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Preklad, cenzúra a marginalizované hlasy

Translation, Censorship, and Marginalized Voices

IVANA HOSTOVÁ
MÁRIA KUSÁ
(eds.)

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▪ VEGA 2/0092/23 Translation and Translating in the History and Present of the Slovak Cultural Space. Transformations of Forms, Status and Functions: Texts, Personalities, Institutions

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OBSAH / CONTENTS

Translation, censorship, and marginalized voices: Challenging power and economic barriers

IVANA HOSTOVÁ – MÁRIA KUSÁ

Power and privilege are often manifested through erasure and suppression, operating in an inherently intersectional way, much like a fractal pattern in their complexity and recurrence. When a group asserts its identity, it frequently marginalizes or suppresses those who do not conform to its idealized or prototypical image. In the current political climate – characterized by the rise of right-wing and populist movements – it is vital to examine the nuances of cultural exchange and expose the blind spots and oversimplifications that shape our perceptions and actions. This complexity is particularly important in translation studies, since translation is a practice deeply intertwined with power, politics, economy, and identity. From the historical struggles of marginalized literatures to the contemporary politics of representation, it has played a crucial role in creation of cultures and their outer images. In many cases, translation becomes an arena of resistance where writers, translators, and readers grapple with forces of censorship, colonialism, and global power imbalances.

This issue of WORLD LITERATURE STUDIES brings together articles that explore the complex relationships between translation, censorship, and cultural identity. It investigates how translation can both reinforce and resist power structures. Apart from the discussion of Roald Dahl, the articles focus on texts and translational practices connected to Central and Eastern Europe. They explore issues such as the curation of cultural exports through colonial intermediaries, censorship in literary translation, and the impact of a country's political, ideological, and economic conditions on the reception of world literature and on minority literature. Further, they investigate how cultural actors navigate non-profit-driven areas of cultural production and how accessibility for disadvantaged groups is provided in present-day Slovakia. The issue also looks at how translators of theoretical works, such as philosophy and translation studies, engage in dialogue with the authors of the texts. In the discussion section, it explores the impact of global events on academic power dynamics, particularly in translation studies, and advocates for the decolonization of knowledge production to promote greater inclusivity and representation of minority perspectives.

Decolonial analytics in translation history: Ukrainian literature in the contested space of English translation

IRYNA ODREKHIVSKA

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Decolonial analytics in translation history: Ukrainian literature in the contested space of English translation

Decolonization. Translation. Ukrainian literature. English translation. Appropriation. Indirect translation.

The article offers a decolonial reading and critically examines the ways in which Ukrainian literature and culture have been represented in Anglophone translation since the 19th century to the present day, revealing the colonial aesthetic and social imaginary influenced by both the Russian imperial and subsequent Soviet lenses. For this, I develop a decolonial analytics in the historical studies of translation through a four-step framework: 1) *archeology of knowledge* through (non-)translation, investigating the foundations of knowledge embedded in translation practices, 2) *deconstructive reading* of translations to analyze the power structures and built-in distortions, 3) *paratextual positioning* of translation, exploring the underlying ideologies, and 4) *re-existence*, concluding with a re-evaluation of translational contribution to decolonial resistance. Grounded in a corpus analysis, the article posits three common colonial strategies in the history of translating Ukrainian works via the Russian imperial/Soviet lens into English: 1) *cultural appropriation*, 2) *indirect translation into English through Russian*, and 3) *centering on Russian imperial and Soviet recognition* of the piece in its English-language publication. These strategies have resulted in a parallel, Russified narrative of Ukrainian literature in Anglophone academia.

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Translation has long been considered "a form of metastatement" about the source text (Holmes 1988); yet, only in recent decades has it been recognized that this act of second-degree reflection, or metarepresentation, transcends mere subjectivity because geopolitical discourses inevitably shape the knowledge systems informing translation practices (Spivak 2021; Baker 2015; Tymoczko 2000). In view of this, decolonial studies, arising as a critical response to the misrepresentation, historical silencing, and objectification of others by dominant actors (Ramos and Daly 2016, xvi) – a phenomenon Aníbal Quijano (2000, 215) termed as the "coloniality of power" – can be equally applicable to the field of translation. Indeed, recent emergence of decolonial perspective within translation studies sheds light on how translation practices intersect with power dynamics, representation, and cultural hegemony (Chamber and Demir 2024). It underscores the transformative potential of translation, which, historically having been an instrument of colonization, also serves as "a vehicle for decolonizing and undermining imperial frameworks and their related biases and systems" (2). Engaging with translation through the lens of decolonial thought, particularly through the groundbreaking works of Frantz Fanon, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, Aníbal Quijano, Abraham Tobi and more recent contributions by Walter Mignolo and Catherine Walsh, and thus conceptualizing translation as a productively disruptive force opposing colonial imageries, has become one of the central directions in contemporary theoretical translation studies (see Batchelor 2014; Harrison 2016).

Building upon the existing scholarship, the present article opens a critical and practical space for decolonial studies in translation history by asserting that historical re-reading of translations can also be decolonial through "performing the questioning of *why* we see things the way we do" (Ramos and Daly 2016, xxvi) leading to the analysis of the *coloniality of translation*. Adopting a decolonial approach, this article critically examines how Ukrainian literature and culture are positioned in English translations spanning from the 19th century to the present, pointing to the colonial aesthetic and social imaginaries influenced by both Russian imperial and subsequent Soviet perspectives. My attempt is to provide a revisionist examination, uncovering hidden biases and paternalistic attitudes shaped by historical and political forces, which even now continue to prevail within Anglophone knowledge production on Ukrainian literature.

For this, the article first develops a decolonial analytics in the historical studies of translation through a four-step framework: 1) *archeology of knowledge* through (non-)translation, investigating the foundations of knowledge embedded in translation practices, 2) *deconstructive reading* of translations to analyze the power structures and built-in distortions, (3) *paratextual positioning* of translation, exploring the underlying ideologies, and 4) *re-existence*, concluding with a re-evaluation of translational contribution to decolonial resistance. Afterwards, grounded in a corpus analysis, the article proceeds to identify three common colonial strategies in the history of translating Ukrainian works into English via the Russian imperial/Soviet lens: 1) *cultural appropriation*, 2) *indirect translation into English through Russian*, and 3) *centering on Russian imperial and Soviet recognition*

of the piece in its English-language publication. Overall, the study argues that these strategies have resulted in a parallel Russified narrative of Ukrainian literature persisting within Anglophone academia, often unchallenged and still relied upon in Slavic studies curricula.

DECOLONIAL ANALYTICS IN TRANSLATION HISTORY

Broadly speaking, fostering a critical reevaluation of the historical and cultural foundations of knowledge production is crucial. Abraham Tobi (2020, 253) highlights the importance of this by articulating the perspective of *epistemic injustice*: "Why should we decolonise knowledge? One popular rationale is that colonialism has set up a single perspective as epistemically authoritative over many equally legitimate ones, and this is a form of epistemic injustice" (253). In this context, translation history possesses a decolonial potential as it serves as a lens through which to examine power dynamics, cultural hegemony, and colonial legacies inherent in linguistic exchanges. By interrogating translation practices, uncovering silenced voices, and challenging dominant narratives, translation history can contribute to the decolonization of knowledge and the promotion of diverse perspectives and epistemologies.

Decoloniality, as an epistemological pursuit, involves delinking from the imposed structure of knowledge, commonly referred to as the "colonial matrix", and subsequently reconstituting alternative ways of thinking and speaking (Mignolo and Walsh 2018). As Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni notes, "every human being is born into a valid and legitimate knowledge system" (2017, 51), suggesting that the process of delinking entails abandoning the epistemic framework one has permanently relied upon – a framework defined as "a historically generated, collectively sustained system of meanings and significance by reference to which a group understands and evaluates the world" (Bhargava 2013, 401).

A decolonial approach in translation history examines the foundations of knowledge (the abovementioned "framework") that are embedded in translation practices, as well as gives the recognition of ex-colonized epistemic sites as valid sources for revealing the complexity of their cultural representation in the world. This approach proves viable for interrogating the lingering dominance of Russian imperial or Soviet epistemology in the Anglophone image of Ukraine, a relevance heightened by the growing power of English as a global lingua franca. Gayatri Spivak (2005, 93–94) aptly directs attention to the responsibility of the translator into English, specifically emphasizing cases when the source literary text is not originally written in one of the languages of northwestern Europe. She underscores the necessity for translators "to enter the protocols of the text" (94), sensing the laws specific to them – a stance that is central to the concept of *epistemic humility*, described as "an attitude of awareness of the limitations of one's own epistemic capacities and an active disposition to seek sources to help overcome these shortcomings" (Wardrope 2015, 341). It is imperative to acknowledge the pervasive colonial framing evident in numerous existing English translations of Ukrainian literary works. Consequently, a critical deconstruction of these representations becomes essential to advance the decolonization of knowledge on Ukraine.

With this in mind, to scrutinize and unearth the historical coloniality embedded within translation practices, the present study has developed a four-step framework of decolonial analytics in translation history. The initial stage lies in the *archeology of knowledge through (non-)translation*, which aims at excavating existing translation products and examining the underlying structures of knowledge and ideologies inherent in those practices, akin to uncovering layers of sediment in archeology to reveal hidden artifacts and their structures. The inclusion of potential non-translations here recognizes that deliberate omissions also contribute to shaping knowledge in significant ways. The second stage is *deconstructive reading* of translations to engage in a critical analysis of their stylistic rendering and pragmatic transfer, thereby revealing built-in socio-political agendas, visible distortions, and tangible narratives. The subsequent stage examines the *paratextual positioning of translation*, providing further insight into how knowledge was constructed, transmitted, and transformed through accompanying texts that framed the translation event. This analysis underscores the broader implications of the translation practice in question within the discourse at that particular moment in time, as well as its implications for the future. In the fourth and final stage, *re-existence* emerges as the culmination of such decolonial historical praxis, providing a comprehensive re-evaluation of the translational contribution to decolonial re-positioning. This stage invites a critical reflection on how translation practices can facilitate the reshaping of colonial narratives and the assertion of alternative epistemologies.

Indeed, applying this framework through archaeological investigation of knowledge-making, deconstructive readings of translations, examination of their paratextual positioning, and emphasis on the "re-existence" of works beyond colonial translation practices offers a platform to contest established knowledge production. While the proposed framework outlines distinct steps, these elements are not intended as a rigid sequence. Rather, they are interconnected and can be employed iteratively to elicit the multifaceted dimensions of knowledge generation and transfer in colonial translation practices.

MAPPING COLONIAL PRACTICES IN THE REPRESENTATION OF UKRAINIAN LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Employing a corpus-based approach that revealed "a pattern of accumulated effects" (Hewson 2011, 87) on how the translated texts were positioned and interpreted, the study delineates three prominent colonial strategies in the history of translating Ukrainian works via the Russian imperial/Soviet lens into English: 1) *cultural appropriation*, 2) *indirect translation into English through Russian*, and 3) *centering on Russian imperial and Soviet recognition* of the piece in its English-language publication. It is essential to expose how these strategies underscored the complex dynamics of power and representational agendas inherent in translation practices of Ukrainian literary culture.

The first strategy is *cultural appropriation*, when the term "Ukrainian" was not prominently featured in the title, and the text was interpreted through the lens of the Russian imperial perspective. The first-ever collection containing Ukrainian

texts in English rendition was compiled by Benjamin Beresford and entitled *Russian Troubadour, or A Collection of Ukrainian and other National Melodies* (1816). The title itself reflects a problematic framing: by foregrounding the term "Russian", it obscured the distinct Ukrainian identity of the works included (as well as other nations) and perpetuated the idea that Ukrainian culture was a subset of Russian culture. The publication's introductory element, called "Advertisement", declared: "The Ukraine has ever been the Provence of the Russian Empire, and, together with the White and the Lesser Russia, still continues to be the nursery of national airs. The inhabitants of those districts may, indeed, be considered as the genuine Troubadours of the nation" (Beresford 1816, front matter). Referring to Ukraine as a "province" of the Russian Empire and its people as mere contributors to a singular "national", meaning Russian, identity lays bare the colonial perspective embedded within the publication, which aims to erase any possibility of a distinct Ukrainian cultural voice and fit the mold of the dominant Russian imperial narrative. This edition set a precedent that was followed in subsequent publications. For example, William Ralston's 1872 publication *The Songs of the Russian People, as Illustrative of Slavonic Mythology and Russian Social Life*, which is still widely reprinted, and his 1873 work *Russian Folk Tales*, effectively erased the Ukrainian origin of certain materials by presenting them from the outset as inherently Russian (Ralston 1872; 1873). In 1889, Albert Henry Wratislaw, a Briton of Czech descent, presented a collection of translated folk tales *Sixty Folk Tales from Exclusively Slavonic Sources*, under the general "inclusive" naming of Slavonic, which comprised nine Ukrainian tales in English translation.

In 1894, *Cossack Fairy Tales and Folk Tales* by Robert Nisbet Bain, a British historian who worked for the British Museum, were published simultaneously in London and New York, containing translations of 27 Ukrainian stories, hence marking the first instance of Ukrainian fiction being extensively translated into English. The introduction drew a clear line:

> Ruthenian is a language intermediate between Russian and Polish, but quite independent of both. Its territory embraces, roughly speaking, that vast plain which lies between the Carpathians, the watershed of the Dnieper, and the Sea of Azov, with Lemberg and Kiev for its chief intellectual centres. Though it has been rigorously repressed by the Russian Government, it is still spoken by more than twenty million of people. It possesses a noble literature, numerous folk-songs, not inferior even to those of Serbia […]. (1916, 9)

In the introduction, Bain's highlighting of the Ruthenian[1] language is notable. However, it is important to underscore that in 1892, two years before *Cossack Fairy Tales and Folk Tales*, Bain published a separate volume titled *Russian Fairy Tales*. This raises the question of why Bain, while positing Ruthenian language and culture as a distinct domain, still opted not to follow a similar pattern for the title of the Ruthenian collection as he did with the Russian one. The exclusive emphasis of "Cossack" in the title prompts further investigation into Bain's editorial decision. After all, he drew upon three foundational Ruthenian folklore collections by Panteleĭmon Kulish,[2] Ivan Rudchenko, and Mykhaĭlo Drahomanov, representing the full spectrum of Ruthenian culture under both the Habsburg and Russian empires. Two potential explanations emerge for Bain's editorial framing. Firstly, he might have opt-

ed for a politically neutral framing strategy by associating the tales primarily with Cossack identity. This approach would have avoided directly acknowledging their Ruthenian origin in the title, which could have been a contentious issue to perform at the time. Cossacks, historically, held a complex relationship with the Russian empire. While they enjoyed a degree of autonomy and self-governance, they were also loyal to the Tsars and played a vital role in Russian expansion and military campaigns throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. Their prowess as cavalrymen made them a key component of the Imperial Army, and they were also extensively utilized for police functions and border security, both along national frontiers and within the empire's own ethnic boundaries (extending as far as Astrakhan and the Urals). Given this context, emphasizing "Cossack" in the title could have served as a way to maintain a neutral stance without wading into the complexities of Ruthenian identity.

