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English-language Translation

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**Censorship in Translation**

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

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## **1. Introduction**

The aim of this thesis is to explore censorship in translation. Before discussing censorship specifically in translation, however, I will provide a definition as well as a short description of origins of translation in general. For better understanding of the issue, I will also attempt to identify main motivations that can give rise to censorship in translation. As there are many ways translated texts can be censored, this thesis will also discuss the stages of the production process at which censorship can take place, types of text alterations, aspects of communication that can be subjected to censorship, as well as the agents that can employ censorship, with special focus on self-censorship.

Another aim of my thesis is to explore the nature of censorship of translations in Czechoslovakia, as well as the way it changed over time. I will, therefore, discuss the communist views on literature and I will explain what aspects made literature acceptable or unacceptable in the eyes of the regime. I will also discuss the post-war history of censorship in Czechoslovakia, thereby exploring its development in time. Since, in the communist era, many translators were forbidden from doing their work, I will focus on the phenomenon of “pokrývání”, which was the practice of publishing translations under names of different people, usually themselves translators. The people involved in publishing were often very crafty, which allowed them to translate and publish certain books that otherwise would have been censored. These means of avoiding censorship will also be discussed.

The practical part of this thesis will feature comparisons of selected source texts and their translations, which will allow me to illustrate the points made in the theoretical part on specific translations. I will pay special attention to books which were translated more than once and this will enable me to analyze the standards of what was deemed acceptable in translations, as well as the way the notions of acceptability developed over

time. My analysis of source texts and their translations will also feature commentaries by the authors of these translations, which will provide explanations for and additional perspective on the censorial alterations in the texts.

## **2. Theoretical Part**

### **2.1. Defining Censorship**

Censorship is quite a well-researched topic when considered on its own, but censorship in translation has not been researched equally thoroughly. Although the aim of this work is to explore the latter, I think it wise to first lay the basis for my task by looking at the issue of censorship itself. Throughout the time of academic interest in censorship, there have been many definitions of the term which reflected the prevailing understanding of the issue. That understanding has changed considerably, especially in recent years, and although the modern redefinitions of the term will be considered in this work as well, for the most part of this thesis, I will identify with the definition provided by Sue Curry Jansen:

[Censorship] encompasses all socially structured proscriptions or prescriptions which inhibit or prohibit dissemination of ideas, information, images, and other messages through a society's channels of communication whether these obstructions are secured by political, economic, religious, or other systems of authority. It includes both overt and covert proscription and prescriptions. (1991: 221)

Although Sue Curry Jansen includes both public and hidden obstructions to free communication in her definition of censorship, it is worth noting that most of the time, censors aim at hindering free speech without the knowledge of the general public. As Francesca Billiani points out, this “invisibility” is something that censorship and translation actually have in common, but, of course, their purposes are opposite, since translators usually try to make themselves invisible to be able to convey a message from the source culture to the target culture (2007: 3), thereby facilitating communication. Although there have been occasional calls for translator's visibility, it is usually



considered desirable for translators not to show their presence in the text, so that it would not contaminate the message. On the other hand, censors use this invisibility to be able to hamper the conveying of certain messages and, as Stefan Kisielewski said, to convince the recipients of these messages that they were actually not censored at all and that what they were reading was, indeed, what the authors really wanted to say (qtd. in Bates, 2004: 152).

Furthermore, since censorship is meant to be hidden from the eyes of the public, censors, as well as censoring offices, are a rare thing to find. That is to say they exist, but they are usually called some euphemistic description of what they really are. In the words of Helen Freshwater, “[Censorship authorities] are careful to describe themselves as licensing authorities or classificatory bodies. The Label of ‘censor’ is applied, it is never claimed” (2004: 238). Thus, the invisibility of censorship is aided by the official discourse which usually tries to hide its presence from the public.

## **2.2. History of Censorship**

A thorough description of the history of censorship would be well beyond the scope of this thesis and so this section will make do with a brief explanation of censorship’s origins. These origins can be found in what is called the taboos, that is words or activities which a certain society deems unacceptable in public life. The areas of human existence which became taboos in many societies can be found in Keith Allan’s and Kate Burridge’s book *Forbidden Words: Taboo and the Censoring of Language*,

From earliest times, themes such as private parts, bodily functions, sex, lust, anger, notions of social status, hate, dishonesty, drunkenness, madness, disease, death, dangerous animals, fear and God have inspired

taboos and inhibitions, such that there has been considerable impact from censoring discussion of them. (2006: 239)

As Allan and Burridge further point out, sometimes the reasons for making a certain aspect of our lives a taboo may seem unclear, at other times the taboos are perfectly reasonable. Preventing incest, for example, is rational for evolutionary reasons and limiting verbal expressions of anger can improve possibly dangerous interpersonal relations (2006: 9). Once a taboo is established, there is just a small step towards the actual censorship of such a topic. Thus, the origins of censorship can be traced back all the way to various aspects of life which became taboos and as such, became subject to the possibility of being censored.

The first official office of a censor was established in ancient Rome in 443 BC and this is also where the word itself originated (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*). The task of a censor was to protect morality of the public, which had serious political implications. Aristotle later wrote of the possible impact of indecent behaviour: “there is nothing that the legislator should be more careful to drive away than indecency of speech; for the light utterance of shameful words leads to shameful actions. The young especially should never be allowed to repeat or hear anything of that sort” (1995: 2120). This illustrates the fear of political establishments that breaking verbal taboos could lead to breaking of taboos on activities and behaviour. Therefore, indecent speech was not taken lightly which can also be seen in Aristotle’s subsequent description of severe punishments which every person who spoke indecently should be subjected to, including the elderly.

## **2.3. Motivations for Censorship**

In this section, I will identify what I consider to be three main motivations for censorship of translated texts. The first motivation is the safeguarding of public morality. The second motivation stems from religious reasons and the third motivation is political.

### **2.3.1. Safeguarding of Public Morality**

As I mentioned above, censorship started with taboos and these are connected to the morality of the public. Therefore, throughout history, many works of art have been censored because, at the time, they were considered harmful to public morals. One reason for such censorship is that the authorities worried about people imitating what they read in books. This can be illustrated on the works of Marquis de Sade, which feature graphic descriptions of violence, torture, rape and murder and which were heavily censored, not only in the time of their creation. As Allan and Burrridge write, Sade's originally French texts were claimed to have influenced several mass murderers in the 20<sup>th</sup> century United States, which created grounds for censoring them (2006: 22). They describe such reasoning in this way:

The argument for censorship is that, although most readers will not be provoked to copy the violent sexual excesses of Sade's fictional characters (nor even of the man himself), there may be some benighted souls who are – with severe consequences for their victims and concomitant cost to the community. (Allan and Burrridge, 2006: 22)

This reasoning, however, fails to account for all the violence throughout human history which could not have been influenced by Sade's or similar texts. After all, as Allan and Burrridge also point out, violence has been a fact of life since time immemorial (2006:

22). It is also worth noting that there didn't seem to be any attempts at censoring violence in the Bible, although one would not have to look for it there for a long time and considering that the Bible may well have been the cause of much more violence than any other book in history.

Closely related to censorship for preservation of public morality is the use of dysphemism and euphemisms. Euphemism is a word which functions as an inoffensive substitute for something that is a taboo. Dysphemism is its counterpart, a word with negative or offensive connotations. Unsurprisingly, it is the dysphemisms in the source texts that often get censored and replaced in the target texts by euphemisms. This, however, leads to changes in the meanings of words, and expressions which started as euphemisms may themselves become too associated with the taboo they were originally meant to avoid (Allan and Burridge, 2006: 43). Through this process, such euphemism may eventually themselves become subject to censorship, which means the need for new euphemisms arises. According to Allan and Burridge,

One hears of people who would like to erase obscene terms like *cunt* and slurs like *idiot* and *nigger* from the English language; most people recognize after a few moments' reflection that this is a wish that is impossible to grant – not least because, under the conditions of their creation, these words will not be taboo. Such words are as much a part of English as all the other words in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. (2006: 11)

This illustrates not only that dysphemisms often start without their offensive connotations, but also the fact that such form of censorship cannot be successful in the long term due to the ongoing development of meanings of euphemisms and dysphemisms.

This covers the descriptions of violent acts and the use of bad language in the source texts. One more important aspect of some works of art which is often censored for the sake of safeguarding the public morals is the description of sexual acts. This can be well documented by the situation in the Victorian England. This era was well known for its prudish morals – at least in the public life – which was reflected in their translations as well. Foreign books featuring sexual scenes were often heavily self-censored in order to prevent the book from being banned after the publication of the translation. Siobhan Brownlie showed this on the 1884 English translation of the French novel *Nana*, written by Emile Zola and translated (most probably) by Henry Vizetelly. *Nana* is a story of a prostitute and as such, features many references to sex, which were toned down in the process of self-censorship. One example of this can be seen in the following translation solution:

ST: ou tu te paies des hommes

TT: or else you've been treating yourself

Brownlie: or you have been paying men for yourself

(Brownlie, 2007: 212)

In this example, the readers in England did not get to know what the woman was treating herself to, since the sexual reference was removed in the process of translation. Brownlie explains this by the prevailing idea in the 19<sup>th</sup> century England that it was especially women who needed to be protected from “assaults to their delicacy” and that they should therefore “not on any account be exposed to indelicate literature”. Since women were a big part of the readership, translated books needed to conform to the supposed need to protect the sentiments of women (2007: 207). This might indicate economic reasons for the self-censorship, yet these could not have been among the most important ones, since if a work of art did not conform to the standards for public morals

of the time, the book would simply be banned after its publication, which is what eventually happened to the translation of *Nana*, despite the many instances of the translator's self-censorship, whose aim was to avoid exactly that outcome.

It is also interesting to note that such form of censorship can also serve as an indicator of the situation in a given society. In the case of *Nana*, one can observe that in France, the book was allowed to be printed freely without any alterations to the text being made. The fact that in England it had to be censored, points to the difference between the two societies. In this way, censorship allows for a synchronic study of social norms in various societies. It can suggest that the French society, at the time, was more open than England, or that the freedom of expression was seen as more important in France. Similarly, a diachronic study of the same country is possible when one focuses on several subsequent translations of the same original novel. There are often differences in the later translations as to what was seen as socially acceptable at the time. Subsequent versions of the book often get censored less and less and they are getting closer to the original. In the words of Siobhan Brownlie, "a gradual progression of increasing explicitness with regard to sensuality can be traced through . . . the translations. This would support the notion of gradually changing social norms with respect to discursive explicitness" (2007: 228). Thus, studying the role of censorship in translation can be used as a good method of learning about the social changes and developments in a given country over time.

### **2.3.2. Religion-related Motivation**

The second main motivation for censorship is the protection of religions from ideas that are incompatible with their world-views. Christianity has a long history of opposition to new ideas, and banning as well as burning of books from foreign cultures

was a significant part of it. Lisa Appignanesi describes the reasons for this in the following way: “religions are particularly sensitive to competing ideas, which they label offensive or attacks on that purity central to so much religious thought,” (2005: 1) and goes on to give an example of the way some of Christianity’s highest officials regarded the freedom of expression: “in 1832 Pope Gregory XVI declared that freedom of the press was heretical vomit. Fiction, which appeals to the heart as well as the mind, which transports the reader directly into the everyday life of another individual can prove even more dangerous in its seductions” (2005: 2). This shows how free expression was seen as a threat to Christianity and that it was good enough a reason for censoring a great many books.

