective, Verne's Czech reception may be understood as both regionally embedded and nationally distinctive.

This article therefore offers a theoretical overview of the reception of Jules Verne's works in the Czech Republic in comparison with selected Central European countries. Its primary aim is to identify the main forms and phases of Verne's Czech reception and to interpret them within a broader comparative framework. The study focuses on reception as a literary and cultural process that includes translation, adaptation, canonisation, and the role of reading culture in sustaining literary presence across time. By approaching the Czech case in relation to other Central European contexts, the article seeks to show that the enduring legacy of Verne's literature in the region results from a complex interplay of shared regional patterns and distinct national traditions.

In this article, the term "Czech lands" is used in a broader historical sense, while references to the "Czech Republic" designate the modern national context in which this longer reception history continues.

Theoretical and Methodological Framework

The present study approaches the reception of Jules Verne's works in Central Europe as a complex historical and cultural process shaped by multiple forms of literary mediation. In this perspective, reception is not understood as a passive record of readership or as a simple measure of popularity, but as a dynamic process through which texts are translated, adapted, republished, interpreted, and institutionally embedded in literary cultures. Such an approach is especially relevant in the case of Verne, whose works have circulated across Central Europe not only through direct reading, but also through translation, educational use, editorial reframing, and adaptation for different audiences.

This broader understanding of reception corresponds to the theoretical premises outlined in reception theory. As Machor and Goldstein (2001) have shown, reception must be examined through the dynamic interaction between production and reception, since literary meaning is not fixed once and for all at the moment of publication, but is continuously reconfigured through the ways texts are consumed, interpreted, and mediated across different cultural and media contexts. In this sense, reception is inseparable from the institutional and interpretive frameworks that shape how a work becomes legible and valuable in each historical moment.

Within such a framework, literary translation occupies a central methodological place. Translation does not merely transfer a text from one language into another; it acts as a cultural bridge through which literary works are adapted and integrated into new national literatures and cultural environments. As Koster (2014) suggests, the translator occupies a double position as both reader and author, which means that translation itself becomes an interpretive act and a formative stage of reception. This is particularly important for a

transnational author such as Verne, whose Central European presence has depended on the capacity of translators and publishers to reposition his works within distinct linguistic, pedagogical, and literary traditions.

The Central European context illustrates this process especially clearly. The reception of Verne's works in countries such as Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia reveals both shared regional mechanisms and nationally specific trajectories. These literary cultures were shaped by overlapping traditions of translation, adaptation, and educational integration, yet each developed its own ways of incorporating Verne into the local literary field. In Hungary, for example, Verne's popularity persisted despite political constraints, and after the Second World War his works were republished on a massive scale, reaching millions of copies by 1969, even though critical engagement with his oeuvre remained limited (Kiss, 2024). This case demonstrates that reception cannot be reduced to critical prestige alone; it also depends on mass circulation, institutional support, and the cultural uses assigned to literature in different historical settings.

Educational mediation forms another key dimension of the present methodological framework. Verne's works have often been reconfigured in ways intended to appeal to younger readers, with particular emphasis on adventure, imagination, and narrative accessibility rather than on strictly educational content. As Commère (2023) has shown, such reshaping contributes to the canonisation of Verne's works by making them continuously available and attractive to new generations. Reception in this sense involves not only preservation, but transformation: texts survive because they are repeatedly reframed according to the expectations of readers, teachers, editors, and publishers.

This emphasis on mediation also accords with broader cultural-historical approaches to reception. Coolahan (2020) stresses that literary reception is maintained through collective and institutional processes in which various agents play crucial roles in disseminating, interpreting, and legitimising texts. Applied to Verne, this means that his enduring Central European presence cannot be explained solely by the intrinsic qualities of his novels. It must also be understood through the activities of translators, educators, publishers, and other intermediaries who have ensured that his works remain visible and meaningful within changing cultural landscapes.