Only in 1911, Ethel Lilian Voynich, an Irish-born novelist, authored a collection *Six Lyrics from the Ruthenian of Taras Shevchenko, also the Song of the Merchant Kalashnikov from the Russian by Mikhail Lermontov* in London. Evident from the very title, she undertook the pioneering effort to make a clear linguistic distinction between two languages – Ruthenian and Russian in Anglophone reception. She foregrounded a decolonial perspective to the understanding of Ukrainian literature, emphasizing in the preface the necessity of acknowledging and translating works written in the language less accessible to Western audiences:

> I am so sensible of this that, had Shevchenko written in a language as accessible to most English readers as French or German, this volume would perhaps not have been published. But if a man leave immortal lyrics hidden away from Western Europe in a minor Slavonic idiom between Russian, Serbian and Polish, it seems hard that he should go untranslated while waiting for the perfect rendering which may never come. Inadequate as are these few specimens, they show some dim shadow of the mind of a poet who has done for the Dnieper country what Burns did for Scotland. (Voynich 1911, 5)

Interestingly, the collection also takes the epigraph from the poetry by C. A. Nicholson: "A dead voice / called to me / From a rotting grave / in far Ruthenia, / the voice of a long-dead slave / in far Ruthenia…" (front matter). This choice of epigraph as a paratextual framing is quite symbolic and telling, hinting at the silenced Ukrainian voices of the past and the importance of reviving the cultural heritage of Ukraine.

Subsequently, in 1916, *Songs of Ukraina, with Ruthenian Poems* was published in London, Paris, Toronto and New York in translation by Florence Randal Livesay. The collection commenced with a foreword posing the question "Ukrainian song… But do you know what the Ukraine is?" (Livesay 1916, 9) and concluded with the assertion "if the Ukraine has lost her written history, it is still preserved in her historical songs" (14), which could be treated as a decolonial gesture, reclaiming the historical narratives and identity of Ukraine through its songs and poetry. This publication marked a significant moment, initiating a new trajectory in the positioning of Ukrainian literary works in the Anglophone space, however some previous publications were still reprinted, carrying their ideological anchoring.

The second colonial strategy lies in *indirect translation via Russian intermediaries*. Often, Ukrainian literary works were initially translated into Russian, resulting in the erasure of identitarian elements and the neutralization of ethnic character, and only after this step did they serve as source texts for English translation. In fact, the practice of translating from Ukrainian to Russian before English highlights the hegemonic structure, where Russian as a dominant language exerts control over Ukrainian as a colonized language. It constitutes a form of linguistic imperialism, marginalizing the inherent voices and culture of the source language through the imposition of an imperial-mediated narrative. In contrast, translation directly from Ukrainian to English, without the intermediary pivot of Russian, implies a deliberate distancing and delinking from the former networks of colonial influence, facilitating the reconstitution of Ukraine's own literary identity (Odrekhivska 2024).

The phenomenon of Ukrainian via Russian into English translation achieved particular prominence during the mid-20th century, in the aftermath of World War II. It is likely that this period saw a deliberate attempt to filter the perception of Ukrainian literature for the West, shaping it to align with Soviet ideology. This is evidenced by the concentration of translations published by the Moscow Foreign Languages Publishing House. For instance, in 1957, Ivan Franko's *Boa Constrictor and Other Stories* were included in a collection from this publisher, featuring English translations by Fainna Solasko from Russian. Similarly, the 1958 edition of Mykhaĭlo Kotsiubyns'kyĭ's *Chrysalis and Other Stories*, released by the same press, exemplified this practice by presenting English translations from Russian by Jacob Guralsky. Both these editions were supplemented by prefatory elements in Russian, featuring alternative Russian titles *Udav i drugie rasskazy* and *Kukolka i drugie rasskazy* correspondingly. Ivan Franko, a renowned Ukrainian classic, and Mykhaĭlo Kotsiubyns'kyĭ, an acclaimed Ukrainian modernist writer, never composed works in Russian. Kotsiubyns'kyĭ even demonstrably influenced several of his fellow prominent Ukrainian writers, including Volodymyr Vynnychenko, to prioritize Ukrainian in their literary output. Analyzing indirect rendition exposes the colonial hangover in literary translation, where Ukrainian voices are first filtered through Russian as a dominant language before reaching wider audiences, perpetuating linguistic hierarchies.

Interestingly, the Kotsiubyns'kyĭ's English via Russian edition was republished in 2001 by Fredonia Books (Netherlands) and is now widely available. Furthermore, it features a quote from Maxim Gorky's review of Kotsiubyns'kyĭ's literary style on the back cover. It is important to note that at the behest of Maxim Gorky, a three-volume edition of Mykhaĭlo Kotsiubyns'kyĭ's works was compiled and published in Russian between 1910 and 1917, which perhaps served as a basis for the 1958 English translation. In fact, Gorky and Kotsiubyns'kyĭ met in person on Cyprus and formed a strong rapport; the Russian writer even penned a brief memoir about his Ukrainian colleague. However, the inclusion of a quote from a notable Soviet cultural leader in the 2001 edition that features the republication of the indirect translation perpetuates a lingering Soviet inscription. It also manifests the third colonial strategy – *centering on Soviet recognition*. It implies that Ukrainian texts first had to gain recog-

nition within the Soviet context, with Soviet Russian authors then framing the paratext of the English translated edition, thereby reinforcing the Soviet narrative of/perspective on Ukrainian literature. It functioned as a gatekeeper, requiring Ukrainian texts to gain "approval" before reaching a wider audience. This approval often came with a twist: translators were strictly selected for ideological compliance in rendering the works into English, whereas Soviet literary establishment authors would then frequently contribute prefaces, introductions, or other elements to the English translations, which was indeed the case with Kotsiubyns'kyĭ's translation.

Another relevant case regarding the duality in the decoding of Anglophone representation of the Ukrainian culture can be exemplified by the figure of the 18th-century philosopher Hryhorii Skovoroda. There has been a large-scale initiative to present his texts in English by Glagoslav Publishing, resulting in well-elaborated editions such as *The Garden of Divine Songs, Collected Poetry of Hryhory Skovoroda* (2016) and *The Complete Correspondence of Hryhory Skovoroda: Philosopher and Poet* (2016) under the translatorship of Michael Naydan. However, there is a parallel English narrative about "Grigori Savvich Skovoroda", as posited by Daniel H. Shubin following his Russian adaptation of Skovoroda's name in the 2012 volume *Skovoroda: The World Tried to Catch Me but Could Not*. It contains a biography, analysis of Skovoroda's philosophy, and a translation into English of several selections of his work from Russian. In the paratextual framing on the back cover of the edition, Shubin describes Skovoroda as a "Russian Socrates" and "the first philosopher on Russian soil in the true sense of the word" (Shubin and Skovoroda 2012). This description, as well as all these editions, reflect the existence of two parallel narratives in the present-day Anglophone cultural space, with some narratives attempting to assimilate him into the purely Russian sociocultural tradition, while others strive to recognize his Ukrainian heritage and the unique contributions he made to Ukrainian philosophy and literature. This duality shows an intrinsic complexity in translational reading and interpretation of hybridity of cultural identities.

In fact, Skovoroda was an imperial subject and did live in Moscow and St. Petersburg for three years while serving in the imperial choir of the Russian Empress Elizabeth I. Later, for five years, he served as the musical director of a Russian mission in Hungary. After that, he returned to Kyïv and taught in Pereiaslav and Kharkiv. Despite Skovoroda's connection to the Russian empire through his professional engagements, it is crucial to resist categorizing him solely as a Russian thinker and avoid any oversimplification. In a key contribution to understanding Skovoroda's work, scholar George Shevelov aimed to dismantle oversimplified views and establish a foundation for in-depth analysis of the philosopher's language and style. Shevelov argued that Skovoroda's linguistic background was rooted in the educated circles of Sloboda Ukraine and his language, while incorporating many biblical, ecclesiastical, political, and personal references, was fundamentally rooted in the Slobozhanshchyna variety of standard Russian used by these educated classes (Shevelov 1994). This complexity highlights the challenges of untangling cultural identity within an imperial framework, where affiliation and intellectual life could intersect in nuanced ways.

RE-EXISTENCE: DECOLONIZING THROUGH TRANSLATIONAL AGENCY

As previously discussed, re-existence serves as the concluding stage of decolonial analytics, offering a critical re-evaluation of the translational contribution to decolonial resistance. To challenge and confront the proliferation of Russian imperial (including Soviet) narratives, as well as reclaim agency of Ukrainian culture, it was the Ukrainian academic diaspora in the US and Canada who started an extensive presentation of English translations of Ukrainian literature.

In 1956, amidst a period when Moscow-based foreign languages press was publishing a series of indirect translations of Ukrainian literature via Russian into English, Yar Slavutych released an English-language anthology in the US titled *Muse in Prison: Eleven Sketches of Ukrainian poets killed by Communists and Twenty-two Translations of Their Poems*, with a foreword by Clarence Manning. The collection showcased the banned poetry by Mykola Zerov, Pavlo Fylypovych, Maik Yohansen and other representatives of Ukrainian Executed Renaissance who were shot in the Sandormokh forest as prisoners of the Solovki Soviet concentration camp. George Luckyj translated stories by Mykola Khvylovy, who tragically took his own life during the Soviet purges, and published them in the 1960 volume *Stories from the Ukraine*, accompanied by his special preface. And in a few years, in 1964, *Their Land: An Anthology of Ukrainian Short Stories* edited by Michael Luchkovich, with the biographical sketches by Bohdan Krawciw and a preface by Clarence Manning, was published by Svoboda Press in Jersey City, New York. Following this, under the editorial guidance of George Luckyj, Ukrainian Academic Press presented a bilingual Ukrainian-English reader *Modern Ukrainian Short Stories* in 1973. This anthology included texts by many prominent Ukrainian 20th-century writers, among them Vasyl Stefanyk, Mykhaĭlo Kotsiubyns'kyĭ, Mykola Khvylovy and Hryhorii Kosynka. These publications, alongside others from the Ukrainian diaspora, assumed a key role in shaping a different – decolonial – narrative about Ukrainian literature, shedding light on suppressed voices and offering an in-depth representation of Ukrainian culture beyond the confines of Russian-dominated narratives. They became vehicles for intervention and recrafted perceptions of Ukrainian literary culture in the English-language contested cultural space.

CONCLUSION

I have suggested that there is value and potentiality in conceptualizing translation history as a decolonial exercise. I have also attempted to elaborate on decolonial analytics in the historical studies of translation and, in a rather cursory manner, presented a decolonial re-reading of the history of translating Ukrainian literary texts into English, pointing to the pervasive influence of Russian imperial and Soviet lens. Applying the designed four-step framework of decolonial analytics to the corpus analysis has revealed three prevalent colonial strategies: cultural appropriation, indirect translation through Russian, and emphasis on Russian or Soviet validation. These strategies underscore a deliberate and sustained effort over time by Russia to propagate in Anglophone contexts either the assertion of a common historical past with

Ukraine or the positioning of Ukraine as an integral component of a broader Russian cultural sphere.

In view of this, George Steiner reasonably argued that translation is key to understanding "referential recognition", or "larger questions of inherited meaning" (1992, 491), and it is especially relevant in the context of Ukrainian literature's representation in English translation, where linguistic and cultural features were often manipulated to serve political agendas. Considering the limited scope of the current study, future investigations might explore in more detail the long-term impacts of these colonial strategies on the reception of Ukrainian culture in the English-speaking world, as well as they could focus more on specific case studies or comparative analyses to broaden the scope of conceptual treatment of translation coloniality.

NOTES

[1] The term *Ruthenian* functioned as a linguonym until the turn of the 20th century for what is now known as the Ukrainian language. In the 19th century, the Ruthenian language existed under two distinct *political* labels, Galician Ruthenian and Little Russian (the latter was used within the Russian Empire, downplaying its distinct character), though the core language remained the same. The 1876 Ems ban on using Ukrainian in print throughout the Russian Empire led to a surge of printing initiatives in Habsburg Galicia, which in turn helped solidify a unified vision of the Ruthenian (later – Ukrainian) language.

[2] The Library of Congress system without diacritics is used for the Romanization from Cyrillic script.

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Soviet ideological and puritanical censorship of Ukrainian literary translations

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Soviet ideological and puritanical censorship of Ukrainian literary translations

Ideological censorship. Ukrainian SSR. Literary translation. Ideologemes. Manipulation.

The article explores censorship of literary translations in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialistic Republic, delineating political and ideological modes and demonstrating the ideological underpinning of the puritanical mode. It describes the censorial system in the Ukrainian SSR as determined by the general goal of Soviet censorship and the local context. It then examines the censorship practices on the textual level in Ukrainian translations of novels by British and North American authors and highlights the variability of translations of the Soviet period.

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The aim of this article is to dwell on the category of ideological censorship in the Soviet context, to demonstrate the censorial tactics employed by this kind of censorship in Ukrainian translations, and to highlight the differences between the Ukrainian and Russian translations of the Soviet period. Censorship had a multifaceted impact on translated literature in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR; Baer 2022; Blium 2008; Rudnytska 2022; Sherry 2015; Witt 2011). Although in different "Soviet republics" it had the identical goal, its tasks also depended on local contexts, as it was in the Baltic States (Maskaliūnienė and Juršėnaitė 2023; Monticelli and Lange 2014) and Ukraine (Strilkha 2006; Kalnychenko and Kolomiyets 2022).

However, the system of ideological censorship of literary translations in the Ukrainian SSR (UkSSR) has not been sufficiently studied. Besides, "the terminological confusion associated with 'ideology'" could not but influence the examining of the expression of ideology in translation (Faucett and Munday 2009, 137), and there is still a certain ambiguity associated with the ideological vs. political factors in the research of censorship of literary translations of the Soviet period. The case studies below, based on Ukrainian and Russian translations of novels by the British and North American authors John Galsworthy, Jack London, J. D. Salinger, Theodor Dreiser, and Ernest Hemingway which were available in the UkSSR, will focus on censorship practices on the textual level, including the use of ideologemes and the excision, substitution, or addition of fragments of text.