The protection of world-views of certain religions, however, is not the only reason for religion-related censorship. Another reason is the protection of feelings of the religious people themselves. Although they might not actually object to dissemination of competing world-views, they sometimes find certain things offensive and demand such things be censored, as though their religion entitled them to having their feelings protected. Stephen Fry addressed this very issue when he said: “it’s now very common to hear people say, ‘I’m rather offended by that.’ . . . It’s actually nothing more than a whine . . . It has no meaning; it has no purpose; it has no reason to be respected as a phrase. ‘I am offended by that.’ Well, so fucking what?” (*Stephen Fry on ‘respecting’ religious beliefs*). Fry’s words illustrate the idea that there should be no inherent right to be protected from ideas one dislikes for whatever reason. This is a direct challenge to censorship, because censors often claimed that what they were doing was for the protection of the people. Such protection, however, can cause more harm than it prevents, as can be seen in the words of Soli Sorabjee, former Attorney-General of India:

Experience shows that criminal laws prohibiting hate speech and expression will encourage intolerance, divisiveness and unreasonable interference with freedom of expression. Fundamentalist Christians, religious Muslims and devout Hindus would then seek to invoke the criminal machinery against each other's religion, tenets or practices . . . We need not more repressive laws but more free speech to combat bigotry and to promote tolerance. (qtd. in Lester, 2005: 225)

This goes to show the ultimate futility of censoring texts for the sake of protection of religious people's sentiments. Censorship motivated in this way only promoted further discord between religions.

### **2.3.3. Political Motivation**

The last motivation for censoring translations I was going to identify is the political motivation. Many political establishments throughout history instituted some sort of censorship in order to protect themselves from ideas that might be harmful to their existence. Anything that was contradictory to the official views might prove to be dangerous to the existing political order. This was especially the case with foreign books meant for translations because they introduced ideas from other cultures where the political establishments may have been different and where people may have lived in different conditions. Such a contact with foreign cultures might support desires for a change of the political system in the home country. Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, before coming to power, spoke about the danger to governments stemming from competing ideas in this way: "Why should freedom of speech and freedom of the press be allowed? Why should a government which is doing what it believes is right allow itself to be criticized? It would not allow opposition by lethal weapons. Ideas are much more fatal



things than guns” (qtd. in Inghelhart, 1998: 179). Being aware of the danger of competing ideas, communist countries, among others, limited the freedom of speech and instituted careful censorship of translated books.

Of course, when governments censored translated literature for political reasons, they were not very keen on letting their citizens know what was happening. As I mentioned above, censorship usually operated hidden from the eyes of the public and under disguised names of the offices. The public was usually only allowed to know about the control of literature to the extent that it was done for the safety of the people, to protect them from harmful influences of foreign cultures. As Beate Müller wrote, however, whatever the government may have claimed to be the reason for such control of dissemination of ideas, the actual “intention of the authorities was to safeguard their own power over what went on in the public sphere, and that their motivation was ultimately of an ideological nature” (Müller, 2004: 4). This shows that unlike the censorship for safeguarding of public morality and the religion-related censorship, whose aim can actually be the well-being of the people, political censorship only strove for the preservation of power.

Political censorship, however, was not only concerned with preventing the dissemination of dangerous ideas. Another aim was to select the correct books for people to read, that is the books that supported the views of the government and helped convince the people that the government was doing the right things. Correct literature, therefore, had to be persuasive, not just enjoyable, and its purpose in communist countries was “to shape the consciousness of the populace and mould a new, socialist personality, demonstrating all the characteristics necessary for the ultimate step forward” (Thomson-Wohlgemuth, 2007: 94). The consequence of this was that even books which did not feature ideas that were in opposition to the views of the political

party in power, often did not make it through the selection process. It was the case simply because they were not seen as beneficial to the political cause in question.

An interesting phenomenon regarding the motivation for censorship is the way some censors themselves regarded what they were doing. In some cases they did not find their task to be repressive at all. It was, in fact, quite the opposite in their views. Rather than stopping translated books from being published, they believed that they were actually mediating the contact between the two cultures and that by removing unacceptable passages, they were making it possible for the books to be published. Robert Darnton wrote about a case of a censor from East Germany who “described her activity as promoting literature, on the basis that, had she not erased several problematic expressions, a fair number of texts would have caused outrage within the Central Committee and would have never appeared in print” (qtd. in Thomson-Wohlgemuth, 2007: 106-107). This is an interesting perspective on the issue and it would remove the responsibility of censors for what they were doing. However treacherous this approach might be, the fact remains that many translated books would simply not be published in the time they were, had it not been for the alterations made to the text. The question remains whether the fact that the book could be published was worth the interference with a work of art.

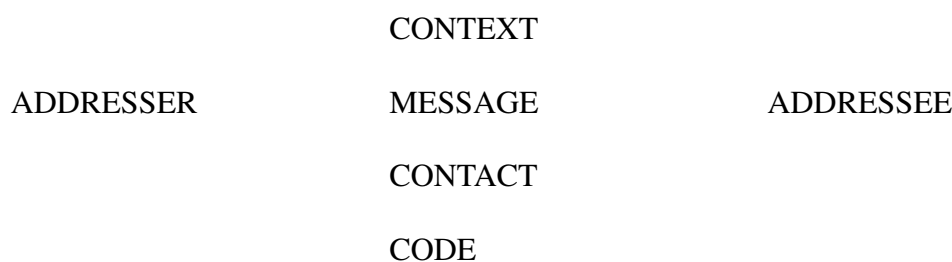
## **2.4. Categorization of Censorship**

Censorship in translation can occur in various phases of the book-publishing process and it can be imposed by various agents. Francesca Billiani ascribed this fact to “the polymorphous nature of censorship and its slipperiness when applied to translations” (2007: 3). Furthermore, there are different ways of altering the texts during translation. In this section, I will identify the following categorizations of censorship in

translation: according to the communication model, pre-publication versus post-publication, public versus self-censorship and lastly, I will discuss the possible types of alterations that can be made to a text.

#### 2.4.1. Categorization According to the Communication Model

Roman Jakobson introduced the following model of communication of six factors:



(Jakobson 3).

One of the factors which might be worth explaining is the Contact, which is similar to Channel in other communication models. According to Beate Müller, this model can serve well for categorizing acts of censorship, depending on which of the factors was subjected to censorship (2004: 15). Of the six factors, four can be effectively influenced by censorship. When the censorship is aimed at the Addresser, Müller identifies this as censorship *ad personam* (2004: 16). An example of this category is a ban on the author or attempts to influence him in any way. When the author's text is manipulated either by deleting or altering of certain passages, it is the case of censorship aimed at the Message. When the message is prevented from reaching the public, it is an instance of censorship aimed at the Addressee. The access to the censored book can be in some way restricted or it can be banned altogether (2004: 17). In cases of censoring specific channels of communication, e.g. literature, films, radio, etc. the censorship is aimed at the Contact factor.

The acts of censorship aimed at the four factors mentioned above are applicable both to regular censorship and the censorship in translation, even though Jakobson's communication model is only meant to represent communication in which both the addresser and the addressee are sufficiently familiar with the code of the message. For the model of interlingual communication, the factor of Translator needs to be added, as well as the factor of the second Code. When the censorship is aimed at the factor of Translator, the person can either be forced to alter the message in the second Code, or the translator can be prohibited from doing his job altogether. In the communist Czechoslovakia, many translators were subjected to this form of censorship for political reasons, which lead to a widespread phenomenon of "pokrývání", that is the practice of having translations published under names of different people, usually also translators, who were allowed to work freely by the regime at the time. This phenomenon will be explored further later on in the thesis.

#### **2.4.2. Pre-publication versus Post-publication**

Another method of categorization of censorship in translation considers the stage of the book-production process, at which the acts of censorship took place, that is to say, whether it occurred before the publication, or after it. According to Pavel Čech, pre-publication, or pre-emptive censorship, can itself operate on two levels. The first level is concerned with the selection of books to be translated (2011: 167). In the process of selection a book would be examined by the authorities, until a decision was reached whether the book was appropriate for the general public. A book to which there were too many objections would not be allowed to be translated at all. If there were only minor objections, or no objections at all, the book might be approved for translation. Then, during the process of translation, the book might go through the second level of pre-

emptive censorship. At the second level, the translators or the editors might be forced to make certain alterations to problematic passages of the text (Müller, 2004: 16). Such alterations would be done so as to avoid the possibility of censorship after the book's publication.

As for post-publication censorship, it was concerned either with books which had been published prior to the institutionalization of censorship in a given country, that is to say usually before a change in the country's political order, or with books which were published after the beginnings of censorship in that country, but which have somehow slipped the attention of censors due to some mistake in the process. According to Beate Müller,

[This kind of censorship] focuses on [the text's] potential audience so that one could describe it as a means to steer the reception of a text. For instance, if only a small number of copies of a contentious book is printed, or if the pricing of the book is suitably expensive, or if libraries that buy the book move it into their restricted sections, access to the publication is made more difficult for the reading public (2004: 17).

Besides the possibilities of post-publication censorship listed by Müller, there was, of course, also the option having the inappropriate book removed from bookshops and libraries altogether. This is what happened in the early stages of censorship in the communist Czechoslovakia and it is a subject which will be explored in more detail later on in the thesis.

### **2.4.3. Self-censorship**

Self-censorship stands in opposition to public censorship, which is the censorship imposed by the authorities in form of specific laws governing what can and

what cannot appear in print and which has been explored to a great extent above. A primary reason for self-censorship in translation, therefore, is easy to find. Translators, as well as other employees of a publishing house responsible for the production of a certain book, would often be forced by the political circumstances to resort to some form of self-censorship in order to avoid the public censorship, which might come with dire consequences to the people responsible for the final version of the target text. Thus, self-censorship “can be conceived of as a compromise between the cultural agent’s desire for expression, and social forces, particularly the dominating forces in society” (Brownlie, 2007: 206). These cultural agents that Brownlie mentions could either be the translators themselves, when they decide to alter the target texts voluntarily, or it might be the editors, who are responsible for the final version of the published book and who might insist on some changes to be made by the translators. Whoever the agent is, however, it is evident that there need not be the office of a censor for censorship to operate in a society.

Although it is unfortunate when translators have to censor their own work, it can sometimes have rather interesting and perhaps even positive consequences. Being forced to avoid certain taboo expressions which are featured heavily in the source texts can give rise to great creativity on the part of the translator. Siobhan Brownlie illustrates this on the case of the aforementioned 1884 English translation of the novel *Nana*. In this text, one of the many things which were unacceptable in public discourse of the time was the translation of the French expression “coucher avec”, which in English means “to sleep with”. In Brownlie’s description of the case,

The translator has gone to extreme lengths never to use the dictionary translation of the expression. Instead, a great variety of expressions are used, some more indirect than others, and the choice of each depending

on the particular context where the expression appears. The result is that the 1884 English *Nana* contains much greater lexical variety than the French original and the other translations. (2007: 215)

This shows that compared to other translators of the same novel, who were not subjected to the same limitations, the first translator had to be much more creative in certain aspects in order to make the publishing of his work even possible.

In recent years, there has been a change in the understanding of the issue of self-censorship. The expression does not necessarily have to mean the alterations to one's own work which were made to avoid subsequent public censorship. New views on censorship convey the idea that censorship is, in fact, present in every act of communication because people adapt their speech to fit social standards on a day to day basis. As Allan and Burrige put it: "language is constantly subject to censoring: individuals who do not censor their language, and so normally say whatever first enters their heads without considering the circumstances of utterance, are deemed mentally unstable" (2006: 27). Seen from this point of view, self-censorship does not need to be taken as a negative phenomenon, for everyone has a censor of their own in their heads. This shows that the idea of free speech might simply be an unattainable ideal and that some form of censorship is just another fact of life. The idea that avoiding censorship altogether is impossible was also expressed by Michael Holquist:

[Censorship is] still treated through a crude axiology, as an absolute choice between prohibition and freedom. This position denies the reality of interdiction and masks the necessity of choosing between the myriad specific conditions that embody censorship's fatedness. To be for or against censorship as such is to assume freedom no one has. Censorship

*is*. One can only discriminate among its more and less repressive effects.