Methodologically, the present article therefore combines insights from reception theory, translation studies, and the cultural history of literary mediation. It treats Verne's Central European reception as a multilayered process in which translation, adaptation, educational integration, and republication function as interrelated mechanisms of literary survival and canonisation. This approach makes it possible to analyse the Czech case not in isolation, but as part of a wider regional constellation in which shared structures of mediation coexist with distinctive national forms of literary incorporation. From this perspective, reception emerges as an active and historically variable process of reshaping and reframing, through which Verne's works have maintained their enduring place in the cultural landscape of Central Europe.

Jules Verne in the Czech Lands: Major Phases of Literary and Cultural Reception

The reception of Jules Verne in the Czech lands may be described as a long-term process of literary transmission, cultural adaptation, and canon formation. Its significance lies not only in the sustained circulation of Verne's novels, but also in the fact that these works came to occupy a stable position within Czech reading culture across different historical periods. This reception was shaped by the interaction of translation, publishing practice, educational mediation, and the broader cultural prestige attached to foreign literature. In the Czech case, Verne did not remain a marginal imported author; rather, he became part of a durable literary presence that connected popular reading, youth literature, and broader notions of world literature.

A first important phase in this process was the entry of Verne's works into the Czech literary environment through translation and editorial adaptation. As in other European contexts, the transfer of Verne into Czech culture depended on the mediation of translators and publishers who made his texts accessible to local readers and repositioned them within the receiving literary system. From the outset, such reception was never merely textual in a narrow sense. Translation involved selection, framing, and cultural accommodation, which means that Verne's Czech presence must be understood as a mediated literary construction rather than as the transparent transmission of a French original. In this respect, the Czech case corresponds to the broader logic of translated literature in Central Europe, where foreign works often entered national cultures through processes of adaptation and recoding shaped by local literary expectations.

A second major phase concerns the consolidation of Verne as a recognisable and repeatable authorial presence within Czech reading culture. Once introduced, his novels did not disappear after an initial wave of interest; instead, they became available in recurrent editions and in forms addressed to different readerships. This continuity is particularly important from the perspective of reception history, because it indicates that Verne's works were not sustained solely by episodic popularity, but by repeated acts of republication and reinterpretation. In such a context, reception becomes closely linked to canonisation: a foreign author acquires permanence when literary institutions repeatedly confirm his relevance and transmit his texts across generations. The Czech case appears especially significant in this regard, since the long-term vitality of reading culture created favourable conditions for the continued visibility of translated classics, including Verne (Rogoż, 2023).

This continuity was reinforced by the specific structure of Czech literary culture, in which translated literature has traditionally occupied a strong and legitimate position. The Czech literary field has long shown a high degree of openness to foreign literature, and this openness has contributed to the incorporation of translated works into the national cultural canon. In the case of Verne, this process was not limited to simple availability in Czech; it involved a robust tradition of translation, republication, and adaptation that gradually

elevated his works to a canonised status within national reading culture. This feature distinguishes the Czech case from some other Central European contexts, because Verne's reception here was supported not only by the existence of translations, but also by the active role of literary intermediaries and by a strong reading culture capable of sustaining repeated engagement with the same author across generations (Rogoż, 2023).

This point is crucial for understanding the specificity of Czech reception. Jiří Trávníček's analyses of Czech reading culture, as discussed by Rogoż (2023), suggest a well-developed and comparatively stable reading environment, shaped by strong habits of literary consumption and by institutional structures favourable to long-term engagement with books. Within such a setting, Verne's works could function not merely as episodic adventure reading, but as a recurrent and culturally validated part of shared literary experience. This helps explain why Verne in the Czech lands attained not only popularity, but also symbolic prestige.

Another important dimension of Verne's reception in the Czech lands is the plurality of forms in which his works were transmitted. As Commère (2023) has shown more generally, Verne's works have often circulated through complete editions, abridgements, adaptations, and versions tailored to younger readers. This observation is directly relevant to the Czech case, where the persistence of Verne's literary presence cannot be understood only through the availability of full texts. Reception also depended on the multiplication of formats through which Verne could reach different audiences. Such plurality is especially important for the study of canon formation, because it shows that literary endurance is often secured not by textual fixity, but by flexibility. A work survives because it can be repeatedly reformulated without losing its symbolic identity.