THE CENSORIAL SYSTEM IN THE UKRAINIAN SSR

The eastern and central regions of Ukraine became part of the Soviet Union in 1922. That year a censorial body, directly subordinate to the People's Commissariat of Education of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR), was created in the UkSSR – the Central Administration for Publishing Affairs. Such subordination contradicted to the Constitution of the UkSSR of 1919 and was objected to by the local government (Babiukh 2004, 81), so the Ukrainian Administration was made formally independent although its functions were identical to those of the Main Administration for Literary and Publishing Affairs (the so-called Glavlit)[1] in Moscow. In 1925, however, the name of the body was changed to the Main Administration for Literary and Publishing Affairs of the UkSSR ("Ukrholovlit"), and the three-tier management system identical to the Moscow Glavlit was developed: the Main Administration, oblast administrations, rayon/city administrations. The task of Ukrholovlit was to provide "politico-ideological, military and economic control over the published or broadcast literary works, manuscripts, books, posters, pictures, etc."[2] (Postanova VTsVK 1931, 34).

Ukrholovlit was to ban works containing anti-Soviet propaganda, state secrets, pornography, or inciting ethnic strife (Goriaeva 1997). The latter – the national issue – became of paramount importance in the UkSSR after 1928, when the new course aimed at a "mutual enrichment" of languages and literatures of the "Soviet peoples" was launched, which in fact meant cultural homogenization and Russification with heavy domination of *Russian* translations of Western literatures and translations of *Russian* literature into the other languages spoken in the USSR (see Rudnytska

2022). Another factor that had a huge impact on Ukrainian literary translation was the state campaign against "bourgeois nationalism", which also was supposed to play a role in Russification (for details see Kalnychenko and Kolomiyets 2022).

The western Ukrainian territories were occupied by the USSR in 1939, and the same policy in the sphere of translation as existed previously in the rest of Ukraine was introduced: the nationalization of publishing houses and introduction of censorship. Many local publishing houses and periodicals were closed, such as the *Dilo* newspaper in Lviv (1880–1939), which had published Ukrainian translations of works by American, British, French, German, and Russian authors, both on its pages and as book series.

Although censorial pressure was relaxed to a certain extent after Stalin's death in 1953, the system of censorial control did not undergo significant changes until the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 (Fedotova 2009, 3).

IDEOLOGICAL CENSORSHIP OF LITERARY TRANSLATIONS

Describing the censorship of domestic Soviet literature, Herman Ermolaev (1997, xiii) delineates puritanical censorship (concerning "sex, gore, foul language, offensive odours, unpleasant appearance, bad manners, uncleanliness and certain parts and functions of the human body") and political censorship (concerning the Party policy and the regime in general, the portrayal of certain figures and events, etc.). Building upon his framework in the analysis of Russian translations, Samantha Sherry defines a third type of censorial intervention – *ideological* censorship concerning "the ideological significance of particular linguistic items, which have been termed 'ideologemes'" (2015, 8). However, such an approach – when Soviet puritanical censorship is examined as independent from ideology, and ideological censorship is limited to the manipulations or exclusions of ideologemes – testifies to an insufficient understanding of Soviet ideology and its pervasiveness. As we remember, the main aim of the Soviet censorial system was "politico-ideological" control, and it makes sense to dwell on these two components in greater detail.

An analysis of censorship of literary translations throughout the Soviet era demonstrates that there were certain kinds of censorial interventions obviously correlated with the Soviet policy of a particular period. For example, the years between the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact (1939) and the Nazi invasion of the USSR (1941) saw the prohibition of previously published translations of antifascist works (see Blium 2008) and excision of references to fascism (Sherry 2015). Due to the Albanian-Soviet split (1956–1961) translations of Albanian literature were banned for over a decade. The dynamics of translations of Chinese literature closely followed the dynamics of Sino-Soviet relations (see Rudnytska 2022). The victims of repressions and enemies of the state became Orwellian "non-persons", which induced banning of translations or literally "cutting out" or "gluing" the corresponding fragments of the books in shops and libraries (Blium 2008). Such censorship was obviously determined by the Party *policies* and therefore can be defined as political.

On the other hand, some content in foreign texts was *permanently* subject to censorial intervention – criticism of communism and everything Soviet, positive eval-

uation of "ideological enemies", religious content, depictions of sex – and that was predetermined by the Soviet ideology. Firstly, polarization, a distinguishing feature of any ideology (Dijk 1998), and the view of communism as the final stage of human development made criticism of communism and all aspects of the Soviet state and society inappropriate as well as "praising the ideological enemy". "Scientific atheism" as an integral component of Marxism-Leninism predetermined censoring religious content. The Soviet variant of puritanism was an important part of raising the "New Soviet person" – the latter was viewed as one of the most significant factors of social transformation (Kahanov 2019, 6), and literature was employed as an effective tool of the "formation" (*formovka*) of the Soviet reader (Dobrenko 1997). Ermolaev points out that "Puritanical censorship weeded out everything what was considered incompatible with the moral or aesthetic education of the Soviet man" (1997, xiii) but eschews to define Soviet censorship as ideological since in some respects it depended more on the current political course than the ideological stance. However, it is not true for puritanical bowdlerization of literary texts, which became an integral part of Soviet censorship. Bearing in mind the ideological significance of raising of the New Soviet man and the role of literature assigned in the process, the ideological underpinning of puritanical censorship becomes obvious.[3]

Thus, foreign literary works deemed ideologically inappropriate (criticizing the USSR, communism, totalitarianism, incompatible with the Soviet morals and aesthetics) were not translated in the UkSSR while published translations were often ideologically manipulated due to manipulation of ideologemes, excision, and substitution.[4]

IDEOLOGEMES

In the USSR, a major means of ideological influence – the totalitarian discourse – was based on a system of ideologemes (Zemskaia 1996, 23); as translation brings texts and discourses together, it produces "new, unanticipated meanings in the receiving culture", so ideological censorship aimed at "reimposing authorised meanings" (Sherry 2015, 8). In Ukrainian translations ideologemes such as "class", "Communist", "bourgeoisie", "worker", etc. were often omitted, substituted with a neutral word referring to the same denotata, or even added in translations.

For example, Jack London often uses the ideologeme "class" in *Martin Eden*, which was omitted in case it implied something undesired. In the following citation, where female workers are characterized not very positively, the ideologeme "class" is omitted in the Ukrainian translation by Mariia Riabova: "Good, as goodness might be measured in their particular class, hard-working for meagre wages" (London 1909, 51) – "Chesnotlyvi, naskil'ky mozhut' buty chesnotlyvii zhinky, shcho vysnazhno pratsiuiut' za mizernu platniu" (1970, 58) [Good, as goodness might be measured for the women who work extremely hard for meagre wages].

In a situation where London emphasizes his protagonist's *respect* for the workers, the ideologeme "class" is added in the target text: "He could not be disloyal to his kind, and it was to more than Lizzie Connolly that his hat was lifted" (London 1909, 103) – "Vin ne zbyravsia soromytysia svoho klasu i v osobi Lizzi Conoli pryvitav ne

til'ky ïï" (1970, 112) [He wasn't going to look ashamed of his class, and it was more than Lizzie Connolly that he greeted].

Another often added ideologeme was "bourgeoisie", for instance, in Oleksandr Terekh's translation of *The Man of Property* by John Galsworthy: "The Club which old Jolyon entered on the stroke of seven was one of those political institutions of the upper middle class which have seen better days" (Galsworthy [1906] 1999, 24) – "Klub, do iakoho staryi Dzholion zaishov rivno o s'omii, nalezhav do tykh politychnykh zakladiv velykoï burzhuaziï, iaki bachyly krashchi chasy" (1976, 30) [The Club which old Jolyon entered at seven sharp was one of those political institutions of the big bourgeoisie which have seen better days].

"Bourgeoisie" and its derivatives had a negative connotation in the Soviet discourse, so they could not be used to denote a positive character such as Blanket in Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*: "He was no gypsy but a bourgeois from Valencia" (Hemingway 1940, 223). In Mar Pinchevs'kyi's translation "bourgeois" is omitted: "Vin buv ne tsyhan, a valensiiets', do toho zh z mista" (1979, 239) [He was not a gypsy but a Valencian and of urban origin].

EXCISION

Excision of textual fragments incompatible with the Soviet ideology enabled publication of Western literature, but it could result in misrepresentation of the ideas and characters of the source text. Numerous excisions were caused by the opposition between "Us", "Our" ("Soviet/socialist"), characterized positively, and negatively characterized "Them", "Their" ("capitalist"). There are dozens of similar excisions in Pinchevs'kyi's translation of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* caused by Hemingway's criticism of the Soviet Union and its policy, communism as a social order, warfare methods used in the Spanish Civil War, Spanish military leaders, Russians, and their military residence in Madrid (Kokhans'ka 2007, 14). In Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* one of the characters is described as "altogether a very acceptable individual of our great American upper class" (Dreiser [1900] 2009, 95), but in the translation by Eleonora Rzhevuts'ka "our" and "great" are omitted: "Zahalom tse buv tsilkom prystoinyi, typovyi predstavnyk vyshchykh klasiv Ameryky" (1971, 105) [He was altogether a quite decent, typical representative of the higher classes of America]. Another group of excisions in translations was provoked by the discrepancy between the concept of success in Western and Soviet societies. For example, in his novel *An American Tragedy,* Dreiser uses the word "successful" while describing his rich characters; as in the Soviet discourse "a rich person" had definitely a negative connotation, and success could not be associated with personal gain, in translations "successful" is omitted, e.g.: "he is so rich and successful" (Dreiser [1925] 2003: 112) – "vin duzhe bahatyi" (1955, 125) [he is very rich].

Elimination of *religious* allusions was another common procedure, as in Ivan Bushe, Leonid Smilians'kyi and Leopold Iashchenko's translation of *An American Tragedy* where references to Christmas are excised as well as preaching on the love of God, repentance and acceptance of Christ. However, out of eight quotes from the Bible used in the source text, four are translated, including those three which

concern universal moral principles corresponding to the Soviet ethics – on the destructive effects of alcohol and evil deeds, e.g.: "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (Dreiser [1925] 2003, 8) – "Vyno – obmanshchyk; pyty – znachyt' vpasty v bezumstvo; khto piddaiet'sia obmanovi – toi ne mudryi" (1955, 10) [Wine is a deceiver; to drink is to fall into madness; who surrenders to deceiving is unwise]. Besides these three quotes, the one on the power of faith is translated: in the USSR the concept of faith implied strong belief in *something*, for instance, in the "victory of communism". The quote mentions not God but omnipotence of a believer, so it can be interpreted in different ways: "if ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, remove hence to yonder place; and it shall move; and nothing shall be impossible to you" (Dreiser [1925] 2003, 8) – "Iakshcho v tebe ie vira zavbil'shky z zerno hirchychne, i ty promovysh do tsiie hory: 'Rush iz mistsia', – vona zrushyt', i nishcho ne bude nemozhlyve dlia tebe" (1955, 10) [If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, and you say to this mountain, "Move from your place", it will move, and nothing will be impossible to you].

Descriptions of sex, traditionally tabooed body parts, and vulgarisms were widely omitted and could result in misrepresentation of characters, their relationships, etc. For example, in Dmytro Stelmakh's translation of John Fowles's *The Ebony Tower* vulgarisms ("cunt", "pussy"), references to nakedness and tabooed parts of male and female bodies ("naked", "vulva", "breast", "the nest of hair between her legs", "well-hung") were excised. As a result, the image of Henry Breasley becomes more conventional, which mitigates the conflict between social norms and freedom necessary for creativity. Besides, the significance of sexual attractiveness as an important ingredient of the relationship between David and Diana becomes, at the very least, obscure in the target text, e.g.: "as she went out through the door the galabya momentarily lost its opacity against the sunlight beyond; a fleeting naked shadow" (Fowles 1974, 4) – "U dveriakh soniachni promeni na myt' vykhopyly z halabiï obrysy divochoï postati" (1986, 5) [In the doorway the sunrays for a moment lighted the outline of the girl's figure in the galabya].[5]

SUBSTITUTION

Substitutions were often employed to eliminate the positive characterization of "ideological enemies", as in the following fragment from *An American Tragedy*, where the main character compares his poor mother and rich aunt and notes diverse traits of the latter: "his mother (might Heaven keep her) not as distinguished or as experienced as his cold, superior, indifferent aunt" Dreiser [1925] 2003, 198). In the target text, however, instead of the positive traits ("distinguished", "experienced") the concept "svits'ka dama" [socialite] was introduced, which had a distinctly negative connotation in the Soviet discourse: "Maty (berezhy iï bozhe!) ne taka svits-ka dama, iak kholodna, hordovyta, baiduzha titka" (1955, 206) [Mother (god save her!) is not such a socialite as the cold, proud, indifferent aunt].

Substitution was employed to mitigate negative characterization of Russians and their actions in Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, as in Robert Jordan's con-

templation about the misinformation spread by them: "But now he knew enough to accept the necessity for all the deception" (Hemingway 1940, 298) – "Ale vidtodi vin bahato choho zrozumiv i vyznav neobkhidnist' prykhovuvaty pravdu" (1979, 312) [Since then he had realized many things and recognized the necessity to hide the truth].

Substitution was often used as a means of puritanical censorship in descriptions of sexual relationships: instead of "sex", "desire", "make love", "pleasure", "grope" in the source texts, in the target texts one could read about "love", "joy", "being together", "hug". For instance, in J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*, Holden Caulfield mentions the headmaster's daughter, saying that "she wasn't exactly the type that drove you mad with desire" (Salinger [1951] 2001, 2). In Oleksa Lohvynenko's translation the feeling is substituted by a more romantic one: "Til'ky zh vona ne z tykh, u koho mozhna vklepatysia po sami vukha" (1984, 3) [Only she isn't the one to make you fall head over heels in love].

Substitutions of this kind are also used in Stelmakh's translation of Fowles's *The Ebony Tower*, e.g. "getting their legs open" – "shchob liahla z toboiu v lizhko" [for her to go to bed with you], "former sexual bantam" – "shchos' vid ioho buinoï molodosti" [something from his exuberant youth], "grope" – "obiiniaty" [to hug]. However, of more interest for the present analysis is the substitution which is not motivated by puritanical censorship proper but is indicative of the Soviet concept of morality in general. The main character, seeing a great difference between his own personality and behavior and the famous artist's, reflects on art and his own potential: "In the end it all came down to what one was born with: one either had the temperament for excess and a ruthless egocentricity, for keeping thought and feeling in different compartments, or one didn't; and David didn't. The abominable and vindictive injustice was that art is fundamentally amoral" (Fowles 1974, 298). As the old artist's way of life was totally inconsistent with Soviet morality, in the translation art is defined not as "amoral" (i.e. unconcerned with the rightness or wrongness of something [www.oed.com]) but "immoral" (i.e. opposed to or violating morality; morally evil or impure [www.oed.com]): "Ohydna i mstyva nespravedlyvist' poliahala v tomu, shcho mystetstvo v osnovi svoïi amoral'ne" (1986, 306) [The abominable and vindictive injustice was that art is fundamentally immoral]. This substitution reflects the Soviet dichotomy "moral – immoral", as nothing could be beyond morality, and nobody could be unconcerned with the rightness or wrongness of something. However, since the adjectives "amoral" and "amoral'nyi" are interlingual homonyms, such a translation could be the result of a translation error.