(1994: 16)

In this sense, censorship is omnipresent. Whether a person is writing an original work of art or translating it, their work inevitably must have been subjected to self-censorship by the time it was published.

A special case of self-censorship is political correctness. It is the tendency to avoid expressions which some people might see as discriminatory against a specific group people, be it a social or ethnic group, gender etc. If a politician, for example, did not self-censor his speech properly and used politically incorrect expressions publicly, he would put himself in danger of alienating the members of the public. A translator who chooses to keep the politically incorrect expressions from the source text in his translation is taking the same risk. The translated book might be badly accepted by the readers, which would mean lower sales. The strength of the tendency to avoid politically incorrect terms can be illustrated on the fact that even words which are free of any tabooed denotations but which are in some way similar to a tabooed word, also get dropped from public discourse. Allan and Burridge provide the following example:

The reality that *niggardly* has absolutely no etymological connections with *nigger* is of no consequence. What really matters is how speakers perceive their language to be, and if people do start connecting words such as *nitty-gritty* and *niggardly* with the N-word, then this will be the kiss of death for these words. (2006: 104)

This applies to translations as well, and the reluctance to use the literal translation of the word *nigger* even in places where the word appears in the source text will be shown in the practical part of the thesis.



#### 2.4.4. Types of Text Alterations

There are many ways in which texts can be altered during the process of translation, regardless of the motivation for such alterations. According to Gaby Thomson-Wohlgemuth, if alterations are necessary, the preferred option seems to be simply leaving the problematic expression or passage out (2007: 112). This usually does not cause any significant problems in the text as long as the issue is just a few tabooed words or sentences. In such a case, the message of the text can remain relatively unchanged. However, when longer passages are left out, the impact on the target text can be significant. Radoslav Nenadál described the practice of controlling translations in the publishing house Odeon in the Communist Czechoslovakia in the following way: “I was told by several editors . . . that there was a closed room in Odeon with two men inside, who read everything again before it was printed, and who commented on what needed to be left out and what could be kept<sup>1 2</sup>” (*Interview with Radoslav Nenadál*<sup>3</sup>). This shows that such omissions were often made after the translation was finished and without the translator’s knowledge.

Other forms of text alterations include substitutions, general toning down of the language used and, interestingly, even additions (Brownlie, 2007: 210-213). In the case of substitutions, a problematic word is replaced by a different one, to which there should be no, or at least fewer, objections by the public or the censors. This often happens with swear words which are replaced by their less offensive alternatives. As for the general toning down of the language used, expressions which are deemed to be too strong are made less expressive, especially swear words and sexual allusions. A good example of

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<sup>1</sup> “Mně několik redaktorů říkalo, . . . že v Odeonu je prý uzavřená místnost, kde sedí dva pánové, kteří všechno, než to jde do tisku, znovu čtou a mají k tomu připomínky, co se musí vypustit, nebo co se může nechat.”

<sup>2</sup> All translations from Czech into English are mine, unless stated otherwise.

<sup>3</sup> All sources cited as ‘*Interview with...*’ are transcripts of interviews with translators made by Lucie Seibertová for the book *Slovo za slovem: S překladateli o překládání*. The quotes used in this way did not make it into the final version of the book.

using additions to reduce the expressiveness of the text is the use of the word “almost” in front of words which, in the original, were used with their full force. Such addition weakens the original expression and the text becomes more acceptable.

It is also possible to make the language of the text more indirect. Siobhan Brownlie described the use of more general terms for this purpose: “generalization (including the use of superordinates) is another means of producing indirect language. The language in the translation is less explicit and detailed than in the original text with regard to the taboo subjects” (2007: 212). Furthermore, in the case of the 1884 translation of *Nana*, Brownlie also identified an interesting technique of text alteration in which the tabooed expression remains in the source language: “one self-censorship technique . . . is to leave a word in French. In the text we find the phrase: ‘Nana was three month *enceinte*’ (324). There is no explanation of the French term, although its meaning (‘pregnant’) can be guessed from the context” (2007: 214). In this way, rather than expressing the meaning directly and possibly breaking some taboos in the process, the translator could leave it up to the readers to decipher the intended meaning on their own.

## **2.5. Censorship in the Communist Czechoslovakia**

This section will explore the nature of censorship in the communist Czechoslovakia. After the description of the censorship’s beginnings, I will focus on the communist views on literature, explaining what kinds of literature were considered desirable and what kinds undesirable. The period of communist censorship will be divided into two main parts. The first is the years up to the late 1960s, when censorship functioned officially. The second part – the period after the late 1960s – will deal with the transition from official censorship to self-censorship. This section will also feature

the phenomenon of publishing translations under names of different translators as well as various means of avoiding censorship altogether.

### **2.5.1. The Beginnings**

The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia gained power in the country in 1948 and that year also marks the beginnings of the communist censorship in Czechoslovakia. At the time, there was a wealth of books in bookshops and libraries which were incompatible with the communist world-view. Therefore, the first task for the censors was to institute post-publication censorship in order to deal with novels that were already in circulation. This led to three waves of cleansing of libraries in the beginnings of the communist rule. The three waves occurred in the years 1948, 1950 and 1953, and, according to Karel Kaplan, approximately 27 million books, both original works and translations, were destroyed in the process (194: 15). All of the books were seen as somehow threatening to the establishing of a new communist society, which meant they could not be allowed to reach the readers and possibly spread undesirable ideas into their minds. Petr Šámal described the process of cleansing of libraries in the following way:

Endeavouring to usurp history, that is to determine what should be forgotten and what values, on the other hand, we should be going back to, is a common concomitant phenomenon of great political changes. However, the number of documents . . . that were to be erased from the collective Czech memory in the beginning of the 1950s is unparalleled in our modern history<sup>4</sup> (2009: 9).

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<sup>4</sup> “Snaha přivlastnit si minulost, tedy stanovit, co má být zapomenuto a k jakým hodnotám se naopak vracet, bývá obvyklým průvodním jevem velkých politických zlomů. Ovšem množství dokumentů . . . jež měly být na počátku padesátých let 20. století z české kolektivní paměti vymazány, nemá v našich moderních dějinách obdoby.”

As I mentioned above, around 27 million books were destroyed in the first years of communism in Czechoslovakia. That number, however, was not the final number of books that were removed from libraries. There were also others, which were not destroyed, but instead were placed into isolated rooms of the Institute of History of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia<sup>5</sup>, a place from which they could still be borrowed, but only under special conditions (Tomášek, 1994: 16-17). The number of books that were censored in this way is not known. For the most part, books were being removed from public libraries, which was fairly simple for the Communist Party. However, undesirable books could still be found in privately owned libraries and bookshops, which meant censors needed to act in the private sphere as well. Rather than confiscating the books, it was decided to buy them out from private libraries, after which they could be destroyed (qtd. in Tomášek, 1994: 17). Damages to the private owners were, of course, of no concern to the party, as can be seen in Dušan Tomášek's words when he commented on a censor's report: "unfortunately, the report does not state whether or not higher prices were set for the purchasing of 'objectionable' publications, or who reimbursed the antiquarian bookshops for the wasted money<sup>6</sup>" (1994: 17).

### **2.5.2. Communist Views on Literature**

In the following section, I will explore the official views on translated literature and on its function in society. I will identify two types – undesirable literature and desirable literature.

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<sup>5</sup> Ústav dějin KSČ

<sup>6</sup> "V hlášení už se bohužel neuvádí, zda byly pro výkup 'závadných' publikací stanoveny vyšší ceny, ani kdo antikvariátům hradil vyhozené peníze."

### 2.5.2.1. Undesirable Literature

There are two main kinds of literature which were subjected to censorship in the communist Czechoslovakia. The first was any literature which was in any way in conflict with the communist views. The second kind is literature which may or may not have been in conflict with the official views, but which was censored mainly because the author of the original, the translator, or even the person who wrote the preface or the postscript was in some way unacceptable to the authorities. The directives for the cleansing of the libraries gave this description of literature that should be removed:

All remnants of politically objectionable literature, i.e. fascist, anti-soviet and other types of reactionary literature, books by traitors, whose names are in deep contempt of every honest citizen of our country, junk literature (overly-sentimental novels and short stories which distort opinions on emotional life and individual's purpose in society) and obsolete scientific literature<sup>7</sup>. (*National Archive*)

It was the label of 'traitor' which was applied to people whose work itself may have been acceptable, yet who did or said something that meant they could not be allowed to be read by the public.

The directive quoted above shows that it was not only books which featured some form of criticism of communism or some competing political ideas that were subjected to censorship. According to Otto Kielmeyer, an important criterion in the selection process was "whether a work is really relevant to the present or merely a matter of the past" (qtd. in Thomson-Wohlgemuth, 2007: 95). Thus, any translated literature that was not seen as somehow beneficial to the formation of the new society

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<sup>7</sup> "Všechny zbytky literatury politicky závadné, tj. fašistické, protisovětské a jiné reakční literatury, knihy zrádců, k jejichž jménům chová každý čestný občan našeho státu hluboké opovržení, literatura braková (přeslazené romány a povídky zkreslující názory na citový život a na společenské poslání jedince) a překonaná literatura naučná."

could have been prevented from reaching the public. An example of a book which was censored mainly for its irrelevance to the new and happy society is *The Wild Goose Chase* by Rex Warner. After its translation, the book was quite positively reviewed by Marie Kropáčková, who wrote of the visible influence of Franz Kafka and ended her review with the following sentence: “[the book] fully and sensitively expresses all the problems and emotional wandering of the present day<sup>8</sup>” (1948: 118). Despite the positive review, the book was eventually censored. Petr Šámal described the reasons for this in this way:

“[Critics would call Kafka’s influence] a typical example of decadent bourgeois art . . . and they would also have to refuse the ‘emotional wandering of the present day’. In the new age, it was not possible to fumble aimlessly, for the direction was clear: happy socialist tomorrows. Warner’s book, which, according to the censors, did not point in this correct direction, could confuse the readers. It was, therefore, also reclassified as objectionable literature<sup>9</sup>. (2009: 85)

This shows that a book could be censored even if it in no way criticised communism and neither the author, nor the translator, was unacceptable to the regime. Not being helpful to the cause was good enough a reason for censorship.

As I mentioned above, it was not only the content of a book that could make it undesirable in the eyes of the censors. Another important factor was who the author and the translator were and what were their political views, regardless of whether they were represented in the book in question. An example of a book which was prevented from reaching the public because of the political activities of the author, although the

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<sup>8</sup> “Vyjadřuje citlivě a plně všechny problémy a citová bloudění dneška.”

<sup>9</sup> “[Inspiraci Kafkou by kritika označili za] typickou ukázkou úpadkového buržoazního umění . . . a odmítnout by musela i ‘citové bloudění dneška’. V nové době nebylo lze tápat, neboť směr byl jasný: socialistické šťastné zítřky. Warnerova kniha, která podle cenzorů tuto správnou cestu neukazovala, by mohla čtenáře mást. Proto byla i ona přerazena mezi závadné knihy.”

translation was already finished, is John Boynton Priestley's novel *The Good Companions*. Antonín Přidal, the author of the Czech translation, described the case of the novel in the following way:

[Priestley] signed a protest petition against the discrimination of writers in the Soviet Union . . . And this news reportedly came from Moscow where Priestley was found to be treacherous, and, although before he was quite an acceptable Briton, none of his works could be published . . . It took several years before the ban on Priestley was lifted and my translation could be published<sup>10</sup>. (*Interview with Antonín Přidal*)

The fact that the book was originally allowed to be translated and the ban only came after Priestley had signed the petition shows that in this case, censorship had nothing to do with the actual content of the novel and that the only problem with the book was the author himself. Situations when the problems were with the author of the translation will be discussed in the section on translations published under names of different translators.