At the same time, the Czech reception differs in emphasis from broader European tendencies in the mediation of Verne. In many contexts outside the Czech lands, Verne's works were frequently abridged and adapted primarily for young readers, often with stronger emphasis on adventure and entertainment than on educational or cultural depth (Commère, 2023; Gobrecht & Straub, 1982). By contrast, the Czech tradition appears to have allowed a broader and more sustained coexistence of different reception modes: Verne could be read as entertaining adventure literature, as youth reading, and simultaneously as a culturally significant part of translated literary heritage. This distinction should not be overstated, but it is analytically useful for explaining why Verne's works in the Czech environment achieved a particularly stable prestige.

A further factor that helps illuminate this specificity is the role of retranslation. The repeated translation of canonical works is not a marginal phenomenon, but an important mechanism through which literary reception is renewed, updated, and culturally reaffirmed. Theoretical perspectives on retranslation emphasise that retranslations do not simply replace earlier versions; they participate in the continuous renegotiation of a text's meaning, status, and accessibility within the target culture (Cadera & Walsh, 2022). In the Czech case, the frequency and nature of retranslations appear to have played a substantial

role in maintaining Verne's visibility. Retranslation helped preserve not only textual availability, but also cultural prestige, since each new version could reactivate Verne for new readerships and new historical circumstances. In this sense, repeated translation reinforced reception and contributed directly to canonisation.

This process was closely linked to educational and youth-oriented mediation. Verne's works have long been associated with reading practices that cross the boundary between recreational and formative literature. Their narrative emphasis on travel, discovery, technological imagination, and adventure made them especially suitable for younger readers, while their status as internationally recognised works enhanced their legitimacy within educational and semi-educational contexts. The significance of this dual function should not be underestimated. A text that is read both for pleasure and as part of broader cultural formation is more likely to remain active in collective memory than a text confined to either purely pedagogical or purely commercial circulation. In the Czech setting, this dual positioning helped Verne's works remain culturally operative over time.

At the same time, the Czech reception of Verne should not be interpreted as a static or homogeneous phenomenon. Like all long-term literary reception, it was subject to historical change, shifts in readership, and transformations in media environments. The continuity of Verne's presence does not imply that his works were always read in the same way or assigned the same value. Rather, continuity here means reproducible cultural relevance: Verne's novels were repeatedly returned to, republished, retranslated, and reframed under changing conditions. This point is methodologically important, because it prevents the notion of canon from being treated as mere permanence. Canonised works endure not by escaping history, but by being repeatedly reinserted into it through new mediating forms.

From a broader theoretical perspective, this sustained engagement confirms the central importance of translation and literary mediation in the shaping of national literary canons. As O'Driscoll (2011) argues, literary reception is never detached from the cultural and institutional forces that regulate circulation, prestige, and readability. In the Czech case, the enduring presence of Verne's oeuvre demonstrates how translation, republication, adaptation, and retranslation can together produce a lasting canonising effect. Verne's reception in the Czech lands is therefore not only a case of successful foreign-author circulation, but also an example of how national literary cultures actively construct and preserve their relationship to world literature.

For the purposes of the present study, the Czech reception of Verne may thus be divided analytically into three broad and overlapping movements: first, the phase of translational entry, through which Verne became accessible in the Czech literary environment; second, the phase of consolidation, in which repeated publication, adaptation, and retranslation stabilised his position within reading culture; and third, the phase of long-term canonised persistence, in which his works continued to circulate across educational, recreational, and culturally legitimised domains. These phases should not be understood as

strictly separate chronological blocks, but as interpretive layers that help clarify how Verne's literary afterlife developed in the Czech context.

In this sense, the Czech lands provide a particularly revealing example of how a foreign author can become culturally durable through mediation rather than through simple textual survival. Verne's reception was sustained not only by the intrinsic appeal of his narratives, but by the repeated work of translators, publishers, educators, and other literary intermediaries who ensured that his novels remained readable, accessible, and meaningful. The following section broadens this argument by situating the Czech case within a wider Central European framework and by examining selected parallels and divergences in the reception of Verne's works across neighbouring literary cultures.