ADDITION

Words or bigger fragments could be added in Russian translations to emphasize or introduce the desired characterization or create intertextuality between Western and Soviet literatures (Sherry 2015); addition was also broadly employed in Russian translations of Ukrainian literature to eliminate the negative characterization of the Soviet authorities, society, army, or avoid potential comparison between the Nazi and the Soviet regimes (see Rudnytska 2016). In Ukrainian translations,

however, we could find just a few instances of addition, which aimed to introduce or intensify negative evaluation.

In *The Ebony Tower*, Fowles characterizes the Freak's religious parents as "hair-raisingly bigoted parents" (Fowles 1974, 74); in Stelmakh's translation the word "cruel" is added to intensify the negative characterization: "Vona smishno rozpovidala pro svoïkh zhorstokykh i fanatychnykh bat'kiv" (1986, 5) [She told funny stories about her cruel and fanatical parents]. A similar addition is used in the translation of *An American Tragedy*, where "faith" acquires negative characterization due to the epithet "blind": "For behind her were all those years of religious work and faith" (Dreiser [1925] 2003, 328) – "Pozadu buly dovhi roky slipoï viry i sluzhinnia relihiï" (1955, 340) [Behind her were long years of blind faith and service to religion]. In this translation negative characterization is also added to the description of an "ideological enemy" – a businessman – through addition of the word "dilok" [man of affairs] with extremely negative connotation in Ukrainian (the word implies sidelining of ethical principles and moral values in pursuit of profit): "His father was not as able as this, his great uncle" (Dreiser [1925] 2003, 76) – "Ioho bat'ko ne takyi zdibnyi dilok, iak tsei vazhnyi diad'ko" (1955, 84) [His father is not such a gifted man of affairs, as this important uncle].

UKRAINIAN VS. RUSSIAN TRANSLATIONS

One of the working principles of Soviet censorship was that the Russian translation of a foreign literary work was used as a "mediating filter" (Monticelli and Lange 2014, 102) for translations into the other languages of the USSR, correspondingly, most excisions or manipulations in translations into different languages coincided. However, there are numerous differences between the Russian and Ukrainian translations analyzed here.

Although many fragments were excised or manipulated in Pinchevs'kyi's translation of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, a comparative analysis with the Russian translation by Ievgeniia Kalashnikova demonstrates that these texts provide a different evaluation of the Soviets/Russians and their actions. For example, the fragments "in case the city should be abandoned" and "In the event the city should be abandoned" (Hemingway 1940, 248), which imply that the Soviet troops could be forced by the Spanish royalists to leave Madrid, are translated into Ukrainian without changes while Kalashnikova's translation implies that the Soviets control the situation: "iesli gorod budet resheno sdat" (1968, 257) [if they decide to abandon the city]. Hemingway's characters discuss another wave of Stalin's purges: "Here it reports the purging of more of thy famous Russians" (1940, 100), while in Kalashnikova's translation the object of the purge is made the subject, so the excerpt can be understood as describing the "famous Russians" struggling with an external enemy: "Vot tut pishut, chto tvoi znamenitye russkie eshche koe-kogo vychistili" (1968, 107) [Here it is written that thy famous Russians have purged somebody else]. The corresponding Ukrainian sentence has the same structure as the Russian one, but the word combination "v sebe" [among themselves] was added, which helped preserve the message of the source text: "Otut pyshut', shcho tvoi slavnozvisni rosiiany shche dekoho v sebe vychystyly"

(1979, 108) [Here it is written that thy famous Russians have purged somebody else among themselves]. Describing the Soviet journalist Karkov, Hemingway mentions his "insolence", which remains "insolent" ("zukhvalyi") in Ukrainian but in Russian becomes "audacious" ("derzkii"), the only synonym which does not necessarily have a negative connotation.

The same tendency can be observed in puritanical (self)censorship:[6] the language of the Ukrainian translations is not limited to the literary variant with a restricted use of colloquialisms, like the Russian translations. For example, in *The Catcher in the Rye,* Salinger's teenage characters speak colloquial English and use slang and profanity. In the translation by Rita Rait-Kovaliova, they mostly speak literary Russian with occasional use of colloquialisms such as "duratskii" [foolish], "chto za chert" [what the hell], "besit'sia" [go nuts] (1960). In the Ukrainian translation by Oleksa Lohvynenko they broadly use colloquial language ("trykliatushchii" [cursed], "prychandallia" [stuff], "idiotskyi" [idiotic], "ni bisovoho bat'ka ne vydno" [one can't see the devil's father], etc.; 1984), vulgarisms, and jargon, which compensate for the teenage slang that was absent in the Ukrainian language of the Soviet period.

In fact, such differences between the Russian and Ukrainian translations can be explained by the time lapse between the translations: if "ideologically appropriate" works such as London's and Dreiser's were translated in many languages and published promptly, "controversial" (in terms of ideology or aesthetics) literature in censored translations could be published only in Russian (as works by John Steinbeck, T. S. Eliot, Samuel Beckett, and others[7]) or was translated into different languages much later, so Ukrainian translations were published years, sometimes decades later than Russian ones.[8] As after Stalin's death censorial pressure gradually became less severe, the time lapse provided for lesser censorial intervention in later Ukrainian translations. This tendency can be seen in the texts analyzed here: *An American Tragedy*, published in Ukrainian in 1955, when the censorship was still extremely strong, bore a great resemblance to the Russian translation of 1947. Conversely, the Russian and Ukrainian translations of *Sister Carrie* were published in 1951 and 1971 respectively, *For Whom the Bell Tolls* in 1968 and 1981, *The Catcher in the Rye* in 1960 and 1984, and *The Ebony Tower* in 1979 and 1986, so the later publication dates created an opportunity for closer rendering of the source text.

CONCLUSION

The censorial bodies of the UkSSR functioned as part of the all-Union system, and the censorship of Ukrainian literary translations depended on general ideological limitations and the current state policy. Ideologically motivated exclusion and manipulation of textual fragments were used to eliminate criticism of communism and everything Soviet, positive evaluation of "ideological enemies", and religious content; puritanical censorship had ideological underpinning, as translated literature was to play a role in raising of the New Soviet person. Political censorship aimed to eliminate the content deemed inappropriate due to the policies of certain periods, such as references to fascism and enemies of the state.

The censorial procedures on the textual level included manipulating ideologemes, excisions, substitutions, and additions although the latter were used only sporadically. Ukrainian translations were checked against Russian ones, which were the first to publish and provided an ideologically appropriate interpretation of foreign texts, but the time lapse between the translations into the two languages provided an opportunity for closer reproduction of the source texts in Ukrainian translations. However, the date of publication should not be viewed as the only reason for such discrepancies, as the earlier, more strictly censored Russian translations were republished repeatedly, including the post-Soviet Russian Federation, which can testify to the significance of factors not connected with Soviet censorship.

NOTES

[1] The Library of Congress system without diacritics is used for the Romanization from Cyrillic script.

[2] Unless otherwise stated, all translations from Ukrainian and Russian are by the present author.

[3] Puritanical censorship of translations was also typical for the totalitarian regimes in Germany, Italy, Portugal, and Spain (see Rundle and Sturge 2010).

[4] Besides manipulation and excisions of textual fragments, paratext played a substantial role in providing the desired interpretation of translated literary texts (see Rudnytska 2022; Sherry 2015).

[5] It is significant that among the Ukrainian synonyms – "fihura", "siluet", "postat'" – the translator (or editor) chose the latter variant, which is the one least associated with physical characteristics of a person, let alone their sexual attractiveness.

[6] Due to the space limitations, we do not delineate censorship proper and self-censorship, as Soviet translators had to refer to the latter for various reasons (see Baer 2022; Sherry 2015).

[7] The works of these and many other Western authors were published in Ukrainian only after 1988, when the censorial system relaxed considerably.

[8] It was predetermined not by the state of the Ukrainian translation field itself, strongly developed since the late 19th century, but purely by the Soviet censorial policy, and besides translations released annually in the USSR, numerous Ukrainian translations were published abroad by the diaspora (Kolomiyets 2004; Strikha 2006).

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Individual decisions in a collectivist ideology: Two Czech translations of I. L. Peretz's short story *Bontshe shvayg*

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Individual decisions in a collectivist ideology: Two Czech translations of I. L. Peretz's short story *Bontshe shvayg*

Yiddish literature in translation. I. L. Peretz. Communist regime in Czechoslovakia. Initial norm. Paratexts.

This article is focused on Czech translations of Yiddish literature, specifically on two versions of "Bontshe shvayg" (Bontshe the Silent, 1894) by Polish-Yiddish author I. L. [Isaac Leib] Peretz published in the 1960s. The main aims of the analysis are to show: 1) how far the initial norm correlated with the explicit commentaries in the epitexts and peritexts; and 2) to what extent translators Jakub Markovič and Stanislav Taraszka were able to individually shape the initial norms within the frame of a collectivist ideology. Understanding the factors that influenced the translators' decisions can provide insight into the role of ideology in shaping the preliminary, initial and operational norm.

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POLITICAL FRAMING AND PUBLISHING STRATEGIES

The political and social framework for the translation of Yiddish literature in postwar Czechoslovakia was the collectivist ideology of the communist party, which went through periods of repression and liberalization between its rise to power in 1948 and its fall in 1989 (cf. Rupnik 1981; Rataj and Houda 2010; Kocian et al. 2020). Scholarly publications mapping the development of the Czechoslovak communist regime emphasize the difference between the period of 1957–1962, when the first cracks in central communist power appeared, and the period of 1962–1968, when closer contacts with the West were established and communist ideology in general was in crisis (Kaplan 2008, 22–36; Rataj, 158–175 and 176–350). From the late 1950s onwards, the strongly ideological press gradually disappeared, giving way to newspapers favoring journalistic practices that focused more on the interest of readers (cf. Sýkorová 2015, 21–22). The mid- to late 1960s represented the peak of liberalization within the limits of the communist regime, culminating in the "period of thaw" (doba tání), which saw a temporary fading of the symptoms typical for communist ideology, such as the supremacy of the proletarian collective over the individual, maximum control of the individual by the state and the associated rejection of personal freedoms (cf. Rataj and Houda 2010).

In connection with the loosening of restrictions in the political and social domain, the publishing strategies changed significantly.[1] Publishing houses tried to make up for the period of oppression by expanding their editorial program, releasing high-quality foreign literature as well as more titles by new Czech authors, and by publishing in much larger print runs than had been possible until then (Měšťan 2000, 67–71). The progressive liberalization in the 1960s was also reflected in the periodical press, and a significant role in this development was played by the Writers' Union and its cultural-political weekly *Literární noviny* (Jungmann 2000).

Nonetheless, even during what at first glance appeared to be a relatively relaxed period, in which literature, the press, cinematography and cultural life in general flourished briefly within somewhat broader boundaries, society was far from operating on democratic principles. The attitude towards the Jewish community is a good indicator of this. Blanka Soukupová (2010, 40) argues that the "Golden Sixties" did not mean the end of discrimination against the Jewish community by state authorities. The only respect in which the 1960s were truly "golden" for the Jewish community was in the reception of Jewish culture: from the mid-1960s onwards, Jewish art and literature began to become widely known in the mainstream society, and interest in Jewish culture in general grew (64–65). This interest was significantly weakened again after the August 1968 Warsaw Pact invasion and during the "normalization" period of ideological repression in the 1970s.

As interest in Jewish culture and literature grew, so did the demand for more information about the specific subfield of Yiddish culture and literature. In the former Czechoslovakia, Yiddish was regarded as a somewhat exotic language – from the end of the 18th century onwards it was gradually replaced by German (or, more rarely, Czech). As a result, Yiddish, which in the 20th century was no longer used as

a spoken language in Bohemia and Moravia, increasingly took on various connotative meanings. In one sense, Yiddish was the language that embodied Jewish identity, being associated with the vanished world of Eastern European Hasidism on the one hand, and with the secular left-wing political movement on the other. This symbolic charge resulted in the ambivalent status that this language had during the communist regime. Both concepts – Yiddish as a representative of Jewish religiosity and as a representative of left-wing political attitudes – were somewhat problematic for different reasons: the pronounced religiosity of the Eastern European Hasidim was only acceptable to the communist regime if it was interpreted as a manifestation of the "simple" masses, and the left-wing orientation of Yiddish intellectuals and culture-makers was often not the "correct" socialist orientation, so it had to be adjusted in some way. This ideologically-driven perception of the language inevitably had consequences for the way Yiddish texts were dealt with: if the translator and editors decided to publish a literary translation from Yiddish, it was necessary to comment on this text in some way, to justify the selection, to present the author of the source text preferably as an undisputed advocate of communist ideology (sometimes even rightly so), to adjust the problematic themes, etc. The procedures used to "justify" the publication of new translations can be placed on a continuum of explicitness. The most explicit procedures were various types of commentary in the form of paratexts, peritexts, and epitexts, which are discussed in the next section. The less obvious strategies were the operational norms which the individual translators opted for; these methods will be demonstrated in the third section by analyzing two Czech translations of "Bontshe shvayg" (Bontshe the Silent, 1894) one of the best-known short stories by Polish-Yiddish author I. L. [Isaac Leib] Peretz. This tale of a simple man who completely surrenders to his fate and the will of God is available in numerous translations, and became an integral part of the Jewish oral tradition during Peretz's lifetime.[2] It has also been interpreted in many different ways, ranging from romantic-pietistic and Zionist interpretations to Marxist distortions by Soviet critics, who saw it as a harsh criticism of the tsarist regime and figuratively as a critique of capitalist society.[3] Its Czech translations from the 1960s by Stanislav Taraszka and Jakub Markovič show how paratextual comments harmonized the biographical background of the author or his/her work with the ideological precepts of the communist regime.