However, a book could be subjected to censorship even if all of the above factors posed no problems. A sufficient reason for censorship was also an objectionable author of a preface or a postscript, again, even if the text itself was perfectly acceptable. Pavel Čech described the case of a book which was censored because it featured a postscript written by Ladislav Novomeský, who was accused of “bourgeois nationalism” in 1951 and later sentenced to ten years in prison (2011: 190). As Pavel Čech put it: “while the persona of L. Novomeský probably played no role in the decision of the pre-emptive censorship in the summer of 1951 . . . one year later, the Slovak author of the postscript

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<sup>10</sup> “[Priestley se] připojil k nějaké protestní petici proti diskriminaci spisovatelů v sovětském svazu . . . A tato zpráva přišla údajně z Moskvy, kde Priestley se prokázal jako věrolomný, ačkoli dříve pro ně docela přijatelný Brit, a že nesmí od něho nic vydávat . . . teprve po několika dalších letech byla sňata klatba z Priestleyho a mohl vyjít můj překlad.”

became the main selection factor of the post-publication censorship<sup>11</sup>” (2001: 190). Again, the fact that the book passed through the pre-emptive censorship shows that content-wise, it was acceptable and the issue was only with the author of the postscript.

Furthermore, there are records of censorship of translated literature even for less serious reasons. Jarmila Emmerová told an anecdote from her career, when she was forced to censor a name that appeared in the footnotes. The name belonged to one of high Russian officials who became inconvenient to the regime. The book, however, had already been printed and so a different technique of censorship had to be employed. Emmerová described the event in this way:

Josef Škvorecký and I were given a marker and we had to black out the name of the renegade from the printed books, so that he could not, by any chance, have bad influence on our socialist society . . . I have to admit that we were in no hurry with the deleting of the villain and we had a lot of fun in the process.<sup>12</sup> (2012: 57)

Since the censored person used to be a representative of the oppressive regime, this was one of the rare occasions when being forced to censor a translation was not such an unpleasant act for the employees of the publishing house.

Aspects that could make a novel undesirable in the communist regime, however, were not always of political nature. Translated literature was also often censored for the sake of protection of public morality. This can be seen in the words of Josef Čermák when he described two reasons for censorship in Czechoslovakia, with the first being the political motivation: “the second barrier was represented by a rather hypocritically demanded protection of our people from immorality and vulgarity as a dangerous

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<sup>11</sup> “Zatímco tedy osobnost L. Novočeského zřejmě nehrála žádnou roli v rozhodnutí preventivní cenzury v létě 1951 . . . o rok později byl slovenský autor doslovu hlavním selekčním faktorem cenzury následně.”

<sup>12</sup> “Já a Josef Škvorecký jsme dostali redispero a jméno odpadlíka jsme museli v hotových výtiscích začernit, aby náhodou nepříznivě neovlivnil naši socialistickou společnost . . . musím přiznat, že jsme s mýcením toho padoucha moc nespěchali a dobře se u toho bavili.”



infection of the bourgeois capitalism<sup>13</sup>” (2012: 34). Various aspects that could trigger censorship in this way were discussed in the section on motivation for censorship. Yet, there is one more aspect which played an important role in translations in Czechoslovakia. This aspect was slang and non-standard language which was sometimes used in the source texts.

Slang in general was often considered a dangerous phenomenon in speech, because it was regarded as a language of “anti-society”. This is illustrated in Allan and Burridge’s description of the functions that slang serves in a society:

Slang is ‘antilanguage’ because it is intended to dissimilate users from out-groupers. The language of those involved in unofficial or illegal activities needs to exclude regulators and law officers; it is reported that the language of drug addicts changes constantly and rapidly for this reason. (2006: 70).

This description shows that slang was seen as a subversive element in speech as well as a threat to public morality, which led to tendencies to censor it in literature. In the communist Czechoslovakia, this tendency was particularly strong after the publication of an essay on linguistics by Joseph Stalin himself. In his essay, Stalin praised the use of the standard language and denounced capitalist influences on the correct speech of the proletariat. Stalin described the capitalist influence in the following way: “the bourgeoisie littered the unified national language with their monger vocabulary<sup>14</sup>” (1950: 14). Stalin’s essay had a significant impact on Czech translations in the way that censors demanded that translators use standard language in their texts. Two good examples of books whose translators had to struggle with censorship over the use of

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<sup>13</sup> “Druhý mantinel představovala dosti pokrytecky požadovaná ochrana našeho lidu před nemravností a vulgaritou jakožto nebezpečnou nákazou ze strany buržoazního kapitalismu.”

<sup>14</sup> Translated from the Czech edition: “Buržoové zaneřádili jednotný národní jazyk svým kramářským slovníkem.”

slang speech are J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* and Warren Miller's *The Cool World*, both of which will be explored further in the practical part of the thesis.

One more interesting fact related to slang is that translations actually led the way in fighting the censorship of such expressions and in making slang speech more acceptable even in original Czech novels later on. This can be seen in the words of Stanislav Rubáš about the translation of the aforementioned novel *The Catcher in the Rye*: “the translation then played a pioneering role in colloquialisms in literary language and influenced the development of literature more than linguistic writings signed by the omniscient generalissimo . . . [It] helped relax language expressiveness of many other translations as well as original prose, that came after it<sup>15</sup>” (2012: 13). Thus, had it not been for such translations, the development of what was acceptable even in original Czech literature would have been delayed.

#### **2.5.2.2. Desirable Literature**

As I mentioned above, a translated novel could have been deemed undesirable and censored simply for the fact that it was not relevant to the communist cause. It is then easy to see what the most important feature of desirable literature was to the regime. An appropriate novel had to be relevant to the current situation and it had to help the regime and the people in achieving their vision of better tomorrows. A. I. Sobolev described the task of an artist in a socialist regime in this way:

[The artist] has to be constantly aware of the meaning of this great struggle, which he will take part in through his future work. Every work of art faithful to guiding principles and truly artistic which the artist creates . . . is another victorious battle in the ideological struggle against

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<sup>15</sup> “Překlad pak sehrál průkopnickou roli v pojetí hovorovosti literárního jazyka a ovlivnil vývoj literatury víc než jazykovědné spisky podepsané vševědoucím generalissem . . . pomohl uvolnit jazykovou expresivitu mnohých jiných překladů i původních próz, které přišly po něm.”

the camp of imperialist reaction, and another achievement in the great work of building the Communist society. (qtd. in Michl, 1999: 24)

This shows that artistic qualities were subordinate to usefulness to the regime. Since the publishing houses also had to deal with shortages of paper for printing, quality literature often ended up being censored by omission simply because novels that supported the communist cause were given priority (Čech, 2011: 178). This meant that there might be no paper left for literature which was not objectionable, but which had no characteristics of desirable literature.

Thus, the preferred literary genre was realism and the goal of a socialist work of art was not enjoyment, but persuasion. According to Petr Šámal, “the number one task of a work of literature was to persuade, to get new followers of the communist future; literature was supposed to mobilise citizens to fight for the new world with enthusiasm, it was meant to be a weapon in the struggle for a better future<sup>16</sup>” (2009: 12-13). Naturally, books which did not meet the criterion of persuasiveness were difficult to publish in such a society. Of course, most of the books which were seen as relevant to the situation and which were persuasive were either original Czech works or translations from Russian. It was these books that the regime found desirable, and translated literature from the West often got either downplayed or outright censored.

### **2.5.3. Censorship up to the Late 1960s**

As I described in the section on the beginnings of censorship in Czechoslovakia, the communist party first focused the censorial attention on books which had been printed before the change of the regime. Once that was done, the focus shifted to pre-emptive censorship. In the early years of the communist era, the responsibility for

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<sup>16</sup> “Literární dílo mělo na prvním místě přesvědčovat, získávat nové stoupence komunistické budoucnosti, literatura měla mobilizovat obyvatele, aby s nadšením bojovali za nový svět, měla být zbraní v boji za lepší budoucnost.”

censorship was passed over several different offices, until the year 1953, when Hlavní správa tiskového dohledu<sup>17</sup> (HSTD) was established. HSTD existed until 1967 and it was the ultimate authority on deciding what could be published in these years. According to Dušan Tomášek, “from the very beginning it was a highly repressive office (censorship probably cannot operate in any other way), subjected and devoted to the communist party and its ministry of the interior and only doing their will<sup>18</sup>” (1994: 13). There was, therefore, no question of the office being impartial or of serving the good of the people in any way. Its task was protecting the regime from negative influences from both outside and inside and keeping the communist party in power.

Before any book could be published in this era, several reports on the book had to be written. This occurred on the level of publishing houses. According to Pavel Čech, the reports stated whether a book or an author were ideologically acceptable and only if the publishing house itself thought the book could be published, would it be sent to the censorship authorities (2011: 167). As I mentioned above, the ultimate authority for the most part of this era was HSTD, which is where the final decision was taken. Nothing was ever published without HSTD’s stamp of approval (Tomášek, 1994: 125). Interestingly, it is very probable that the people responsible for these decisions were not actually qualified to make them. First of all, they did not need to be able to speak the foreign languages from which the translations were made, since they only considered the ideological aspect of the books (*Interview with Miroslav Jindra*). Eva Kondrysová, however, expressed an even stronger opinion on the insufficient qualities of the communist censors:

[People] who were put in charge of culture, were good-for-nothings and could only read and write . . . they had no appreciation of culture and

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<sup>17</sup> Office for Publication Surveillance

<sup>18</sup>“Hned od samého počátku šlo o orgán výrazně represivní (jinak to u cenzury snad ani není možné), podřízený a oddaný komunistické straně a jejímu ministerstvu vnitra, vykonávající pouze jejich vůli.”

books were just a nuisance to them. Furthermore, they saw books as a dynamite of possible problems and they would be happiest if books weren't published at all. That was one group. The other group was people who had creative ambitions of their own, but were not successful in them<sup>19</sup>. (*Slovo za slovem*, 2012: 197)

Whether this opinion is a little too excessive or not, it seems quite clear that the responsibility for deciding what the people in Czechoslovakia could and could not read was often entrusted to people who were not really competent and qualified in the field of literature.

In those times, there were some other forms of controlling what was published as well. The communist party also started closing down all privately owned publishing houses so that it could have full control of the entire sector. Pavel Čech writes that the official reason for this was to prevent wasteful usage of paper for printing, but that “in reality, the main aim was easier control and direct influence on publishing<sup>20</sup>” (2011: 13). However, the shortage of paper was a real problem and it was used by the regime as another means of control. Gaby Thomson-Wohlgemuth described the situation in Soviet countries in this way: “paper was the planning item that caused the most problems for publishers. The paper industry and the paper trade had been nationalized, with the result that paper could no longer be bought on the free market but was instead distributed” (2007: 103). Thus, translations would often not be allowed to be printed, since books from western countries were the least important among the things that were to be published. Books that somehow served the needs of the regime were always given priority and so many translations would either be printed later or not at all.

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<sup>19</sup> “[Kdo] dostal na starost kulturu, nebyl dobrý k ničemu jinému a uměl jenom číst a psát . . . ke kultuře neměli žádný vztah a knížky je jenom obtěžovaly. Navíc v nich viděli dynamit možných malérů. a byli by nejradši, kdyby nevycházelo vůbec nic. To byla jedna parta. A druhá byli lidé, kteří měli vlastní tvůrčí ambice, ale nebyli v nich úspěšní.”

<sup>20</sup> “Ve skutečnosti se jedná zejména o snadnější kontrolu a o přímé ovlivňování nakladatelské činnosti.”

Along with political liberalization towards the year 1968, there was a censorial liberalization as well. HSTD was discontinued and the office that took its place, in the short time of its existence, did not enforce censorship very strictly. The communist party changed its position officially when it declared that,

It is not possible to arbitrarily and forcefully dictate to working people, who are no longer controlled by an exploitative class, what they can or cannot be informed about . . . We refuse the administrative and bureaucratic methods of effecting cultural politics, we disassociate ourselves from them and we will oppose them; works of art cannot be subjected to censorship.<sup>21</sup> (Central Committee of the Communist party of Czechoslovakia)

It seemed then that censorship in Czechoslovakia would be over and, indeed, on June 26 1968, the following formulations in a new law made censorship illegal: “(1) Censorship is impermissible. (2) Censorship is defined as any interference by the state authorities in the freedom of speech<sup>22</sup>” (*act no. 84/1968*). This was the end of the official censorship in Czechoslovakia, but it did not stop censorship altogether.