Comparative Perspectives on Verne's Reception in Central Europe

The Czech reception of Jules Verne acquires clearer contours when placed in a broader Central European perspective. Such a comparison does not reduce national literary histories to a single regional model; rather, it helps identify the shared mechanisms through which Verne's works circulated across the region while also clarifying the specific cultural conditions that shaped their reception in individual national contexts. Across Central Europe, Verne's works were mediated by translation, adaptation, and other forms of cultural transmission, but these processes did not unfold uniformly. Instead, they were conditioned by local literary traditions, political circumstances, and the broader structures of cultural exchange that characterised the region (Monok, 2016).

Within this regional framework, the Czech case appears particularly notable because of the conjunction of two factors: a robust reading culture and a strong tradition of literary translation. As discussed by Rogoż (2023) with reference to Jiří Trávnický's analyses, Czech reading culture may be described as stable and well developed, and this broader literary environment helps explain the enduring popularity and canonised status of Verne's works in the Czech context. The significance of this point lies not merely in the fact that Verne was widely read, but in the fact that he was received within a literary culture capable of sustaining long-term engagement with translated works across generations. This distinguishes the Czech case from other Central European contexts, where the reception of translated literature was often shaped more visibly by political and cultural factors.

The role of translation is particularly important in this regard. In the Czech environment, the tradition of translation has long been tied to questions of national literary context and literary continuity. This point is illuminated by Kolmanová's (2016) comparative discussion of Czech translations of Edgar Allan Poe's "The Raven," which shows that Czech translation practice has often been shaped by an awareness of national literary tradition and by efforts to position translated works meaningfully within it. Although this example concerns Poe rather than Verne, it is methodologically relevant to the present argument: it suggests that the Czech translation tradition has not functioned as a purely technical transfer of texts, but as a culturally formative practice. In such a

framework, the prominence of Verne in Czech literary culture may be understood not only as the result of popularity, but also as the effect of a translation culture capable of integrating foreign works into the symbolic order of national reading.

A broader East European comparison further confirms that reception was deeply affected by political conditions. As Popa (2002) argues, the political climate in Eastern Europe significantly influenced the translation and dissemination of literature. This observation helps contextualise the reception of Verne within a region where foreign works were often filtered through ideological, institutional, and cultural constraints. Such factors are necessary for understanding why similar translated authors could occupy different positions in neighbouring literary systems. Reception was therefore never determined by the text alone; it depended on the interplay between literary mediation and the political-cultural environment in which that mediation occurred.

A brief contrast may also be noted in Romanian translations of Verne's works. Martin (2024), in discussing *Le château des Carpathes*, shows that Verne could be adapted in ways that aligned his works more closely with local cultural narratives. This example is important because it demonstrates a different mode of reception from the Czech one. Rather than emphasising durable canonisation through a strong reading and translation culture, the Romanian case illustrates how adaptation could serve to localise Verne within specific national symbolic frameworks. Such a comparison does not diminish the importance of other regional receptions; rather, it helps clarify the distinctive character of the Czech case.

What emerges from this comparative perspective is a differentiated picture of Verne's Central European afterlife. Across the region, his works circulated through translation, adaptation, and cultural mediation, but the outcomes of these processes varied according to local literary traditions and historical conditions. In the Czech lands, the combination of a stable reading culture and a strong translation tradition appears to have created especially favourable conditions for the long-term presence of Verne's works. This interplay helps explain why, in the Czech context, Verne appears to have achieved a particularly durable and canonised status within national reading culture (Rogoż, 2023; Kolmanová, 2016).

From this perspective, the Czech case stands out not because it was isolated from broader regional processes, but because it represents a particularly successful convergence of them. Verne's works circulated in many Central and Eastern European cultures, yet in the Czech environment they seem to have attained a particularly strong degree of continuity, visibility, and cultural stabilisation. This suggests that the enduring Czech reception of Verne was shaped less by any single factor than by the interaction of multiple mediating forces: reading culture, translation tradition, publishing continuity, and the broader historical circumstances of literary circulation in the region.

Jules Verne, Modernity, and Cultural Memory

The comparative perspective outlined above makes it possible to move beyond descriptive reception history and to ask why Jules Verne retained such a durable place in Central European literary cultures. His persistence cannot be explained solely by the popularity of particular titles or by the repeated publication of adventure fiction. Rather, Verne's long afterlife in the region suggests that his works continued to mediate culturally significant ideas about modernity, knowledge, imagination, and the relation between literature and education. In this sense, Verne's reception belongs not only to the history of reading, translation, and adaptation, but also to the history of cultural memory.