PARATEXTUAL COMMENTS ON YIDDISH CULTURE AND LITERATURE AS A SPECIAL COMMUNICATION CODE

The vast majority of translations of Yiddish literature into Czech were not published in books but in periodicals, especially Jewish ones.[4] In the 1960s, Stanislav Taraszka and Jakub Markovič were the only two translators regularly translating Yiddish literature into Czech.[5]

Both of them published their translations in the same periodicals, *Věstník židovských náboženských obcí v Československu* (Bulletin of Jewish religious communities in Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia) and *Židovská ročenka* (Jewish almanac), adapting the selection of genres to these publication venues: most of the texts

published there were short stories (cf. Krappmann 2021). Taraszkas translations from Yiddish were published in the abovementioned periodicals until the end of the 1970s.[6] Jakub Markovič, whose publishing activities for both periodicals ended with his premature death in 1965, was the only translator to publish several translations from Yiddish in book form in the period between 1945 and 1989. Having grown up as a native speaker of Yiddish in a large Hasidic family in Transcarpathia, Markovič was one of the few Czech translators who translated directly from the source language.[7]

In the paratexts that accompanied the translations in the magazines, attention was paid to the "correct" embedding of the text in the cultural-political context, especially in the first half of the 1960s. A kind of communication code was developed using idiomatized routine formulae (Feilke 2012, 2) and keywords (Hermanns 1982), which was, however, easily recognizable to readers of the time (cf. Krappmann 2024). Phrases used in the paratexts as ideological "ciphers", such as "Vzhůru k lepším zítřkům!" (Towards a brighter future!), "utlačování mas" (suppression of the masses) or "rozbřesk nové doby" (dawn of a new age) had a signaling function: "they activated complex metaphorical concepts, which, however, quickly faded away through rapid usualisation in the totalitarian context. When recipients encountered such repetitive, only minimally varying routine formulations, they immediately became aware of the communication code" (Krappmann 2024).[8] These routine formulations, therefore, probably had only a limited impact on how the (primarily Jewish) readers of these periodicals perceived Yiddish and Yiddish literature.

In the introductory paratext to Taraszka's translation of "Bontshe shvayg" ("Mlčenlivý Bonze") in *Židovská ročenka*, entitled "Věčně mladý Perec, bojovník za pokrok a svobodu" (The eternally young Peretz, fighter for progress and freedom), Peretz's personality has been characterized in accordance with this interpretation:[9]

> I. L. Peretz belongs to the great writers who are constantly experiencing inward stirrings, the restlessness of the eternal search for an artistic form of expression that is in harmony with the feelings and life expressions of the people. The suffering of a people humiliated, endlessly persecuted and hunted by the tsarist regime, as well as a deep longing for liberation, are reflected in Peretz's work in a powerful protest against the oppression of man by man and a demand for the freedom of all people. Peretz is wrapping his protest in various artistic forms […]. ([D. S.] 1960, 147)

Routine formulae such as "protest against the oppression of man by man" ("utiskování člověka člověkem") or "demand for the liberation of all people" ("požadavek po svobodě všech lidí") must be interpreted in the context of communist group language of the period (for political group languages cf. Kämper 2018, 439–454). They play the role of what Fritz Hermanns calls "Abgrenzungsvokabular" (literally "differentiation vocabulary"), referring to expressions and phrases that "make a party standpoint recognizable in a striking way" (1982, 92). Peretz is presented here as a warrior for values which in the routinized rhetoric of the Communist Party have taken the form of largely empty phrases. The artistic literary form is presented as a kind of mere "wrapper" in which the political struggle is enveloped. Following this ideologically adapted view of Peretz's primary motivation

for writing literary works, the Jewish way of life is characterized in similarly routinized phrases as "backward and outdated" ("zpátečnický a zastaralý"): "To all the forms of artistic creation used by I. L. Peretz, he gives his restless spirit of rebellion and protest against the backward and outdated ways of Jewish life" ([D. S.] 1960, 147).

Another translation of Peretz's story appeared in Markovič's anthology of Yiddish literature *Rozinky a mandle* (Raisins and almonds, 1968), published at the height of the reform movement within the Communist Party. Jakub Markovič's preface to the collection contains far fewer routine formulae and has an overall informative character. In less than eleven pages, he attempts to introduce the reader to the development of Yiddish literature and outline some of the basic problems associated with its translation. After outlining the historical development of Western and Eastern Yiddish, Markovič examines the specific motifs and topoi[10] of Yiddish literature, discussing the elements of humor, afterlife and antiheroism which, according to him, characterize Yiddish literature. He also looks for reasons for the idealization of the vanished world of the *shtetl* and analyzes how the emphasis on religious education and scholarship influenced the development of Eastern Yiddish literature. While introducing the three "fathers" of Yiddish literature, Mendele Mocher Sforim, Sholem Aleichem and I. L. Peretz, Markovič discusses the fundamental challenge facing translators of Yiddish literature:

> [W]hen translating from Yiddish into a European language, the translator encounters a number of specific problems that do not arise when translating from other European literature, where a certain cultural affinity can be assumed. The role of cultural and social commentator is imposed on the translator. (1968, 14)

Discussing the selection of texts for the anthology, Markovič points out that the role of "cultural and social commentator" can hardly be fulfilled in some cases, so that some texts simply cannot be translated satisfactorily: "The selection was made more difficult by the specificity of the Jewish cultural tradition, which meant that sometimes an excellent story had to be omitted from the translation because it simply would not be comprehensible to our readers without an extensive commentary" (18). According to Markovič, however, it is not only cultural and social differences and "the problem of accessibility of the material, because the Nazis destroyed all Jewish libraries in occupied Europe during the Second World War" that represent an insurmountable obstacle for the translator, but also specific literary aesthetics: "Often the undertone, the mood, the tonality plays a crucial role here, which eventually becomes the main carrier and commentator of the story" (14). He sees this specific "tonality" as the main reason why some of the original Yiddish texts "would simply not work well in translation" (18).

The strategies that Jakub Markovič and Stanislav Taraszka used to translate Peretz's short story will be discussed in more detail below, as their individually chosen operational norms caused very different interpretations. Furthermore, the analysis will consider how the message communicated by the two target texts differs and to what extent it correlates with the statements in the paratexts.

TWO TRANSLATIONS OF PERETZ'S "BONTSHE SHVAYG": CRITICAL SATIRE OR PRAISE OF CHASSIDIC PIETY?

The main character of Peretz's story, Bontshe Shvayg, is a prototype of the suffering Jewish little man, afflicted by severe plagues which he bears quite resignedly without a murmur or protest. After his death, he appears before the heavenly tribunal by which he is to be judged. The defense lawyer (*melits yoysher*) recites to the court everything that Bontshe Shvayg had to endure during his life. When the prosecutor (*kateyger*) is supposed to take the floor, he has to state after a short hesitation that he has nothing to present: "Rabosay! er hot geshvign! vel ikh oykh shvaygn!" [My lords, he has been silent all this time, I will be silent too!] (Peretz 1920, 15). Bontshe's reaction to the subsequent request that he should wish for whatever comes to his mind corresponds exactly to his earlier surrendered attitude during his lifetime: he merely wishes for "ale teg in derfri a heyse bulke mit frishe puter" [hot bread rolls with fresh butter every day in the morning] (17). Hearing this simple wish, the angels bashfully bow their heads, the accuser, in contrast, bursts out laughing. The enigmatic final scene allows for two different interpretations. On the one hand, the narrative has been interpreted as the celebration of the pietistically devoted, extremely modest attitude to life, and Bontshe is seen as a religious figure of the ascetic saint (Wisse 1971, 22). In this interpretation, the figure of Bontshe can be linked to the concept of the spiritual master, the "lamedvovnik", which was a concept particularly widespread in Hasidic circles.[11] On the other hand, the story has been perceived as a parodic critique of the passive attitude towards life, culminating in the absurdly simple last wish (Pinsker 1971, 64–65). In this interpretation, Bontshe is perceived as an anti-hero, unable to think outside the confines of the ghetto. Anita Norich sees in this story "Peretz's exploration of the radical passivity and lack of volition of Eastern European Jews, so overwhelmed by the mundane, by anti-Semitism, or by strictures within their own community that they have lost all power of imagination" (2007, 116).

In his comprehensive study of the Job motif, Bruce Zuckerman, who clearly subscribes to the second line of interpretation, attempts to explain the reasons behind the perception of Bontshe as a saintly figure. Zuckerman emphasizes that the expectations of the Jewish readers are strongly conditioned by sobering historical experiences. Both after the pogroms in Eastern Europe in the 1880s and to an incomparably greater extent, after the wartime experience of the Shoah, Jewish readers identified with the figure of the suffering, mutely silent Bontshe. This perception blocked interpretative approaches that emphasized the satirical undertone of the story. Zuckerman himself interprets the narrative as a negative appeal to readers, namely: one should not endure unjust "punishment without protest" and one should not enthusiastically accept every little "favor from the ruling authority" without questioning it (1998, 65). On the other hand, he concedes that such great moral principles become invisible to the eyes of survivors who "can perhaps receive some comfort in identifying with someone who suffered as they did but somehow seemed to endure, someone whose silence seemed much the same as their own silence" (1998, 67). In the commentaries on this short story, both directions of reception can be observed, sometimes even contradictorily within a single paratext. In a memorial text on the 35th anniversary

of Peretz's death, it is claimed on the one hand that the characters in his works are "the embodiment of protest [!] against the cowardice, willingness to compromise and low, despicable endeavors of such figures as Bontshe Shvayg"[12] (D. S. 1950, 187) – in this passage Bontshe Shvayg is thus presented as a cowardly, "despicable" figure. On the other hand, in the very same paratext, the author explains that Peretz "shows in works like […] Bontshe Shvayg […] the heroically uplifted hope and unfaltering optimism of a simple Jew and his deep confidence in the ultimate victory of justice"[13] (187).

This text was reprinted ten years later, in 1960, in the *Židovská ročenka* as the introductory paratext to Taraszka's translation – the only change the editors decided to make was the elimination of the first sentence quoted here, in which Bontshe is described as a despicable type of character; the contradiction thus disappears. In particular, the interpretation of Bontshe as a figure who is actually heroic in his poverty and oppression, which is consistent with the communist ideal of proletarian struggle, probably contributed to the fact that the Czech translation of the story was published twice in a relatively short time interval: 1960 and 1968. This retranslation was (and still is) an unusual situation in relation to Czech translations of Yiddish literature. Stanislav Taraszka and Jakub Markovič used very different strategies in their translations, and it can be assumed that their decisions had an impact on the interpretation, perception and reception of the target texts.

THE IMPACT OF DIFFERENT TREATMENTS OF THE OPERATIONAL NORM

The following case analysis is intended to support the thesis that Taraszka's translation strategies tend to support the first, pietistic interpretation of Peretz's story, while Markovič, with his tendency towards a colloquial and straightforward style, emphasizes the grotesque element and thus implicitly promotes the second interpretation approach. In a certain sense, this initial thesis refers to the theoretical approaches developed between the 1950s and 1970s by Jiří Levý and the founder of the Nitra school of translation studies Anton Popovič, both of whom more or less explicitly based their work on Prague functional dynamism. Regardless of their differing formulations, they both took the view that one and the same text can fulfill different functions; in the translation process, the trigger for the choice of the predominant strategy is the individual, socially and historically conditioned interpretation of the source text.

From the first two stages of processing the source text – understanding and interpreting the original (Levý 2012, 50–63) – Markovič and Taraszka take different paths, which leads to divergencies in the re-stylization (63–77) and thus in the application of the operational norms that mainly "determine what would more likely remain intact despite the transformations involved in translation, and what would tend to get changed" (Toury 2012, 82). These divergences take shape in the way that the two translators handle the main character's name and the title of the story. "Bontshe" is the Yiddish Polish variant of the name Benjamin (Binyomin), "Shvayg" goes back to the imperative form *shvayg!* (Be silent!). Taraszka paraphrases the telling name as

a noun phrase consisting of a phonetically adapted proper name preceded by a qualifying adjective – "Mlčenlivý Bonce" (the taciturn/silent Bonce).[14] However, this results in a slight modification in the implicit characterization of the figure through the telling name. The attribute "mlčenlivý", which roughly corresponds to the English adjective "taciturn" or "silent", rather indicates a noble character trait. Markovič, on the other hand, tried to preserve the slightly ironic character of the proper name on a formal level and opted for the somewhat more expressive and colloquial solution "Bonče Mlčoch" (the approximate English equivalent would probably be "Bontshe the clam", as in the English idiom "silent as a clam"). The main strategies of the two translators can therefore already be surmised from their translational treatment of the title: what is already indicated here is Taraszka's tendency towards an elevated lexical register, often with an archaizing undertone, and Markovič's striving for linguistic naturalness, which is often reflected in the choice of colloquial and connotatively marked linguistic devices on various levels.

These strategies are not only played out at the lexical level, but also at the level of the syntactic structure of the two target texts. We will take a closer look at a passage that clearly demonstrates the different ways in which the two translators deal with more complex sentence structures.

ST[15]
volt Bontshe a matseyve gehat, volt efsher iber hundert yor an altertums-forsher zi gefunen. (1920, 8)

TT (Taraszka)
Kdyby byl Bonce měl pořádný náhrobek, je možné, že sto let po jeho smrti by naň byl přišel některý archeolog. (1960, 149)
[If Bonce had had a decent tombstone, it is possible that an archaeologist would have found it a hundred years after his death.]

TT (Markovič)
Kdyby Bonče měl náhrobní kámen, snad by na něj za sto let narazil nějaký archeolog […]. (1968, 63)
[If Bontshe had a gravestone, perhaps an archaeologist would come across it a hundred years later.]

Taraszka substituted the structure of the Yiddish sentence consisting of the main clause and the conditional clause signaled by the double fronting of subjunctive verbs *volt – volt* with a more complex structure; by translating the lexeme efsher (perhaps) with the main clause "je možné" (it is possible), he created a sentence structure that also contains a subject clause in addition to the conditional subordinate clause. Furthermore, Taraszka attempted to achieve a purely formal adequacy in the target language by using the subjunctive past perfect in the two subordinate clauses, which seems somewhat archaic in Czech. The elision of the preposition and the pronoun ("naň") also has a strongly elevated and archaizing effect. Markovič has dispensed with the past perfect tense and the elevated pronominal form and has not decondensed the structure of the sentence structure.

The clearly more "flowery" syntactic style in Taraszka's translation is directly linked to the choice of lexical register, as is shown in the following passage – the characterization of Bontshe:

ST
er hot keynmol nisht ibergerekhent, vifl pud last es kumt oys oyf a groshn. Vifl mol er iz gefaln bay yedn gang far a drayer, vifl mol er hot shir-nisht di neshome oysgeshpign, monendik zayn fardinst. (1920, 13)

TT (Taraszka)
Nikdy nepropočítával, kolik centů jeho břemene připadne na jeden haléř jeho mzdy, kolikrát se zhroutil při pochůzce, za kterou dostal trojník; kolikrát skoro vydechl duši, když se dožadoval mzdy. (1960, 152)
[He never counted how many quintal of his burden came to a penny of his wages; how often he collapsed on an errand for which he received a little coin (trojník); how often he almost breathed his last when he demanded his wages.]