#### **2.5.4. Censorship after the Late 1960s**

The era of normalization brought a new kind censorship. Soon, the law which made censorship illegal was repealed, but things did not go back to the way they were. This time, the responsibility for what was published lay on the publishing houses themselves which led to self-censorship in the publication process. If the publishers

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<sup>21</sup> “Pracujícím lidem, kterým už nediktuje třída vykořisťovatelů, nelze libovolným výkladem mocensky předepisovat, o čem smějí a o čem nesmějí být informováni . . . Odmítáme administrativní a byrokratické způsoby uskutečňování kulturní politiky, distancujeme se od nich a budeme jim čelit; umělecká tvorba nesmí být podrobována cenzuře.”

<sup>22</sup> “(1)Cenzura je nepřípustná. (2) Cenzurou se rozumějí jakékoliv zásahy státních orgánů proti svobodě slova.”

wanted to avoid punishment after the publication of a novel, they had to make sure themselves that nothing problematic would be printed. In the eyes of many of the people involved, this situation was even worse than the era of official censorship. According to Josef Čermák,

As long as HSTD existed . . . and this office put its stamp on the final version of the text, the publisher was then out of the picture and the responsibility was passed on to that authority. Later, however, when self-censorship was exercised, things got worse. Responsibility was with the authors and, subsequently, with the publishing houses. Fear began to spread further. It was up to the authors and editors to decide how much risk they would be prepared to take, depending on their judgement and courage<sup>23</sup>. (2012: 36)

In the days of the official censorship, it was not a big issue to suggest a book which was potentially problematic. If it was, indeed, found unacceptable, the authorities would simply not allow it to be translated. In the days of self-censorship, however, coming up with a potentially unacceptable book for translation also meant potential problems for the people involved. This meant, as Dušan Tomášek put it, that “editorial staff were more paranoid than before and they were even afraid to publish things that censors would have allowed without objections. Furthermore, the regime was free to call out into the world: There is no pre-emptive censorship in our country!<sup>24</sup>” (1994: 154). Thus, the communist party succeeded in bringing censorship back even stricter than before, while making it look like the opposite.

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<sup>23</sup> “Dokud existovala HSTD . . . a tento úřad dal na definitivní verzi zkorigovaného textu své razítko, byl už nakladatel z obliga a odpovědnost přejímal orgán. Když však později začala být uplatňována autocenzura, bylo to horší. Odpovědnost byla na autorech a následovně na nakladatelství, začal se víc šířit strach. Záleželo na rozvaze a statečnosti autorů i redaktorů, do jaké míry dokážou eventuálně riskovat.”

<sup>24</sup> “V mnoha redakcích ‘slyšeli trávu růst’ víc než dříve a báli se uveřejnit i to, co by bývalí cenzoři bez připomínek pouštěli. A režim navíc mohl hlásat do světa: předběžná cenzura u nás neexistuje!”

Since the publishing houses now bore full responsibility for what they published, they needed a way of figuring out what books would be acceptable for translation and which would be problematic. They relied, once again, on the system of writing several reports on every book before translation. Josef Čermák described the system of writing reports in this way: “books were subjected to external assessment, and when there were doubts, there would even be two or three of them. Furthermore, every editor had their own group of professionally, as well as literarily, reliable experts whom he trusted<sup>25</sup>” (2012: 27). It was the job of these experts to decide whether a book could be translated without subsequent problems for the people involved. It is very unfortunate for the study of censorship in translation that most of these reports were later destroyed (Čermák, 2012: 27). The experts’ task, however, was not an easy one. For example, they were not told which foreign authors were unacceptable to the regime and yet they needed this information to be able to decide about their books. Jarmila Fialová spoke of the situation: “although we had no written lists [of undesirable authors], they did exist somewhere and we had to sort of devise them. We had to use our instincts to guess what was and what was not acceptable<sup>26</sup>” (2012: 76). As I mentioned above, this uncertainty about the regime’s expectations may have even prevented the publishing of books which, in the previous era, would have successfully passed the process of official censorship.

#### **2.5.5. Publishing Translations under Names of Different Translators**

The years of normalization were also characterised by investigating of party members and of employees on rather important positions. People’s political opinions

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<sup>25</sup> “Kniha byla podrobena externímu lektorátu, v případě pochybností i dvěma nebo třem. K tomu měl každý redaktor svůj lektorský sbor, složený z odborně i literárně spolehlivých znalců, jimž věřil.”

<sup>26</sup> “Sice jsme neměli písemné seznamy [nežádoucích autorů], ale někde ty seznamy prostě byly a my jsme si je museli jakoby vymyslet. Museli jsme po čichu uhodnout, co ano a co ne.”



were checked and this could have direct consequences for their careers – along with expulsion from the party for the members, employees could lose their jobs and be forbidden from practising their professions altogether (Fröhlich, 2012: 100). This was the case of many translators who were suddenly blacklisted, which meant that publishing houses could not cooperate with them and, effectively, the voices of these translators were being censored. This led to a widespread phenomenon called “pokrývání” in Czech. It was the secret practice of having translations published under names of different people, usually themselves translators, who were allowed to work freely by the regime. Of course, this meant that for all official purposes, the author of the translation was the person under whose name it was published and the original translator lost all the rights to his work. According to Antonín Přidal,

Some editors and dramaturges bravely inspired this silent game, because they wanted to help those who were affected to make a living, others supported it silently, and yet another group did not want to see through the scheme and thwart it, because the quality work, although it was done illicitly, was beneficial to their enterprise.<sup>27</sup> (*Zamlčování překladatelé*, 1992: 5).

Thus, this phenomenon was a result of cooperation of several people who hid it from the regime. Keeping such a secret was no simple matter and on several occasions it led to problematic situations.

Eva Kondrysová described some of the situations which could have led to police finding out about a specific translator ‘covering’ another one:

Both the people who covered others, and the ones who were covered, continued to live their regular lives – they got drunk, divorced . . . they

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<sup>27</sup> “Někteří redaktoři a dramaturgové tuto tichou hru statečně inspirovali, protože chtěli postiženým existenčně pomoci, druzí ji mlčky podporovali a třetí ji prohlédnout a překazít nechtěli, protože kvalitní práce, byť získávané nazapřenou, byly jejich podniku ku prospěchu.”

fought policemen, and all of these things were a threat to the covering, since, of course, it was a criminal activity. Had it been exposed, it would have caused a lot of trouble<sup>28</sup>. (*Interview with Eva Kondrysová*)

Specifically, there was a case of the two people involved meeting in a pub and leaving behind the corpus delicti – the manuscript – which was then found by the police (Čermák, 2012: 32). On another occasion, a translator forgot he was being covered and wrote an angry letter to a publishing house about the changes that had been made to his translation (Emmerová, 2012: 65). All of these were dangerous situations and, for the most part, people involved in covering were extremely careful not to be exposed. Indeed, they had every reason to be cautious, because the secret police was after them. Rudolf Pellar described how his wife was interrogated by the police and was asked whether it could be told who the author of a translation was. Pellarová rather courageously answered the police officers that, “eventually, it could be told, but *you* couldn’t tell!”<sup>29</sup> (qtd. in Pellar, 2012: 296).

Interestingly, when translators were forbidden to keep working in their profession, they usually did not get to know the reasons for the ban. Of course, a signatory of the Charter 77 would have no problems devising what led to him being banned, but there were others for whom the reasons are much harder to find and these were never informed about them by the regime. When asked whether there were lists of banned translators, Josef Čermák answered: “I don’t know, because they never put anything on paper . . . Directors were confidentially informed in person or over the telephone<sup>30</sup>” (2012: 32). The heads of publishing houses were informed in this way

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<sup>28</sup> “Jak ti pokrývači, tak ti jejich chráněnci, žili dál normálními životy – opjeli se, rozváděli . . . prali se s policisty a všechny tyto akce ohrožovaly vlastně průběh toho pokrývání, protože to byla samozřejmě trestná činnost. To by býval byl velký malér, kdyby se to bylo profláklo.”

<sup>29</sup> “Nakonec by se to poznalo, ale vy byste to nepoznali!”

<sup>30</sup> “To se neví, protože na papíře nic nebylo . . . Sdělovalo se to důvěrně ředitelům po telefonu nebo při osobních schůzkách.”

about whom they could not work with, but not even they were told any details or reasons for the ban. Surprisingly, just as a ban on a specific translator could suddenly come out of nowhere, the same was true for the lifting of the ban. Radoslav Nenadál described how he was allowed to translate again after three years in this way: “just as back then, when [Jarmila Rosíková] picked up a phone and said, ‘Radoslav, a terrible thing happened. You cannot do any work for us,’ so then she called and said, ‘Radoslav, now you can<sup>31</sup>’” (*Interview with Radoslav Nenadál*). When Nenadál asked for the reasons for the change, Rosíková had no information to share. And so it was that translators were forbidden to work and their voices were censored, without their ever finding out why this was the case.

#### **2.5.6. Avoiding Censorship**

Just as translators were able to fight against bans on their work through covering, there were also ways of fighting against pre-emptive censorship. The most common method of avoiding censorship was using the experts’ reports to the publishing houses’ advantage. Through a wise choice of the person to write the report, publishers could influence the final decision by the censors. Prefaces could serve the same function as the reports. If a party member, for example, wrote a preface to a book, it improved its chances of getting published. This can be seen in the words of František Fröhlich:

It was sometimes decided that the book should feature a preface by someone in the communist party, if possible. That is someone who for some reason entered the party, which was not all that odd in the sixties,

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<sup>31</sup> “Stejně, jako tenkrát vzala telefon a říkala: ‘Radoslave, stala se hrozná věc. Ty pro nás nesmíš nic dělat,’ tak teď zavolala a řekla: ‘Radoslave, už můžeš.’”

but who also remained in it after the audits in the seventies, which was a little dubious<sup>32</sup>. (2012: 109).

Therefore, when the publishers needed someone to write a report for or a preface to a possibly contentious book, they often looked for people whose names or whose reports would be well-received by the censorship authorities.

Of course, it was not just the names of the people writing the reports or prefaces that could be of use to avoiding censorship. It was also what the people wrote that mattered. Thus, the authors of the reports often tried to downplay possibly problematic aspects of the books, such as religion, and, instead, they emphasized aspects which the censors would regard positively, such as criticism of capitalism or the main character's will to improve things in the world (Thomson-Wohlgemuth, 2007: 110). They could, in fact, try to trick the censors into approving books which normally would have been censored. Miroslav Jindra also spoke of this possibility:

Luckily, most censors, regardless of the level and the institution, were fools, and so it was possible to deceive them. For example, you could write that a book was a crushing criticism of the imperialist system. And even if there was nothing of that sort in the book, it worked. It is almost unbelievable what actually got published<sup>33</sup>. (Slovo za slovem, 2012: 150).

Not every book, of course, could be saved in this way, but in many cases it was possible to prevent censorship using such methods. Furthermore, when it happened that a contentious book was surprisingly published in Russia, this too could have been used by

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<sup>32</sup> "Někdy se dospělo k názoru, že by knihu měl 'zaštitit' předmluvou někdo, kdo je pokud možno v komunistické straně. Tedy kdo nějakou shodou okolností do té strany vstoupil, což v šedesátých letech taková zvláštnost nebyla, ale pak v ní po těch prověrkách v sedmdesátých letech i zůstal, což bylo trochu na pováženou."