One important reason for Verne's durability lies in his capacity to mediate key ideas of modernity, especially science, progress, discovery, and imagination. His novels combine scientific discourse with adventure narrative in ways that allowed them to exceed the historical moment of their origin and remain legible in later cultural contexts. As Duperré (2019) and Bernat i López (2016) suggest, Verne's works did not simply reflect the advances of the modern age; they also helped narrativise them, transforming scientific and technological developments into forms of literary experience that could be repeatedly reactivated through translation and adaptation. This helps explain why Verne's fiction endured not merely as a historical curiosity, but as a lasting component of European cultural memory.

At the same time, Verne's modernity is not reducible to technological optimism. His works became culturally durable because they allowed later readers to reinterpret the nineteenth-century imagination of progress from changing historical perspectives. This capacity for reinterpretation is crucial for reception history. A work remains active in cultural memory not because its original meanings remain intact, but because it can be repeatedly reframed under new conditions. Verne's fiction proved especially suited to such reframing: it could be read as scientific romance, as youth adventure, as a precursor of science fiction, as a document of nineteenth-century imagination, or as part of a broader heritage of world literature. The plurality of these reading positions helps explain why his works remained visible across different educational, literary, and ideological environments.

This dynamic is closely connected to the original modes of Verne's publication and circulation. As Gobrecht and Straub (1982) note, his novels were often serialised in family magazines and thus addressed a broad readership that sought both instruction and amusement. This dual appeal is highly relevant to the question of Verne's long-term reception. Literature that combines entertainment with education occupies a particularly favourable position in processes of canon formation, because it can circulate across age groups and institutional settings without being confined to a single reading function. Verne's novels were therefore well positioned to move between recreational reading, family reading, and more explicitly formative modes of literary consumption.

The role of education is especially important here. As already noted, Verne's works frequently moved between recreational and formative reading. This duality contributed significantly to their endurance. Literature that is read only for school may become

institutionally preserved but affectively weak; literature that circulates only as entertainment may enjoy temporary popularity without long-term cultural stabilisation. Verne occupied an intermediate position. His novels could appeal to youthful curiosity and imaginative pleasure while also being perceived as culturally legitimate texts connected with geography, science, discovery, and intellectual expansion. This positioning made them particularly suitable for educational reuse and for semi-formal forms of literary transmission within families, libraries, and schools. Commère (2023) is especially relevant here, since her work shows how Verne's continued presence among younger readers has depended on processes of editorial and pedagogical reframing rather than on the untouched survival of the original text.

A further dimension of this durability lies in Verne's intertextuality. As Evans (1996) argues, Verne's works are anchored within a recognisable cultural tradition through references to a broad range of canonical Western literature. This intertextuality strengthens his literary authority, since it situates his novels within a wider network of culturally valued texts rather than leaving them isolated within the field of popular adventure writing. At the same time, such intertextuality increases the adaptability of his works across different literary cultures: readers and mediators can approach Verne simultaneously as an author of popular fiction and as a writer connected to broader literary tradition. This helps account for the fact that Verne could resonate across diverse cultural environments while still acquiring distinct national meanings.

Seen from this angle, canonisation is best understood not as a fixed status, but as a process of sustained cultural activation. Verne remained canonical where literary cultures continued to reactivate him. Translation, retranslation, adaptation, abridgement, and educational mediation were all part of this process. The Czech case demonstrates this especially clearly, since the durability of Verne's presence seems to have depended on a convergence of such mediating forces rather than on any one institutional mechanism alone. The importance of retranslation is particularly visible here: if retranslations renew a text's linguistic and cultural accessibility, then they do not merely preserve a canonical work, but actively participate in its continued canonisation. In this sense, Verne's cultural memory in the Czech lands was maintained through repetition with variation.