TT (Markovič)
Nikdy nepočítal, kolik metráků připadá na jeden groš nebo kolikrát cestou upadl či kolikrát málem vyplivl duši, než se domohl výplaty. (1968, 67)
[He never counted how many hundredweight came to a penny, how many times he fell on the way or how many times he came close to spitting out his soul before he got his wages.]

In Taraszka's translation, both the strategies on the morphosyntactic level, such as archaic genitive attributes ("centů jeho břemene", "haléř jeho mzdy"), and the strategies on the syntactic level, such as the immediate sequence of two hypotactic constructions on the syntactic level contribute to a very flowery narrative style. This corresponds to the selection of unmarked, or even stylistically elevated expressions and phrases: "cent" (quintal), "břemeno" (burden), "haléř" (haller), "trojník" (a type of coin), "vydechnout duši" (breath one's last). Markovič has opted for a clearly simpler syntactic style that imitates spoken language. He also adapted his choice of the lexical register to this decision, which is why he translates "pud"[16] with the colloquial expression "metrák" (a strongly colloquial expression for quintal), and has Bontshe almost "spit out" the soul, not "breathe out" it ("skoro vyplivl duši"/"málem vydechl duši").

Markovič's tendency to preserve the markings of the spoken language in the target text is also reflected in the fact that, unlike Taraszka, he takes over all passages from the source text in which the heterodiegetic narrator addresses the anonymous audience in the imperative form:

ST
es iz dray teg nokh bontshes toyt, fregt dem kabren bekheyrem, vu er hot'n gelegt! (1920, 8)

TT (Taraszka)
Hrobník už tři dny po Boncově smrti nevěděl, kam nebožtíka pochoval. (1960, 149)
[Three days after Bonce's death, the gravedigger no longer knew where he had buried him.]

TT (Markovič)
Tři dny uplynuly od smrti Bonče, a zkuste se zeptat hrobníka, kam Bončeho uložil! (1968, 63)
[Three days have passed since Bontshe's death and try asking the gravedigger where he had put him!]

The less colloquial, elevated style of Taraszka's translation is evident not only in the elaborate syntactic structures, but perhaps even more strikingly at the lexical level. This can be seen in the transfer of expressively colored lexemes, which frequently occur in the initial text in the form of Hebraisms: in the scene in which the narrator critically remarks that a dead horse rather than the passing of Bontshe Shvayg could arouse the pity of passers-by, Markovič translates the lexeme of the Hebrew component "neveyle" as "zdechlina" (the carrion), while Taraszka opts in a neutralizing way for "padlý kůň" (the fallen horse). In the scene in which Bontshe waits for the heavenly tribunal after his death, two angels bring "a gingoldenem fotershtul oyf redlekh" (1920, 9) for Bontshe. While in Taraszka's translation the angels "přivážejí do ráje zlatou lenošku" [bring a golden armchair to paradise] (1960, 150), in Markovič's translation they "tlačí do ráje pro Bončeho křeslo na kolečkách z nejryzejšího zlata" [push a wheelchair of purest gold to paradise for Bontshe] (1968, 64). The image of a wheelchair in Markovič's translation gives the scene a grotesque quality, just like in the source text, while Taraszka's throne-like golden armchair rather emphasizes the solemnity of the situation. Hebraisms are used not only to highlight the expressive character of a lexeme, but also to denote specific cultural concepts, which Markovič considers to be one of the reasons for the untranslatability of Yiddish literature. Taraszka refers to a circumciser, who is reported as having once botched Bontshe's circumcision, as an "operatér" (surgeon), while Markovič preserves the Yiddish Hebraism in Yiddish pronunciation – "mojl". When "Avram Ovinu", the forefather Abraham, greets Bontshe in heaven by stretching out his right hand and pronouncing the Jewish greeting "sholem aleichem" – "di rekhte hant oysgeshtrekt tsum breytn 'sholem aleykhem'", Taraszka eliminates the phrase and replaces it with a general, somewhat elevated description of the welcoming ceremony. In contrast, Markovič has Abraham greet the newcomer with the genuinely Yiddish "šolom alejchem" (1968, 64, 65).

The difference between the strategies of the two translators is particularly evident in the use of lexemes and phrases from the religious sphere. The passages in which the heavenly Court is described are introduced with the description of the shofars' sound: "der groyser shoyfer fun meshiekhs tsaytn hot geklungen in ale ziben himlen" (1920, 9). In Taraszka's translation, it is a "pozoun" (trombone) that resonates in all seven heavens, an instrument that is generally familiar in the Christian tradition (1960, 150). In Markovič's translation, on the other hand, it is the Jewish "šofar" (1968, 64). The subsequent scene in which Bontshe is to appear before the court: "bontshe iz "nisbakesh gevoren beyeshive shel mayle!" (1920, 9) is interpreted very differently in the two translations. In Taraszka's translation, Bontshe "byl povolán k nebeským zástupům" [was summoned to the heavenly armies] (1960, 150), while in Markovič's translation, "se [Bontshe] laskavě vyzývá, aby se dostavil před nejvyšší soudní stolici!"

[(Bontshe) is respectfully requested to appear before the Supreme Court] (1968, 64). The term "kise-hakoved" (1920, 9) is then consistently translated in Taraszka's metaphysically tinged translation as "trůn Božího Majestátu" [the throne of the Divine majesty] (1960, 150), while Markovič consistently uses the sober expression "soudní stolice" [court chair] (1968, 64). The translation of the term "av-bes din" (1920, 16) also corresponds to general strategies of both translators: in Taraszka's translation the court is presided over by "Nejmilosrdnější Otec soudu" [the most merciful Father of the court] (1960, 154), in Markovič's translation simply by "předseda soudu" [the president of the court] (1968, 68). The decision that the court finally reaches – in Yiddish "psak fun bes-din-shel-mayle" (1920, 9) – is translated by Taraszka in the sense of the overall metaphysical metaphor as "výrok nebeského soudu" [the verdict of the heavenly court] (1960, 150), while Markovič remains in the semantic field of sober jurisdiction with the term "výrok nejvyšší stolice" [verdict of the highest court] (1968, 64). When the advocate then describes Bontshe's endured suffering in drastic detail, the procurator shies away from this and warns him to be brief: "Nor on mesholim!" (1920, 11). Translating this passage, Taraszka and Markovič also adhere to their respective preferred strategies; Taraszka's accuser admonishes the advocate to omit "parables" – "Prosím, bez podobenství!" (1960, 151), while Markovič's procurator calls for a defense "bez řečnických obratů" [without rhetorical figures] (1968, 65). The subliminal secularization of the scenes in Markovič's translation allows for a slightly sarcastic undertone, which is not at all perceptible in Taraszka's translation.

The only moment in which Markovič briefly departs from the sober juridical tone is the last sentence in the final scene. However, this makes the message of his translation all the more satirical. In this scene, Bontshe is asked what his greatest wish would be after the favorable verdict has been reached. To the astonishment of everyone present, as already mentioned, he wishes for nothing other than a fresh buttered roll every morning. Taraska translates the scene in his typical elevated style – he has the judges call on Bontshe in a sentence with a biblical tone: "Vol a vezmi si, co chceš: neboť budeš brát jen z toho, co ti náleží!" [Choose and take what you want: for you shall take only from what is yours!] (1960, 154). The reaction to Bontshe's answer is that the angels lower their eyes in shame and the Prosecutor begins to laugh. By consistently translating the term "kateyger" as "Žalobce" (Prosecutor), Taraszka maintains the constellation of the sublime heavenly court; thus the laughter of the accuser can be interpreted in this constellation as one of recognition – he has fulfilled his task with ridiculous ease, the costs for the heavenly rich are absurdly low: nothing stands in the way of interpreting Bontshe as an ascetic hero whose modesty puts even the heavenly court to shame. Markovič in comparison achieves a completely different final impression by very unobtrusive stylistic means: in contrast to Taraszka, he has the judges address Bontshe in a colloquial formulation that contains no allusion to the biblical tone: "Bereš tedy jen to, co je *tvoje*!" [You take only what is yours!] (1968, 69, italics in original). Alongside the angels, who "lower their heads in shame" in response, it is not "the Prosecutor" who begins to laugh, but "the devil" who "chuckles" – "ďábel se zachechtal". The fact that Markovič translates the expres-

sion "kateyger" as "ďábel" has the consequence that the image of the sublime, serious heavenly court fades away and is suddenly replaced by a much more "down-to-earth" concept. The uninhibitedly joyful reaction of the devil, combined with the decidedly colloquial tone, lends the scene an almost burlesque quality. In Markovič's translation, nothing prevents the interpretation of Bontshe as a real Jewish anti-hero, whose incomprehensibly modest reaction is exposed in satirical exaggeration.

CONCLUSION

The two Czech translations of I. L. Peretz's short story "Bontshe Shvayg", separated by eight politically significant years, provide a good insight into the extent to which the initial norm applied in each case and how the resulting operational norms can influence the interpretation and thus the perception of the text. Markovič and Taraszka opted for very different strategies: Taraszka chose a more complex syntactic style and a corresponding, stylistically high lexical register. On the pragmatic level, Taraszka emphasizes the religious component, so that his translation has a clearly metaphysical undertone. Markovič opted for a colloquial register on both the syntactic and lexical levels; moreover, his translation appears significantly more "sober", preferring legal vocabulary to metaphysical attributes. He presents the final scene of the story in a folksy burlesque tone, which tends to steer the perception in a satirical direction. The strategies chosen by Markovič pave the way for interpretations in which Peretz's story "Bontshe Shvayg" is perceived as a parodically exaggerated critique of the passive attitude to life, while Taraszka's stylistically elaborate translation with metaphysical undertones resists such interpretations.

In the case of Taraszka's translation, a certain discrepancy can be observed between the introductory paratext interspersed with routine formulae and the initial norm applied by the translator. While I. L. Peretz is presented in the paratext as a fighter for progress and against the "retrograde and outdated" way of life of the religious Eastern Jews, the metaphysical and pietistic tone resonates very clearly in Taraszka's translation. This contradiction may be caused by the use of a routinized ideological code in the paratext, which, however, could be easily identified as such by the readers of the time. The message implicitly communicated in the target text had very little to do with this code. In the preface that Markovič wrote to the translations in his anthology, Peretz is described as "the most European" (nejevropštější) of the three founders of modern Yiddish literature, who, unlike M. M. Sforim and Sholom Aleichem, was not "the favorite of the masses" (miláč[ek] mas), but a "hero of the intelligentsia" (hrdinou intelligence; 1968, 13). In this context, the subliminal satirical and critical undertone in Markovič's translation of the short story seems completely understandable to the reader.

One cannot but agree with Jakub Markovič that in translating Yiddish literature, "the role of cultural and social commentator is imposed on the translator"[17] (1968, 14) even more intensely than in translating, for example, German, French or Polish literature. One can also subscribe to the claim that "[o]ften the undertone, the mood, the tonality, plays a crucial role". By comparing the two translations of "Bontshe Shvayg", I have tried to show here to what extent the translator, directing the lan-

guage like a conductor tuning music into harmony, is able to navigate the perception of the text, sometimes even despite the contradictory information given in the ideologically tinged paratexts.

NOTES

[1] Publishing strategies are part of the preliminary norm in Gideon Toury's theoretical concept of descriptive translation studies (cf. Toury 2012, 82).

[2] In one of his essays, David Neal Miller (1974, 41) recalls his literate but not well-read grandfather, who knew the contents of the story nine years after its first publication (1894) from the accounts of other readers.

[3] An excellent summary of the contradictory reception of Peretz's work is provided by Adi Mahalel in his book *The Radical Isaac: I. L. Peretz and the Rise of Jewish Socialism* (2023).

[4] Even today, the production of book translations from Yiddish is negligible.

[5] The other authors dealing with Yiddish literature, such as Hana Náglová, Dagmar Hilarová or Jiřina Šedivá, have done so more occasionally, often focusing on short forms, mostly poetry, and sometimes using other foreign-language translations as a basis.

[6] Taraszka also worked as a translator from French and German.

[7] After a very eventful life, which included a temporary emigration to Israel before World War II, fighting in North Africa in the Czechoslovak units of the British army, and persecution during the communist regime, Jakub Markovič suffered a severe heart attack in 1956 and had to give up his physically demanding job at the Motex factory; from then until his death, he concentrated entirely on translating Yiddish literature into Czech. I owe the biographical information on Markovič to an e-mail exchange with his daughter Andrea Peer, who lives in Israel.

[8] Unless otherwise stated, all translations are by the present author.

[9] This text was published in identical wording ten years earlier in *Věstník* on the occasion of the 35th death anniversary of I. L. Peretz.

[10] The expression "topos" is used here in the broader sense as a term for a literary commonplace with a culturally specific meaning.

[11] The term is derived from the Hebrew letters Lamed/l and Vav/v, whose numerical value adds up to 36. According to this concept, there are at least 36 holy people in the world at any given time who are *tzadikim* (a kind of spiritual masters). According to Jewish mysticism, these holy people work in secret – nobody knows who they are, even they themselves may not know about their special mission. It is for the sake of these 36 hidden saints that God preserves the world. The figure of Bontshe bears striking traits of a *lamedvovnik*, regardless of whether it is portrayed in a serious manner or satirically distorted.

[12] "Postavy v Perecově uměleckém díle jsou ztělesněním protestu proti zbabělosti, ochotě ke kompromisům, a nízkým opovrženíhodným snahám druhu lidí Boncze Szwajga."

[13] "V dílech […] Boncze Szwayg […] ukazuje Perec co nejvýrazněji heroicky vzpřímenou naději, nezlomný optimismus prostého žida a jeho hlubokou víru v konečné vítězství spravedlnosti."

[14] It is not entirely clear why Taraszka decided to phonetically modify the name by replacing the affricate *tsh* with *ts*. One could perhaps consider the influence of the English translations, in which the main character's name was transcribed as "Bontzye" (1906, trans. by Helena Frank as "Bontzye Shweig") or "Bontsia" (1951, trans. by E. T. Margolis as "Silent Bontsia").

[15] The Yiddish excerpts were transcribed according to the current YIVO transcription standard.

[16] There is also a difference between the lexeme *pud* in the source language and the two equivalents in the target language on the denotational level: the Russian borrowing *pud* denotes a different (much smaller) weight unit (16, 38 kg) than the Czech terms *cent* or *metrák* (100 kg). However, since the term is used in a figurative turn of phrase, the denotational difference is not significant.

[17] "Překladateli je vnucována role sociálního a kulturního komentátora."

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Words in time: Inclusive reading and rewriting in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*

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Words in time: Inclusive reading and rewriting in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*

Roald Dahl. Inclusive language. Ideological retranslation. Intralingual translation. Sensitivity rewrites.