<sup>33</sup> "Naštěstí většina cenzorů, ať už na jakékoli úrovni a v jakékoli instituci, byli lidé hloupí, takže bylo možné je jistým způsobem ošálit. Třeba stačilo napsat, že kniha podává zdrcující kritiku imperialistického systému. A i když tam třeba nic takového nebylo, fungovalo to. Je až neuvěřitelné, co všechno vycházelo."

publishers in Czechoslovakia (Josef Škvorecký, 2012: 395). This was the case because it would have been hard for the censors to oppose the publication of a book that had been given a stamp of approval by their Russian colleagues.

Another method of avoiding censorship in translation was publishing bibliophilic editions of problematic books and manipulating official information about them. This was often done by Jaroslav Picka. In his editions, Picka frequently changed the actual publication dates, because older books meant less interest of the censorship authorities (Čech, 2011: 216). Another way of manipulating information about the bibliophilic editions was misrepresenting the number of books that would be printed. Small editions meant less interest of the censors, which allowed Picka's editions to slip the censors' attention. Pavel Čech described an example of Picka's crafty manipulations: "[a specific book] was meant to be printed in one single copy for certain František Kostka. In reality, there were 80 copies and a further unspecified number of copies which Picka declared to be 'test prints'<sup>34</sup>" (2011: 217). Although it was not a great amount of books that Picka managed to print in this way, he still succeeded in publishing a number of books which otherwise would not have been published at all and instead of a small audience, there would have been no audience.

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<sup>34</sup> "[Jedna kniha] měla být vytištěna v jediném exempláři pro jistého Františka Kostku. Ve skutečnosti se jednalo o 80 výtisků a další neupřesněný počet exemplářů, které Picka označil jako 'zkušební tisk'."

### 3. Practical Part

#### 3.1. The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, written by Mark Twain and first published in 1884, is a story for young readers about a boy's journey along the Mississippi river in company of a runaway slave. The book has caused a lot of controversy because of its frequent use of the word "nigger" and because of some of the attitudes towards African Americans expressed by the protagonist. This was also an issue in the two translations into Czech, one from 1953 by František Gel and the other from 2007 by Jana Mertinová.

In both translations, the word "nigger" was censored and it was rendered as "černoch" in Czech. Thus, even when Huck speaks condescendingly about African Americans, the reference is still translated using the neutral term:

He was most always right; he had an uncommon level head for a nigger.  
(1948: 76)

(G) Měl skoro vždycky pravdu. Měl na černocho opravdu kromobyčejně dobrou hlavu. (1955: 72)

(M) Jim měl skoro vždycky pravdu. Tak rychle mu to pálilo, že by to u černocho nikdo nečekal. (2007: 111)

This act of censorship is quite understandable, since the book is aimed at young readers and because there were even American editions of the original novel from which the offensive word was removed. However, it is interesting that many years after the first publication of the novel in Czech, Mertinová felt it was acceptable to keep the literal translation of "nigger" in her version of the text, although only on some occasions. There are two types of situations in which Mertinová decided not to censor the word.

The first is when Jim himself speaks about other members of his own race and the second is when Huck becomes upset with Jim.

An example of the first type of situation is the following sentence, in which Jim is offended upon hearing French, which he mistakes for an insult:

I'd take en bust him over de head – dat is, if he warn't white. I wouldn't  
'low no nigger to call me dat. (1948: 79)

(G) Vzal bych klacek a praštil bych ho po hlavě, totiž kdyby nebyl bílý.  
Od žádného černocho bych si takhle nenechal nadávat. (1955: 75)

(M) Dal bych mu rovnou lepanec. Teda pokud by to nebyl běloch. Ale  
vod žádnýho negra si taklenc nadávat nenechám. (2007: 115)

Gel, as always, stuck with the neutral term, but Mertinová chose to use the word “negr”. It is possible that Mertinová found the word acceptable in this situation because in today's United States some African Americans refer to each other in this way. Only members of that race can use this word and in this context, it is not meant offensively. As Allan and Burrige wrote, its meaning is actually positive: “used among African Americans, *nigger* is often a badge of identity and solidarity (when it is often spelled *nigga*)” (2006: 84). Such use, however, is not appropriate in the context of the novel, since Mertinová used the word when Jim was offended and he spoke derisively. This resulted in Jim appearing to have less respect for members of his own race than Huck does, which is not the case in the source text.

The second type of situation is when Huck becomes angry with Jim. This occurred when Huck started having bad conscience about helping Jim run away from, as Huck says, “his rightful owner” (1948: 91) after Jim talked about rescuing his children from slavery. Huck described the situation in this way:

Here was this nigger, which I had as good as helped to run away, coming right out flat-footed and saying he would steal his children – children that belonged to a man I didn't even know; a man that hadn't ever done me no harm. (1948: 88)

(M) Najednou si tenhle negr, kterýmu jsem já v podstatě pomáhal utýct, klidně řekne, že ukradne svý děti – děti, co patří nějakému člověku, kterýho ani neznám a kterej mi v životě neublížil. (2007: 127)

In the source text, Huck was upset with Jim, but there was no change in the way he referred to him. However, when Mertinová decided to refrain from censorship in this context, it made Huck appear much angrier in the translation than in the source text. Mertinová's version portrays Huck in a very different light, because, for the most part, he speaks to Jim respectfully, but when he gets upset, he switches to using a very offensive term. There are, however, no grounds for this in the source text.

Thus, it appears that Mertinová's decision to only censor the word "nigger" in same cases was not a very sound one. Considering the readership of this novel, it is understandable that the expression was censored, but once the substitution for a neutral term was used, it probably should have been employed throughout the novel. However, the fact that Mertinová could keep the word in her rendering of the text illustrates the freedom translators gained after the end of the communist regime. On the other hand, the fact that Mertinová still decided to censor the word on most occasions in the novel shows that some form of censorship is present even in these days.

### **3.2. The Young King**

*The Young King* is a fairy tale by Oscar Wilde. It is a story of a young man who loves beautiful and expensive things but denounces them once he learns about the



suffering of the poor. As such, the story could have been very popular with the communist regime, had it not been for the few final paragraphs in the source text which are full of Christian imagery. Three Czech translations of this story were made during the communist era: the first in 1959 by Arnošt Vaněček, the second in 1981 by J. Z. Novák and the third in 1985 by Radoslav Nenadál. Interestingly, censorship was only employed in the cases of the first and the third translation and it is these two that I will now discuss.

In both of the translations, the religious imagery was censored by omission, but to varying degrees. In the earlier translation, several pages were left out, although the problematic passages are to be found only at the very end of the story. The reason for this was probably the fact that the story could hardly have ended anywhere in the middle of the deleted passages and the closest suitable passage which could appear as a natural ending of the story was several pages before the actual ending. The following sentences could have been the reason for the censorial interventions:

He knelt before the image of Christ, and the great candles burned brightly by the jewelled shrine . . . He bowed his head in prayer. (1909: 45)

And lo! through the painted windows came the sunlight streaming upon him, and the sun-beams wove round him a tissued robe that was fairer than the robe that had been fashioned for his pleasure. (1909: 46)

Both of these passages are missing in Vaněček's translation, but they are kept in Nenadál's version of the text. The most problematic passage of the story, however, was the following paragraph:

He stood there in the raiment of a king, and the gates of the jewelled shrine flew open, and from the crystal of the many-rayed monstrance

shone a marvellous and mystical light. He stood there in a king's raiment, and the Glory of God filled the place, and the saints in their carven niches seemed to move. In the fair raiment of a king he stood before them, and the organ pealed out its music, and the trumpeters blew upon their trumpets, and the singing boys sang. (1909: 47).

In Nenadál's version of the text, the paragraph is rendered in this way: "Stál tam před nimi v nádherném královském šatu a varhany se burácivě rozezněly hudbou a trubači začali troubit a chlapecký sbor začal zpívat" (1985: 82). The first two sentences, which contain the most vivid Christian imagery and speak of an occurrence of a miracle, were deleted.

These text alterations illustrate the communist regime's dislike of religion, since it was not compatible with the communist views. This can be seen in the famous quote by Karl Marx: "religion is the opium of the people". These alterations, then, are not surprising. However, it is interesting to note the gradual weakening of censorship. In 1959, in the era of the official censorship, the censors found it appropriate to remove all passages with any religious content, even at the cost of being forced to remove several more pages on top of that. Twenty-six years later, in the era of self-censorship in the publishing houses, most of the story was kept, including the passages featuring the image of Christ and praying. Only the passage that seemed to suggest the actual presence of god was removed in the later version of the text. In the case of Nenadál's translation, it is known at what stage of the publication process the censorship took place. According to Nenadál, "The editor must have removed it during the prepress proofing without my knowledge<sup>35</sup>" (2012: 270). Even though the alterations were not

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<sup>35</sup> "Redaktorka to tehdy musely vypustit až v náhledu, aniž jsem já o tom věděl."

made by the translator but by the editor, it is still considered an example of self-censorship, in this case on the level of the publishing house.

As I mentioned above, there is another translation by J. Z. Novák from 1981. Although it was published four years prior to Nenadál's translation, Novák's version was not censored at all and it contains all of the religious imagery. The 1985 translation is thus an interesting example of regression in the development of what was acceptable in literature. The reasons for this are not known, but two explanations seem possible. Either the editor of the later version knew of some negative reactions by the authorities to the publication of the earlier version, or, alternatively, this case could be an illustration of the treacherous nature of self-censorship which led some of the people involved in the process of publishing to employ censorship even in cases when it was not necessary.

### **3.3. Mary Barton, The Catcher in the Rye, The Cool World**

Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton* from 1848 (translated into Czech by Radoslav Nenadál and first published in 1960), J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* from 1951 (Czech translation by Rudolf Pellar and Luba Pellarová published in 1960) and Warren Miller's *The Cool World* from 1959 (translated either by Josef Škvorecký or Jan Zábrana<sup>36</sup> and published in 1963) are all novels whose Czech translations struggled with censorship for the same reason. That reason was the use of slang and non-standard Czech. As I explained in the theoretical part of the thesis, non-standard language was disapproved of by the authorities and was, therefore, often censored despite the fact that it was used in the source text.

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<sup>36</sup> The authorship of the translation is contested. Officially, the author was Jan Zábrana, but his name may have been used as a cover for Josef Škvorecký. Unlike in many other cases of covering, there is no consensus on the real author of this translation.

An important factor in this issue was also the aforementioned essay on linguistics by Joseph Stalin, in which he denounced the use of non-standard language. Rudolf Pellar described how this essay made publishing of a book featuring non-standard language very difficult:

We had already started working on it when an essay by Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin on linguistics was published, in which he claimed that the proletariat used standard language. The protagonist of this novel, therefore, was supposed to use standard language as well, which we did not agree with. The editor, Eva Ruxová, understood that, but she also knew that the authorities would not accept it<sup>37</sup>. (2012: 300)

Eventually, however, all three books were published despite the problems with the authorities in the publication process.

These books can now serve as illustrations of the development of what was acceptable in translations into Czech, as regards slang and non-standard language. In the case of *Mary Barton*, the Czech translation seems especially innocent in its use of non-standard language, which can be seen in the following example:

‘I put th’ horses up in th’ stables at th’ Spread Eagle, and went mysel’,  
and got a glass or two by th’ fire.’ (1956: 89)

‘Zaved jsem koníčky do stáje U velkýho vorla a sám jsem šel a dal si pár  
skleniček u vohně.’ (1960: 72)

The language used is, indeed, non-standard, but not to a great degree and it does not feature any coarse words. Yet, the translator’s version was initially declined for using inappropriate language. A possible reason for this could be the fact that *Mary Barton* is a story of working class people and their hardships, which means it could have been

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<sup>37</sup> “Už jsem na tom začali pracovat, když vyšla stať Josefa Vissarionoviče Stalina o jazykovědě, podle které dělníci mluvili spisovně. A hrdina této knihy měl proto taky mluvit spisovně, což podle nás nešlo. Redaktorka Eva Ruxová to chápala, ale zase věděla, že nahoře to neprojde.”

useful to the communist cause. The use of non-standard language, however, put the workers in an unfavourable light, which the regime would not have appreciated.