A further point concerns the relation between national and transnational memory. Verne belongs to world literature, yet his reception in Central Europe shows that world literature becomes culturally effective only when it is localised. Translation and adaptation do not simply transmit a foreign classic; they insert it into the symbolic economy of a particular culture. In the Czech lands, the repeated translation and adaptation of Verne's works allowed them to persist simultaneously as transnational literary heritage and as a stable component of national reading culture (Duperré, 2019; Bernat i López, 2016). This dual status is especially important for understanding the Czech case. Verne's works were not preserved in spite of being foreign, but because the Czech reading and translation tradition enabled foreign literature to become part of shared cultural experience.

This also helps explain why Verne retained relevance under changing media conditions. Literary modernity did not end with the age that produced Verne; instead, later periods repeatedly returned to his works in order to rethink the meanings of science, exploration, and imagination. Cultural memory is selective, but it is also adaptive. Verne's continued presence in Central Europe suggests that his fiction provided a particularly durable narrative grammar for imagining movement, knowledge, and future possibility. Even when mediated through abridged editions or youth adaptations, his works continued to offer symbolic models through which readers could engage questions larger than the immediate plot. The persistence of such symbolic functions is one reason why Verne outlived many other once-popular authors of adventure literature.

From the perspective of the present study, then, Verne's Central European afterlife should be understood as the result of three mutually reinforcing processes: first, the repeated mediation of his works through translation, adaptation, and republication; second, their incorporation into reading cultures capable of sustaining collective literary memory; and third, their continuing interpretive openness in relation to modernity. The Czech lands illustrate these processes with particular clarity. There, Verne's works were not only transmitted, but culturally stabilised through a literary environment in which reading, translation, and canon formation were closely intertwined.

In this sense, Verne's reception in Central Europe, and especially in the Czech context, reveals the broader significance of literary afterlives. What endures is not merely the text, but the network of practices that keeps it readable and meaningful. Verne's works remained present because they could be continuously re-situated between entertainment and education, between translation and canon, between historical modernity and later cultural memory. Their endurance thus offers a particularly revealing example of how literary prestige is maintained over time through institutional, cultural, and interpretive mediation.

Conclusions

The main aim of this article was to offer a theoretical overview of the reception of Jules Verne's works in the Czech Republic in comparison with selected Central European contexts, and to interpret this reception as a literary and cultural process shaped by translation, adaptation, republication, educational mediation, and reading culture. More specifically, the study sought to clarify how Verne's works were integrated into Czech literary life, which factors contributed to their long-term visibility and canonisation, and in what respects the Czech case may be understood as both regionally embedded and nationally distinctive.

This aim has been fulfilled by showing, first, that Verne's Central European reception was not uniform, but developed through different national configurations of literary mediation. Second, the article has argued that the available scholarship suggests that the Czech case is distinctive because of the conjunction of a strong reading culture and a durable tradition of literary translation, which together created favourable conditions for

the repeated transmission and stabilisation of Verne's works. Third, the study has demonstrated that Verne's enduring relevance is connected to his ability to mediate culturally significant ideas of modernity while remaining adaptable to changing literary, pedagogical, and cultural frameworks. In the Czech lands in particular, repeated translation and adaptation enabled Verne's novels to function both as part of transnational literary heritage and as a stable element of national reading culture.

At the same time, the study has clear limits. It is theoretical and synthetic in nature and does not present new archival or bibliographical research. It does not reconstruct the full chronology of Czech translations and editions, nor does it provide a detailed quantitative comparison of print history, readership data, or school use across the selected countries. The comparative sections are therefore interpretive rather than exhaustive, and some national contexts, especially Slovakia and other neighbouring literary cultures, would require fuller treatment on the basis of more specialised source material.

These limits point directly to possible directions for further research. Future studies could focus on a detailed bibliographical mapping of Czech Verne translations and retranslations, on comparative analyses of paratexts and illustrations, on the reception of Verne in school anthologies and reading lists, or on the role of publishers and translators in shaping his Czech canonisation. Another productive direction would be a closer comparison of Czech reception with Polish, Hungarian, Slovak, or Romanian cases based on specific titles, translation strategies, and adaptation practices. Finally, Verne's place in contemporary Czech cultural memory could be examined through readership surveys, library circulation data, or analyses of current re-editions for children and young adults.

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