This study aims to examine the phenomenon of "sensitivity rewrites" in contemporary literary practice, focusing on intralingual translation as a means of making texts more inclusive and respectful. Through a comparative analysis of Roald Dahl's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, both in its classic and revised editions, the research integrates André Lefevere's concept of *rewriting*. In this sense, "sensitivity rewrites" represent a socio-cultural shift towards inclusivity and diversity, aiming to eliminate stigmatizing language. The study highlights the dynamic nature of literary works as cultural artifacts evolving with societal values.

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Since antiquity, rewriting literary texts has been integral to the social institution and practices of literature (Munday 2001). Across all modes of rewriting, one common objective has persisted: to make new texts more accessible and understandable to readers. Interlingual translation, widely recognized as the primary form of rewriting, has historically been viewed as a complex, dynamic, and interpretive process influenced by various factors (Lefevere [1982] 2004). This study embraces the idea that rewriting is a transformative process and explores a different form of translation, intralingual translation, which promises new insights into the interplay among ideology, language, and power. This is because in the contemporary world "every act of translation or interpreting operates within the forces of dominant and alternative ideologies" (Hostová and Kusá 2020, 2).

Recent revisions of popular works of literature in English, which are presented as "regular reviews of the language" by the publishing industry, have been dubbed as "sensitivity rewrites" by critics and perceived by proponents as insights based on "inclusive reading" for authentic portrayal of characters. As John Steel (2023, 237) succinctly states when reflecting upon the "sensitivity changes" in children's novels by Roald Dahl, "literature sometimes evolves to reflect societal shifts" and "texts change". On the other hand, some critics consider the revised books a side-product of "cancel culture" (Caulcutt 2024), or in more objective terms, a part of cultural changes spurred by progressivism (Banfield-Nwachi 2023) with roots in identity politics (Hodgson 2023). Having started in the mid-2010s with publishing houses first employing "readers specialized in inclusion and authentic representation of marginalized groups" (called variously "sensitivity readers", "authenticity advocates", "inclusivity ambassadors"), the phenomenon gained prominence by the beginning of the 2020s.

This editorial and publishing practice involves editing literary texts, particularly novels, with the aim of making them more inclusive and respectful towards marginalized social groups by removing or altering passages in the books under scrutiny that might be considered offensive or harmful. What distinguishes this new wave of rewriting from the ones in the literary past is its depth, not breadth, as it involves more detailed revisions and includes a wider range of what might be deemed inappropriate or hurtful. A heated discussion ensued at the end of February 2023 around Roald Dahl's books for children published by Puffin Books having been subjected to revision on the basis of recommendations provided by authenticity readers. The opponents from the literary community of both writers and engaged readers refused the "sensitivity rewrites" or the "airbrushed editions" of Dahl's works. Following this public uproar within which the tipping point might have been the proclamation of Queen Consort Camilla in support of freedom of speech and writing (Khomami 2023), the publishing house announced that it was keeping the previous editions in print as the "Roald Dahl Classic Collection".

By integrating André Lefevere's conceptualization of "rewriting" (or "refraction") which he defines as the adaptation of a literary work for a different audience, aimed at influencing the reception of the work (2004), with Pierre Bourdieu's insights on "ideological retranslation", a process of dynamic struggle over cultural dominance

in language (as well as the arts etc.) between dominant and dominated fractions (1984; 1996 cited in Speller 2011, 48), the present study explores the cultural and ideological shift behind "sensitivity rewrites" by focusing on translational choices and strategies (in the intralingual sense) used in these inclusive revisions. The shift is illustrated through a comparative analysis of Dahl's classic edition and a revised edition of his popular children's book, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (hereafter *CCF*).

"SENSITIVITY REWRITES" AS INTRALINGUAL AND INTERSEMIOTIC PROCESS

Language and culture are intertwined, leading to inevitable changes over time. Texts are not stable; they evolve just as culture does, making meaning fluid (Benjamin [1923] 2004). A text's plurality arises from the "stereographic plurality of the signifiers" rather than from ambiguity in its content (Barthes 1989, 59–60). The plurality of the text is woven into the openness of the meaning, allowing it to change, adapt, and evolve over time.

The dynamism behind the sociocultural and ideological contexts necessitates the rewriting of the works of literature for new or specific audiences, as they may otherwise be perceived as inadequate in some sense. According to Lefevere, the process of rewriting is evident in translation, historiography, anthologization, criticism, and editing (Lefevere 1992, 9). Maria Tymoczko (2007, 109) notes that Lefevere viewed rewriting (or refraction) as a way to understand translation within a broader context, highlighting its similarities with other forms of textual modifications and thus illuminating the nature of translation itself.

The theoretical framework utilized in this study integrates a blend of translation theories and sociological concepts. It seeks to describe and define "sensitivity rewrites" or "airbrushed editions", within the broader Lefeverian context of rewriting, as empirical manifestations of ideological retranslation including the characteristics of both intralingual and intersemiotic translation. Pierre Bourdieu (1984) uses the verb "to translate" and the noun "translation" broadly in his sociology to refer to the conversion of something (as an idea or a piece of information) from one form or medium into another. In this context, ideological translation involves transferring cognitive and semiotic elements from one form of human activity to another (e.g., from the thoughts of individuals into their social behavior, or from observed social action into symbolic capital). Roman Jakobson ([1959] 2004) categorizes three types of translation: intralingual, interlingual, and intersemiotic, each representing different ways of interpreting verbal signs. "Sensitivity rewrites" can be viewed as both intralingual (i.e. rewording in the same language) and intersemiotic translation (i.e. transmutation of the ideas, and social conditions into words). Both types of translation are applicable in defining the sensitivity rewrites and theoretically relatable to Bourdieu's metaphor of "ideological retranslation".

Brian Mossop (2016) argues that intralingual translation, that is rewriting (rewording, paraphrasing), should be called *cislation* because "translation is carrying a message to the far side of a language border, whereas cislation is carrying a message to a new place while staying on 'this side' of the border" (2). He theorizes how the in-

tralingual translation is dissimilar from interlingual translation and moreover different from any translational activity, and demonstrates that on a detailed set of examples. *Intralingual rewriters* write for a different audience, typically adjusting content and style to suit their readers, such as in children's adaptations of classic literature and they do "not mainly engage in equivalencing", that is, in "writing in the same style as the same-language source text" (9). The objective of their work is "adding and subtracting information to make the text understandable to the new audience; in short, they will engage in stylistic and content editing" (9). Sensitivity readers recommending changes to be made in literary texts fall into the category of *intralingual* rewriters as defined by Mossop, similarly to specialist re/writers who adapt professional medical texts for layman readers or customers (e.g. for a new pharmaceutical product). Very closely related to the case of Roald Dahl is Mossop's example of the intralingual rewriting of classic literary works for child readers with changes in content and style.

The presence of the element of intersemiotic translation within the concept of ideological retranslation may raise the question of whether, in the case of sensitive rewriting, it is not rather an intrasemiotic process. The reason is that from a semiotic perspective, the sign systems in both the source and target texts are identical (written English), making this an *intrasemiotic* process, which includes both interlingual and *intralingual* translation (Gottlieb 2007, 3), but the previous step in the process of rewriting (revision, editing) entails the transfer of a thought from one's head into a written text which must be understood as a cognitive *intersemiotic* process. This is because it involves translating ideas from a mental or conceptual state (which may involve various forms of cognition) into a different semiotic system-written language. Bourdieu used the term in his works about class relations (1984), academia (1988), arts (1993, 1996), and social space (1999). In this study, the ideological retranslation is understood as a metaphor, inspired by Bourdieu's sociology, showing how the interpretation of the real world, contemplation, and expressing one's thoughts verbally or in writing create a never-ending hermeneutical circle (i.e. creating and re-creating meaning).

Studying sensitivity rewrites (cultural revisions based on identity politics) focuses on intralingual translation: converting Dahl's linguistic register and narrative style into "inclusive" English, a more current and polite register aimed at today's child readers. In a translatological sense, these revisions are a type of rewriting intended to use "domestication" strategies, where the authenticity/inclusivity readers translate the text within the same language to align it with their cultural values (Leonardi 2020, 3–4).

Similarly, Gideon Toury's (1995) idea of *acceptability* versus *adequacy* relates to the question of rewriting, specifically regarding the extent to which it is acceptable to change a novel's text to preserve its adequate sense and message. The root of the problem seems to be the ever-existing issue of balance between originality and social acceptability. Toury (2004, 199) describes certain socio-cultural norms which have so much validity that they become "as binding as rules" so that translation becomes a norm-governed activity and translators should adhere to these norms when creating a target text for an intended audience. In this regard, rewriting extends

beyond a mere linguistic transfer; it encompasses various forms of transformation where manipulation and ideology play central roles.

Lefevere's concept of rewriting, or refraction, helps explore the sociocultural and ideological issues behind sensitivity rewrites as it transitions "a work of literature" between various systems (2004, 237). Rewriting is a dynamic process influenced by ideology, language, and power. Lefevere describes refracted texts as those processed for a specific audience or adapted to a particular poetics or ideology (1981, 72). Society's culture shapes its literary system, with both systems influencing each other, while poetics and patronage ([1985] 2014, 226) are serving as two control factors. The first component of the literary system, poetics, has two main functions: "one is an inventory of literary devices, genres, motifs, prototypical characters and situations, and symbols; the other a concept of what the role of literature is, or should be, in the social system as a whole" (1992, 26). Poetics operates as an internal factor that regulates the system from the inside through the professionals such as interpreters, reviewers, critics, teachers, and translators. The rewriters hold decision-making positions and adapt literary works to the poetics and the ideology of their era (2014, 226). The second component, patronage, is the external factor that regulates the system from outside and it refers to the powers that further or hinder the reading, writing and rewriting of literature (1992, 15). Lefevere emphasizes that the concept of power should not only be understood as a repressive force but also can be comprehended in the Foucauldian sense as something that traverses and produces things, induces pleasure, forms knowledge, and produces discourse.

Writers are continuously rewritten as socio-cultural norms and ideologies evolve. Lefevere emphasizes the fact of literary life that patrons and critics are the influential figures in the decision-making process: "Writers are powerless to control the rewriting of their work, which may be a bad thing; but so, in the long run, is anybody else, which may not be such a bad thing after all" (2014, 236). While the previous centuries saw the censorship practice of bowdlerization, the de-sexualization of Shakespeare's texts in the Victorian era (Volceanov 2005), followed by de-racialization in the second half of the 20th century (e.g. the works of Agatha Christie in the 1950s, Dahl's edits in the 1970s), the new trend in editing seems to take a new, formerly unrecognized, form in a direct reaction to changing socio-cultural norms. This new approach to rewriting 20th-century Anglophone novels transcends the mere sensitivity surrounding intimate themes and the exclusion of archaic racial slurs. This type of rewriting reflects the inclusive efforts of identity politics to build a world in which the voices of women, elderly people, and people of specific body shapes and sizes are heard. Therefore, authenticity readers, who are holders of various cross-sectional identities themselves, have been called by careful publishing houses to "sensitize" the selected texts accordingly.

Rewriting acts as a shaping force by both introducing and repressing literary innovation, often altering the original work for ideological purposes. Regardless of the intentions and the specific ideology they operate under, the purpose of rewriting is to manipulate literature and make altered texts acceptable to the target audience. As Lefevere states: "Rewriting is manipulation, undertaken in the service of power, and

in its positive aspect can help in the evolution of a literature and a society" (2003, xi). While rewriting can contribute positively to cultural growth, it is also used to modify the originals so they conform to the ideological trends of the target culture. This type of manipulation aims to influence the reception of the literary work, as Lefevere describes: "Originals refract a poetics and/or an ideology; refractions refract originals" (1981, 76).

The aforementioned idea by Lefevere aligns with Bourdieu's concept of "ideological re/translation" (1984, 254). Patronage employs ideological retranslation to align literary works with the evolving expectations of the literary market and political correctness. Sensitivity rewrites are a recent example of ideological retranslation, converting real-life values by modifying the language in fictional texts within the realm of cultural production.

Dahl's classic texts, particularly *CCF*, are being rewritten to remove language deemed offensive to contemporary audience in the 2020s. The socio-cultural norms of Dahl's era have undergone substantial changes, reflected in the progression from the 1964 original text to the 1973 revised text, and the 2023 sensitized text.

COMPARATIVE TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF CLASSIC VERSION AND AIRBRUSHED VERSION

The comparative textual analysis includes the 2022 classic version (published by Viking) and the 2023 inclusive version (published by Puffin) of Dahl's *CCF*. The children's novel underwent several revisions, with major edits occurring during the early 1970s. The changes between the original 1964 text and the revised 1973 version have sparked polemical discussions from a psychoanalytic perspective (Bosmajian 1985), critical racial studies (Corbin 2012), and some reviews that border on personal attacks against the author himself (Cameron 1972).

The research design is based on a qualitative approach and is comprised of a comparative method (Kuckartz 2014, 68–69) and textual analysis (Belsey 2013, 160). The comparative textual analysis is focused on two versions of the same text (*CCF* novel by Roald Dahl) being compared in a systematic manner to identify modified or deleted words, phrases, and sentences and to assess the effect of these changes on literary motifs, themes, and the narrative. The concrete context of rewriting in this particular case, by a team of sensitivity and inclusivity readers who have considered and decided which textual changes to make, represents the role of intralingual translators in the process of ideological retranslation. However, we can only interpret their intentions and decisions by identifying and analyzing the changes they have made.

Three applied analytical perspectives serve as a supportive analytical tool. The aim is to describe the changes in the revised edition within the context of several perspectives in a critical strong-objectivity-seeking manner (Harding 1995, 23) while acknowledging the researcher's subjectivity that might skew the interpretation and offer a biased analysis (Hammersley and Gomm 1997). The three perspectives that will serve as a helpful interpretive device and can be imagined as three dimensions of the human world surrounding language are ideological, sociological, and translatological. The *ideological* (or *normative*) perspective describes the world according

to a particular worldview that is shared by social groups and individuals and, for example, can be as omnipresent as "the ideology of capitalism" (Hostová and Kusá 2020). A person taking an ideological stance sees the world as it *ought to be*, not as it is. The progressive idea behind making the texts of books more inclusive seems to be based on championing social justice and the well-intended assumption that with the use of more polite language, people will change for the better. On the other hand, progressivism might be in danger of being misused as "a smoke-screen for covert increase in governmental social control of citizens" (Mečiar 2022, 115). The *sociological* (or *descriptive*) perspective pursues the description and explanation of the world *as it is*. It helps to explain how the practice of employing the sensitivity readers and "airbrushed" revisions made by publishing houses is a direct empirical demonstration of ideological retranslation (Bourdieu 1984) of values and social norms radiating from the actors in identity politics. The *translatological* perspective, when analyzing any form of written translation as a "social practice", explicates what strategies and techniques have been used in translation ("rewriting") of a particular text (Mossop 2016). When it theorizes literature and translation as a "social institution", inspired by social theory, the authors contributing to this field shed light on rewriting (Venuti 2003; Lefevere 2003) and power relations in patronage (Lefevere 1992).