On the other hand, the language used in *The Catcher in the Rye*, which is narrated by a dissatisfied American adolescent, is non-standard to a greater degree and it often features coarse words. This means that the reasons for the unwillingness to publish the novel are more understandable. Here are some examples of the language used in the novel:

‘Hey, is she good-looking?’ I asked him. ‘I don’t want any old bag.’  
(1964: 91)

‘Poslyšte, ale vypadá co k čemu?’ zeptal jsem se. ‘Nějakou starou brěcu nechci.’ (1960: 97)

‘Yell your goddam head off . . . Want your parents to know you spent the night with a whore?’ (1964: 102)

‘Jen si řvi do aleluja . . . To jako chceš, aby se doma dověděli, že ses vyspal s kurvou?’ (1960: 108)

The style of speech is a great deal more expressive than in the previous novel, which made its publication even more difficult. Actually, it was difficult despite the fact that the strong language of the source text was often toned down in the translation:

I damn near fell over on my can – he was a huge sonuvabitch. (1964: 101)

Div že jsem neupad na zadek, ten prevít vám byl jak hora. (1960: 107)

In this example, both the expressions “can” and “sonuvabitch” were self-censored to their neutral alternatives in Czech, but this was not enough to make the novel truly acceptable.

Both of the novels, however, were eventually published and could be bought by anyone. This was not true for *The Cool World*, which is a story of young members of a gang in New York's Harlem and as such, features by far the most expressive language of the three:

‘Řikaj mu Flandák, peněvač dycky chodí v černym.’ (1963: 13)

‘Ty sráči,’ povidá. Zase jí jednu vlepim. (1963: 45)

A stejně tam chodim tak 1 nebo 2krát za rok a nemám žádný voblíbený  
zvýřata. (1963: 91)

The word “zvýřata” is an example of the use of incorrect grammar even in situations in which it was not prompted by the spoken form of the word. The use of such language was unparalleled in Czech translations and it was not acceptable at the time. Even though the translation somehow passed through pre-emptive censorship, it was later subjected to post-publication censorship. According to Josef Čermák, “the reaction was unimaginable, as though the book was a threat to the morality of the entire nation, especially with its depraved language<sup>38</sup>” (2012: 34). Through post-publication censorship, the authorities did not allow the book to be sold publicly and it could only be bought with a special permit as study material (Emmerová, 2010: 65).

These three novels show what a problematic issue the use of slang and non-standard language was in translations. All of them had problems in the publication process, but since only one of them was eventually prevented from reaching the public, they can serve as indicators of where the line of acceptability was at the time. When compared to books which were published later, they also show the development of this acceptability. Furthermore, as I mentioned in the theoretical part of the thesis, these

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<sup>38</sup> “Narazilo to nepředstavitelně, jako kdyby knížka ohrožovala mravnost celého národa, a to hlavně svým degradovaným jazykem.”

translations, and especially the translation of *The Catcher in the Rye*, actually played an important role in this development.

### 3.4. Castle Keep

*Castle Keep* was written by William Eastlake and first published in 1965. It is a story of a group of American soldiers whose task is to defend a castle in Belgium. The novel contains some strong language and expressions related to sex, which caused some problems in translation. There are two Czech translations. One is from 1972 and it was done by Stanislav Mareš and Radoslav Nenadál. Mareš translated the first 90 pages and after his emigration, Nenadál finished the rest. The second translation from 1980 was done entirely by Radoslav Nenadál, which means the two versions only differ in the first 90 pages.

The passage that is of the most interest to this thesis is at the very beginning of the novel. The book opens with the following sentence and its corresponding translations into Czech:

The bitch! Both of them naked, the bitch! . . . Major Falconer lit a cigarette and one for the duke's wife too, naked. (1965: 7)

(M) I sakra. Oba dva, skoro jak je Pánbůh stvořil . . . Major Falconer si klidně zapálil cigaretu a zapálil také vévodově ženě. (1972: 7)

(N). Ta děvka! Oba jak je pámbu stvořil, a kruci! . . . Major Falconer si zapálil cigaretu a zároveň také vévedově manželce, tak jak byl, nahý.  
(1980: 7)

Mareš censored his version of the opening scene to a great extent. The first exclamation “the bitch” was changed to an expression that is not only weaker but cannot even be attributed to the duke's wife, which is the case in the source text. The second occurrence

of the same exclamation was removed altogether from the translation. Furthermore, Mareš added the word “almost” in front of the first “naked” to tone down the expressiveness. In the second sentence, he omitted any reference to the characters being naked, or even close to naked. On the other hand, Nenadál’s rendering is almost faithful to the original, except for the second occurrence of the expression “the bitch” which is weaker in force in Nenadál’s version and again, it cannot be attributed to the duke’s wife. This illustrates a great difference in what the two translators saw as acceptable when they were working on their translations, eight years apart.

One might expect that the entirety of Mareš’s translation would be self-censored in the same way, but, interestingly, it was not. In the pages that follow, Mareš does not shy away from any coarse language. In this sentence, for example, the earlier translation is no less expressive than Nenadál’s version:

The fact that you are very young, about nineteen, a Negro, unscrewed and unpublished. (1965: 23)

(M) Že jseš devatenáctiletý černošskej cucák, nevošoustanej a nevotištěnej. (1972: 23)

(N) Že jseš cucák, tak devatenáct jar, černej, nešoustanej a netištěnej. (1980: 21)

It would have been easy to find a weaker expression than “nevošoustanej” but at this point in the book, Mareš kept the strong language of the original. Furthermore, there were even occasions when the version by Mareš was not only as expressive as Nenadál’s, but was actually even more so:

You sir? A delicious slice of horsecock? (1965: 24)

(M) Račte, pane? Lahodný řízeček z koňského kokota? (1972: 25)



(N) Tak co si dáme, sire? Řízek z koňskýho utahováka, jedna lahoda?

(1980: 22)

In this case, Nenadál used a rather uncommon expression where Mareš chose a more literal translation which was also a more expressive one.

This shows that the version by Mareš was not censored completely, but rather, only at the very beginning. Judging from the uniform level of expressiveness of the original, it seems very probable that had the problematic passage come later in the text, it would have been translated faithfully even in the earlier version. The motivation for this text alteration seems to have been only to tone down the opening scene so that the book would not be as shocking right from the start and the translator would have a chance to ease into expressive language more gradually.

### 3.5. Not Dying

*Not Dying* is an autobiographical novel by William Saroyan from 1963. The book could have been published without any problems, had it not been for one single passage which triggered politically motivated censorship. The translator, Josef Schwarz, translated the passage faithfully and the book was printed in 1972. Before it could reach the public, however, the book was subjected to censorship. An entire page that contained the passage had to be replaced and the book was rebound (Čermák, 2012: 34).

The following passage, in which the author discusses meeting great people with his children, is the one that caused the problem. I present it along with two editions of Schwarz's translation, one from 1972 and the other from 1995. The 1972 edition is shown as it was after the censorial intervention:

‘Who is the greatest man you ever met, period? And no hocus-pocus, please.’

‘Did you meet Stalin?’ my daughter said.

‘No, I didn’t, but my grandmother, after whom you were named, resembled Stalin to an astonishing degree including in the last years of her life the same kind of mustache, and I certainly met *her*.’ (1963: 210)

(1972) ‘Kdo je největší člověk, s kterým ses kdy setkal, a hotovo? A prosil bych žádné vytáčky.’

‘Tak vám to povím. Moje babička, po které jsi dostala jméno ty, holčičko. S tou jsem se tedy rozhodně setkal, a ne jenom jednou nebo letmo.’ (193)

(1995) ‘Kdo je největší člověk, s kterým ses kdy setkal, a hotovo? A prosil bych žádné vytáčky.’

‘Setkal ses se Stalinem?’ zeptala se dcera.

‘Ne, nesetkal, ale moje babička, po které máš jméno, se Stalinovi úžasně podobala včetně stejného druhu vousů v posledních letech svého života, a s *tou* jsem se rozhodně setkal.’ (148)

Writing about the former leader of the Soviet Union in a disrespectful manner could not be tolerated and the passage had to be removed from the earlier edition to protect the authority of the regime. After the end of the communist era, this was, of course, no longer an issue and the passage was kept in the new editions.

However, in 1972, the fact that the book was initially printed uncensored meant there would be consequences. According to Josef Čermák, “the editor, Vlasta Dvořáčková, had to be punished exemplarily. Indeed, she was punished, but we knew what to do. She was fined fifteen hundred crowns, but two months later, she received a two-thousand-crown bonus<sup>39</sup>” (2012: 34). Despite the fact that in the publishing house,

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<sup>39</sup> “Redaktorka Vlasta Dvořáčková musela být exemplárně potrestána. Stalo se, jenže věděli jsme si rady. Dostala tisíc pět set korun pokuty a za dva měsíce nato dva tisíce korun mimořádné odměny.”

they managed to cancel out the punishment for printing a book containing a politically inappropriate passage, the punishment itself illustrates the way censorship operated after the end of official censorship, as well as the responsibility editors had at that time.

### 3.6. The Honey Badger

Written by Robert Ruark in 1965, *The Honey Badger* is an example of a book whose Czech translation was censored for two different reasons. Both the political motivation and the motivation of safeguarding of public morality played a role in censoring this novel. The former can be seen in the two following passages about soldiers in Africa being armed with guns from Czechoslovakia. The Czech translations are by Miroslav Jindra. The first is from 1973, the second is from a revised re-edition from 1990:

There's a whole company of ragged asses up front, waiting happily with those nice little Czech machine guns for any of the local unwary with the other Czech machine guns. (1965: 507)

(1973) Tam vpředu je celý regiment těch černých bojovníků, čekají tam hezky v skrytu s těmi svými pěknými zahraničními samopaly, jestli se neobjeví jiní nepozorní černí bojovníci s týmiž pěknými zahraničními samopaly, aby se do sebe mohli pustit. (651)

(1990) Tam vpředu je celý regiment těch černých bojovníků, čekají tam hezky v skrytu s těmi svými pěknými československými samopaly, jestli se neobjeví jiní nepozorní černí bojovníci s týmiž pěknými československými samopaly, aby se do sebe mohli pustit. (535)

In this passage, Jindra freely added some information and what was only implicit in the source text is stated explicitly in his translation. However, what is of more interest to

this thesis is the fact that the “Czech machine guns” became “machine guns from abroad” in the first edition. Jindra himself commented on this act of censorship in this way: “this could not remain in the book, because we did not export and sell weapons, of course. Self-censorship was employed – not by me, I would have gladly kept in – but the publishing house did not allow it<sup>40</sup>” (*Slovo za slovem*, 2012: 150-151). The regime needed to protect its image in the eyes of its citizens and the publishing houses were aware of this. Keeping the passage as it was would have, in a way, discredited the regime, which would open up the possibility of the publishing house being punished after the novel’s publication. Of course, this danger was no longer valid in 1990 and the “Czech machine guns” were kept in the new edition.

Interestingly, a similar passage, which also puts Czechoslovakia in an unfavourable light, was not treated in the same way in the re-edition:

‘But the currency isn’t worth anything, even in its own country,’ Mike said.

‘Of course not,’ Alec answered. ‘They make it in Czechoslovakia.’

‘But this is Guinea.’

‘They still make it in Czechoslovakia.’ (1965: 511)

(1973, 1990) ‘Pokud jde o zdejší peníze, tak se za ně nedá nic koupit ani tady,’ konstatoval Mike.

‘Není divu,’ řekl Alec. ‘Vždyť je tisknou někde v Evropě.’

‘Ale tohle je Guinea.’

‘Přesto jim je tisknou někde v Evropě.’ (656, 539)

In both versions of this passage, the money is no longer printed in Czechoslovakia, but rather “somewhere in Europe”. One could only speculate on the reasons for this

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<sup>40</sup> “To tam být nemohlo, protože my jsme přece zbraně nevyváželi a neprodávali. Zafungovala autocenzura, ne moje, já bych to tam klidně nechal, ale nakladatelství to nepřipustilo.”

alteration even in the new edition, but it is clear that external factors could no longer be valid. The employees of the publishing house could have still decided themselves that they did not like the original passage, but it seems far more probable that it was simply overlooked in the new edition.

As I mentioned above, safeguarding of public morality was also a factor in censoring this novel. Jindra himself spoke of the need to tone down many sexual references because of the regime's prudishness in times of the normalization (*Slovo za slovem*, 2012: 151). This can be exemplified by the word "orgasm" which is constantly being avoided in both versions of the translation, and this is true not only in passages describing sexual scenes, but also in passages where sex is merely discussed from a psychological point of view:

Psychiatric tags – relate, in analysis, sibling – strode their conversation, and their acute appraisal of the psychological mechanics of the female orgasm made Alec writhe. (1965: 572)

(1973, 1990) Své rozhovory proplétali psychiatrickou hantýrkou a z jejich detailního rozboru psychologického mechanismu ženské fyziologie se Alecovi dělalo špatně. (737, 606)

Here, "female orgasm" was changed to "female physiology", which removes the sexual reference in keeping with the aforementioned prudishness of the regime. What was expressed directly in the source text was toned down in the translation, but, interestingly, this was the case even with expressions which were not stated directly in the original:

‘Will they fly us to the Ogaden?’

‘Oh, God, no.’ Alec’s voice was horrified. ‘That’s off limits. That’s no-man’s land. Not even the King Emperor goes there, or they’ll cut off his –’ (1965: 511)

(1973, 1990) ‘A dopraví nás odtud letadlem do Ogadenu?’

‘Panebože, kdepak,’ zděsil se Alec. ‘To je mimo hranice. Země nikoho. Tam nejedí ani sám císař...’ (656, 539)

In the original passage, it is clear what the threat means, but it is not mentioned expressly what would be cut off. In the translation, however, avoiding the specific word was deemed insufficient and the entire threat was removed. Furthermore, all of the text alterations which were made for the safeguarding of public morality were kept in the 1990 edition. Again, it seems improbable that the reason for this was the desire to censor these passages. The motivation was probably of a more pragmatic nature, since an extensive revision of the translation would have been necessary.

Interestingly, a comparison of the 1973 translation of *The Honey Badger* and the 1972 translation of the *Castle Keep* reveals very different standards of what was seen as acceptable as far the use of coarse language is concerned. As I showed above, a very rude word for male genitalia was used in the *Castle Keep*, whereas in *The Honey Badger*, not even an indirect reference was considered acceptable. This illustrates the point discussed in the theoretical part of the thesis that the transition to self-censorship often led to people going unnecessarily far in their toning down of the language of the source text. Standards of acceptability were different from person to person and one could not be sure how far one could go without being subsequently punished for publishing an indecent novel.

### 3.7. The World According to Garp

John Irving's *The World According to Garp* was first published in 1978 and it tells the life story of a novelist T. S. Garp. The Czech translation by Radoslav Nenadál was published in 1987, shortly before the end of the communist era in Czechoslovakia. Even this late in the development of what was acceptable in translations, the following passage describing the aftermath of a car accident was still a reason for censorship for the protection of public morality:

Helen's mouth was snapped shut with such force that she broke two teeth and required two neat stitches in her tongue . . . She spat what she thought was her tongue into the palm of her left hand. It wasn't her tongue, of course. It was what amounted to three quarters of Michael Milton's penis. (1979: 376)

Heleně náraz náhle přirazil ústa s takovou silou, že si zlomila dva zuby a museli jí dvěma stehy sešít jazyk . . . To, co pokládala za svůj jazyk, vyplivla do dlaně levé ruky. Samozřejmě to nebyl její jazyk, ale tři čtvrtiny penisu Michaela Milтона. (1994: 359)

Nenadál's rendering of the passage was faithful to the original and the Czech translation was eventually published uncensored. However, it was not so for lack of trying on the part of the editor, who found the passage unacceptable for the readers and forbade the book's publishing (*Interview with Radoslav Nenadál*). It was only published thanks to the efforts by a sub-editor Eva Slámová and the translator himself. According to Nenadál, the two waited for the editor to go on holiday, after which they talked to the person filling in for him, who had no knowledge of the book or of the problematic passage. They told her that the book had been approved and they just needed her to sign the document to start printing, which she did (*Interview with Radoslav Nenadál*). Thus,

the novel was initially censored, but thanks to this clever scheme, censorship was eventually avoided in this case. The book is an example of the inventive methods for circumventing censorship which were described in the theoretical part of the thesis.



#### **4. Conclusion**

In this thesis, I set out to explore the nature of censorship in translation. The section on the history of censorship revealed that censorship's origins lie in what are called taboos, that is the topics that are deemed unacceptable for public discourse. Taboos revolve around such issues as functions of the human body, sex and death, and it was these topics that originally became subjected to censorship. Avoiding such topics became the first main motivation for censorship in translation, which I identified as motivation of safeguarding of public morality. Other two main motivations I identified were political motivation and religion-related motivation. These two usually shared the same goal, which was the protection of a given regime or religion from ideas that were incompatible with their world-views and that could potentially bring about their downfall.

In another section, I discussed the possible ways in which censorship in translation can be categorized. Categorization according to the communication model allows for a study of censorship depending on which factor in the model censorship was aimed at. Both the author of the original text and the author of the translation can be subjected to censorship, as well as the message itself and the channel that is used for communication. In fact, censorship can even be aimed at the factor of addressee, which is the case when the readers are somehow forbidden from accessing the message. Censorship can also be classified depending on what stage of the publication process the act of censorship took place. Censorship can thus be identified as either pre-publication (pre-emptive) or post-publication. The task of pre-emptive censorship is to make sure objectionable literature will not get published. Post-publication censorship, on the other hand, deals with books that had been published before the institutionalization of censorship in the country as well as with objectionable books that somehow slipped

through the process of pre-emptive censorship. Censorship in translation can also be imposed by different agents. In the case of public censorship, censorial interventions are effected by the authorities, whereas in the case of self-censorship, they are effected by the translators themselves or by some other employees of the publishing houses. The motivation for self-censorship usually is the wish to avoid subsequent public censorship. In this section, I also discussed the possible types of text alterations. While the most common alteration is a simple omission of the objectionable expression or passage, it is also possible to use substitutions and additions to make the text more acceptable. The text's expressiveness can also be toned down and some specific expressions can be made more general. It is even possible to keep the objectionable expression in the source language, which allows the translator to avoid expressing it directly.

One of the aims of this thesis also was to explore censorship of translations in the communist Czechoslovakia and its development in time. Firstly, I discussed what made literature desirable or undesirable in the eyes of the regime. Most importantly, desirable literature needed to be relevant to the communist struggle for a better future and it needed to be persuasive. Of the three main motivations for censorship in translation, two were valid in the communist Czechoslovakia. Undesirable literature was censored for political purposes or for the protection of public morality. I also identified two main periods of censorship in the communist Czechoslovakia. The first period – the years up to the late 1960s – was characterized by censorship which was officially imposed by the authorities. At that time, a special office needed to approve every book before it was printed, which meant the responsibility for what was published lay with the censorship authorities. In the second period – after the late 1960s – the responsibility was transferred from the authorities on to the publishing houses

themselves, which meant that official censorship changed into self-censorship. Translators were then forced to participate in what they opposed and many of them described this period as worse than the era of official censorship. Furthermore, the second era was also characterized by blacklisting of many translators, which meant they were no longer allowed to work in their profession. However, there were ways censorship could be avoided and many translators managed to continue working despite the bans, as well as to translate and publish books which normally would have been censored.

In the practical part, comparisons of source texts and their translations enabled me to study the way censorship in Czechoslovakia operated in practice. Analyses of translations published throughout the communist era, as well as of several different Czech translations of the same novel, allowed for a diachronic study of what was acceptable in Czech translations. In fact, translations played an important role in the development of that acceptability in Czech literature. *The Catcher in the Rye*, for example, helped ease up the standards regarding the use of slang and non-standard language. These analyses also showed the development of acceptability regarding taboos such as coarse words and descriptions of sexual acts. Such topics also progressively became more and more acceptable in literature, although this development was not linear. Especially in the period of self-censorship, certain regressions in this development occurred, since judging what was acceptable for publication was a very subjective issue. Regarding politically motivated censorship, the analyses showed that books could only contain minor problems and still be chosen for publication, and when that was the case, censorial alterations were necessary in the process of their translation. Books which were truly objectionable with regard to their political content never made it through the selection process and were not translated.

Therefore, they could not feature among the analyses in this thesis. Finally, the analysis of the two Czech translations of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* also showed that some form of censorship exists even in these days. This illustrated the point made in the theoretical part of the thesis that self-censorship of the language people use is a natural phenomenon and that censorship, at least to some degree, will always be a part of our lives.

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## **6. English Résumé**

This thesis deals with the issue of censorship in translation, with special focus on the communist era in Czechoslovakia. In the theoretical part of the thesis, a definition of censorship in general, as well as a brief description of its beginnings, is provided. Additionally, three main motivations for censorship are identified: safeguarding of public morality, religion-related motivation and political motivation. In the next section, the following categorizations of censorship in translation are discussed: according to the communication model, pre-publication versus post-publication and public versus self-censorship. This section ends with a description of possible types of text alterations.

The last section of the theoretical part is dedicated to censorship of translations in the communist Czechoslovakia. It opens with a description of the censorship's beginnings in the country and continues with a discussion of the communist views on literature, explaining what made literature desirable or undesirable in the eyes of the regime. Censorship in the communist Czechoslovakia is then divided into two main eras: up to the late 1960s and after the late 1960s. This section also discusses the phenomenon of publishing translations under names of different translators and it closes with a description of the means by which censorship could be avoided.

The practical part of the thesis features analyses of translations of several novels through comparisons of source texts and the resulting target texts. Special attention is paid to novels which were translated into Czech more than once. The practical part illustrates the points made in the theoretical part and it provides specific examples of censorial interventions in Czech translations.

## 7. Czech Résumé

Tato práce se zabývá cenzurou v překladu, obzvláště pak v období komunismu v Československu. V teoretické části je definována cenzura obecně a jsou zde krátce popsány její historické počátky. Dále jsou určeny tři hlavní motivace k cenzuře: ochrana mravnosti, náboženská motivace a politické motivace. Další sekce se zabývá následujícími kategorizacemi cenzury v překladu: podle komunikačního modelu, preventivní versus následná a institucionalizovaná versus autocenzura. Tuto sekci uzavírá popis možných cenzurních zásahů do textu.

Poslední sekce v teoretické části je věnována cenzuře překladů v komunistickém Československu. Nejprve jsou popsány počátky cenzury v této zemi. Následuje rozbor komunistického přístupu k literatuře spolu s popisem toho, co podle režimu činilo literaturu žádoucí, nebo naopak nežádoucí. Cenzura v Československu je pak rozdělena na dvě hlavní období: první období trvalo až po pozdní šedesátá léta, druhé skončilo spolu s pádem komunismu. Tato sekce se také zabývá fenoménem pokrývání překladů a na závěr popisuje způsoby, jakými bylo možno cenzuře předejít.

Praktická část obsahuje analýzu překladů několika románů pomocí srovnání zdrojových a cílových textů. Zvláštní pozornost je věnována románům, které byly do češtiny přeloženy několikrát. Tato část uvádí praktické příklady toho, co bylo rozebíráno v části teoretické, a ukazuje konkrétní případy cenzurních zásahů do českých překladů.