The image of the three dimensions surrounding language aims to provide the ground for identifying the allegedly obsolete and discriminatory language represented in the novel and to analyze the sensitivity rewrites on the basis of inclusivity with the transformative power of the language. Identity politics (Bernstein 2005) explores how social and political identities intersect with individuals' participation and experiences in the political sphere, acknowledging factors such as race, class, and gender. Originating in the 1970s, this movement initially focused on protecting rights (Táíwò 2022, 6–7) across eight social dimensions: ability (physical and mental health), age, ethnicity, race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status (Kurzwelly, Pérez, and Spiegel 2023). Many of the textual alterations in the revised edition of *CCF* align with core identities discussed by proponents of identity politics.

Text modifications stemming from roots of progressive identity politics

"Progressives are committed to ideals of economic justice and the welfare of the planet" (de Zengotita 2019, 357). The progressive movement in the 21st-century United States is a political and social reform movement with a global impact (Mečiar 2022) that aims to address economic inequality, social injustice, and environmental issues. New progressivism reaches to the sphere of identity politics and its proponents are deeply involved in the issue of social justice: the movement champions causes like racial equality, LGBTQ+ rights, criminal justice reform, and immigrant rights. The preparation of the revised editions of widely-read books can be viewed as an expression of progressivist ideals.

Gender-neutral language in the edited 2023 version of the novel challenges traditional gender norms and promotes inclusivity by avoiding binary distinctions. Terms

like "newspapermen" are replaced with "journalists", and "policemen" with "police officers". Gender-specific language is avoided, with "women" becoming "people", and "girls" becoming "folks". Diverse family structures are acknowledged by changing "mothers and fathers" to "parents", and "his/her" to "their" to enhance gender inclusivity. This approach fosters a broader understanding of gender identities and creates more inclusive spaces and practices.

As Mafalda Batista da Costa, Harriet R. Tenenbaum, Alexandra Grandison (2024, 3) mention in their study, Jo Young Switzer (1990) found that the pronoun "they" helped children generate inclusive images when presented with a scenario and questions about a character. Similarly, Lea Conkright, Dorothy Flannagan, and James Dykes (2000) discovered that children interpreted "they" both generically and as a specific gender in their story recall and interpretation. Darren K. LaScotte (2016) found that most native English speakers (79%) used gender-inclusive pronouns for a genderless person, with 68% preferring singular "they". These studies suggest that using "they" as a generic pronoun can help people express less gendered ideals and foster a more inclusive worldview.

Ageism encompasses discrimination based on age (Ayalon and Tesch-Römer 2018) which manifests through discriminatory language related to a person's age. The revised edition replaces "old ones" (Dahl 2022, 153) with "the three grandparents" (Dahl 2023, 305), emphasizing familial roles and intergenerational connections that reflect the impact of age on social roles, family dynamics, and relationships. The term "Grandparents" acknowledges their wisdom, experience, and continuity within families, while "old ones" lacks this contextual consideration. The original text's mention of an "old Oompa-Loompa" (2022, 106) might reflect ageist undertones. In literature, ageism perpetuates negative stereotypes, often implying "ageist tropes of decline" although at the same time they empower "intergenerational relationships" (Caldwell, Falcus, and Sako 2020, cited in Joosen 2023, 235). By removing such references, the text promotes inclusivity and respecting individuals regardless of age.

Avoidance of any references to disability is represented by opting for a grandfather being "short-sighted" (Dahl 2023, 61) rather than directly stating "his eyes were bad" (Dahl 2022, 30) and reflecting a broader societal context. Societal norms often associate vision impairment and disabilities in general with negative connotations and Othering (Wendell 1996, 60). Lennard J. Davis (1995) argues that societal standards have historically framed disability in a negative light, influencing literary portrayals to align with these norms. Davis's concept of "normalcy" (23–24) suggests disability is not an individual issue but a social construct created by the norm, or societal expectations of what is considered average or acceptable. The term "short-sighted" may soften this perception by framing it as a common condition rather than a personal failing.

All references to possibly questioning one's mental health were erased. The word "crazy", used ten times in the classic edition (Dahl 2022) of *CCF* ("Are you crazy?", "He must be crazy!"), is completely absent in the revised version (2023). The choice of "deliciously" instead of "deliriously" aligns with cultural norms celebrating indul-

gence and pleasure, reflecting a positive view of sensory enjoyment. The phrase "ridiculously rich" (2023, 22) reflects societal admiration for wealth and success without stigmatizing mental health, by modifying the original adjective "crazy" (2022, 12). The term "wildly" (61) replaces "madly" (2023, 30), to evoke spontaneity, joy, and childlike wonder, avoiding negative connotations associated with madness and irrationality. To prevent the mental health association and a potential stigmatization (Goffman 1963, 101) that might be caused by sanism or psychophobia (Perlin 1992), the editor chooses to erase such references entirely from the novel.

Preventing the social stigmatization of obesity and short stature was followed by many erasures in the revised text. The original text's frequent references to characters' body sizes, such as describing a character's "fat hand" or "huge rubbery lips" (Dahl 2022, 95, 96; 2023, 190, 192), have been significantly toned down. The famous character Augustus Gloop is not accompanied by the adjective "fat" anymore, although he still remains an "enormous" boy. Even a positive character (Averill 2016) of the "fat shopkeeper" (Dahl 2022, 42–46) who treats Charlie, the main child character, in a friendly and protective manner when Charlie finds the golden ticket to the chocolate factory, is now referred to only as a shopkeeper, and all the sentences describing his body have been deleted (2023, 86–95). Sizeism in literature can perpetuate harmful stereotypes and contribute to body shaming. The revised text seeks to promote body positivity and acceptance of diverse body types, reflecting a broader societal understanding towards inclusivity and the rejection of body shaming. Sizeism in the story is lexically represented by the adjective "tiny" and narratively with the Oompa-Loompas (Pritchard 2023, 14–17). The revised version refers to the Oompa-Loompas in a gender-neutral way as "the little people" (Dahl 2023, 139), or "a little person" (135), and not "a little man!" (2022, 67). If possible, an adjective of size is erased as in "I found the [little] Oompa-Loompas living in tree houses". This change reflects increased sensitivity and respect towards individuals of shorter stature, commonly referred to as "little people" in contemporary discourse.

By using more inclusive language, the text moves away from potentially pejorative terms that have historically been used to marginalize or dehumanize. For example, the revised statement, "look here, if you and the other Oompa-Loompas would like to come with me" (2023, 140), replaces the more assertive original, "if all your people will come back to my country" (2022, 71). The shift from an assertive to a polite statement in Willy Wonka's offer reflects a reduction in his perceived dominance and a more respectful, democratic approach. The use of polite register ("if you would like to") suggests a more democratic and less authoritarian approach, implying that the Oompa-Loompas have a choice and some agency in the decision. The text also demonstrates a shift towards democratic decision-making among the Oompa-Loompas. This is evident in the change from a directive statement to a consultative process as seen in the revised version the Oompa-Loompa leader asking: "Let's go and ask the others. But I think it's a deal." (2023, 142), instead of ignoring the possible will of other Oompa-Loompas by only exclaiming "It's a deal!...Come on! Let's go!" (2022, 142). This reflects a move towards recognizing the collective agency and decision-making power of the Oompa-Loompas, rather than presenting them as passive

subjects within hierarchical social relations. The shift from testing products on Oompa-Loompas to Mr. Wonka testing them on himself indicates a move towards more ethical considerations: "I tried it myself yesterday in the Testing Room and immediately a huge black beard started shooting out of my chin […]" (2023, 179). This change acknowledges Oompa-Loompas' humanity and moves away from exploitative practices.

References to cultural and ethnic groups, such as describing Grandpa Joe dancing like a "dervish" or mentioning "gypsies" in one Oompa-Loompa song, have been removed due to their potential to carry offensive cultural connotations based on negative stereotyping. This approach aligns with cultural sensitivity, which emphasizes the importance of recognizing diverse cultures without resorting to stereotypes which would promote disrespectful representations (Foronda 2009; Kubokawa and Ottaway 2009). The references to Oompa-Loompas wearing "deerskins" and "leaves" and the children wearing "nothing at all" are problematic as they exoticize their culture and dress, presenting it as primitive and peculiar. These descriptions can perpetuate stereotypes about non-Western cultures being less civilized (Spivak 1988). The omissions aim to avoid these ethnocentric portrayals and foster a more respectful and nuanced representation of cultural differences.

The original portrayal of the Oompa-Loompas who were "imported direct from Loompaland" (Dahl 2022, 68) reflects colonial undertones, ethnic stereotyping and commodification. Descriptions of their lives before working for Wonka, such as "living in tree-house villages" and eating "mashed-up green caterpillars" (69), evoke images of primitive and exotic cultures often depicted in colonial narratives. The idea that Wonka "shipped them all over here" and "smuggled them over in large packing cases" (2022, 71) further reinforces a colonial mindset of exploitation and dehumanization. The original description of smuggling Oompa-Loompas in crates is a commodifying theme, reducing them to objects of trade. By omitting these details, the last revision strives to restore the Oompa-Loompas' humanity and decommodify them, that is, as Peter Corrigan (1997, 38) explains in the context of sociological theory, changing one's status from a thing into a person.

Social issues and risk-aversion related rewriting

References to the Oompa-Loompas enjoying alcohol and becoming "drunk as lords" have been omitted (Dahl 2023, 216). Depicting alcohol consumption in a humorous or casual manner can inadvertently encourage such behavior among young readers. By removing these references, the text aligns with modern public health perspectives that aim to promote healthy behavior and discourage underage drinking. Early exposure to alcohol via media can increase the likelihood of underage drinking (WHO 2024) and therefore removing these references supports efforts to create a healthier environment for children.

This deliberate omission of references to potentially harmful behaviors and situations in literature serves to prevent the normalization of social deviance and promote pro-safe behavior, a concept that can be termed a risk-aversion culture (Nikiforidou 2019), or "safetyism" used by its critics (Lukianoff and Haidt 2018, 170). By erasing

any mention of weapons ("machine guns", even "toy pistols"; Dahl 2023, 66), the revised text is aimed at mitigating the promotion of violent behavior and reducing its portrayal as an acceptable solution to conflict.

The original depiction of Oompa-Loompas in the book reflects colonial undertones, reducing them to be tools for labor. The concept of commodification in literature refers to the portrayal of characters as commodities, and inclusive revision aims to present them as individuals with dignity. This approach aligns with postcolonial critiques that emphasize the deconstruction of the colonial narratives. Edward Said discusses the "Other" in Western narratives, highlighting how colonial literature dehumanizes and commodifies non-Western people who "were rarely seen or looked at; they were seen through, analyzed not as citizens, or even people, but as problems to be solved or confined or […] taken over" (1978, 207). Similarly, Gayatri Spivak (1988, 271) focuses on the necessity of giving voice to the subaltern, challenging dominant colonial discourses that render them invisible. The exclusion of Wonka's reference to the Oompa-Loompa's language adaptation, "They all speak English now" (Dahl 2023, 142), aims to recognize linguistic and cultural diversity, progressively countering "imperial discourses around immigration and labor" (Diaz, Clark Mane, and González 2013, 91).

The class position (employment and poverty) and patriarchy issues found their expression in this, now deleted, sentence: "Mr Bucket was the only person in the family with a job" (Dahl 2022, 5). The father's employment as an unskilled worker in a toothpaste factory explains why the family of six adults and one child live under the level of the minimum wage and at the same the family's humility in starvation (as they do not blame "the society") and dignity (in being loving and kind to each other) supports the myth of the deserving poor (Elizabeth Parsons quoted in Cheetham 2006, 12). With this sentence absent, a reading parent might not have to answer questions on why both parents have to work long hours to keep up the family, otherwise a one-income family could end up being poor. The second reason for deletion is to prevent promoting the traditional view that a sole breadwinner in the family should be a man.

Expressions such as "the poor little fellow, looking thin and starved" are intended to evoke empathy but do so in a patronizing manner that highlights their vulnerability and inferiority. This approach can be seen as a form of subtle dehumanization, where empathy is tinged with pity rather than respect. By removing these descriptions, the revisions aim to present the Oompa-Loompas with dignity, focusing on their skills and contributions rather than their perceived deficiencies. In relation to dehumanization, Teun A. van Dijk (1984, 40) identifies the categories employed to justify prejudice against minority groups as "the 7 Ds of Discrimination"; dominance, differentiation, distance, diffusion, diversion, depersonalization or destruction, and daily discrimination. The omitted parts in the text falls under the category of depersonalization which exemplifies exerting control over minority groups, excluding them from social interactions. Due to discrepancy between Dahl's narrative vision and lingual sensibilities of the present, the original story of the Oompa-Loompas has been reduced significantly. Lucy Mangan (2014), in her biographical book

about Roald Dahl, sheds light on how the famous author responded constructively to the request of a civil rights group to change the origins and outlook of the Oompa-Loompas.

Grammar and vocabulary-oriented changes

The least extensive part of rewriting falls under the labels of grammar corrections and vocabulary updates. One interesting approach is the transformation of negative clauses into positive ones, along with adjustments in quantifiers. The differences between the British and American version were minuscule and are not discussed here. The main focus has been on the differences between the "old" and the "new" language of *CCF*. The rewriter(s) changed some quantifiers, from "all" to "most" in: "Like most extremely old people, he was delicate and weak, and throughout the day he spoke very little" (Dahl 2023, 18) acknowledging individual differences among the elderly people, emphasizing the age-related experiences. Shifting from negative to a positive clause, as in "Tell me more about these" (36) instead of "There aren't any such people" (2022, 18), indicates curiosity and openness. Instead of denying the existence of certain people, the author invites further discussion. This encourages dialogue and aligns with a communicative approach that promotes exploration rather than shutting down possibilities. The sentence "Most of us find ourselves…" uses "many of us" (2023, 77) instead of "we are all" (2022, 38) to avoid universalizing experiences. For example: "Most of us find ourselves beginning to crave rich steaming stews and hot apple pies and all kinds of delicious warming dishes; and because many of us are a great deal luckier than we realize, we usually get what we want – or near enough" (2023, 77). This approach acknowledges variability in experiences while emphasizing shared desires, avoiding the assumption that everyone shares the same circumstances.

A note on corrective omissions and alterations

Language use, discourse, verbal interaction, and communication are elements of the micro-level of social structure. In contrast, power, dominance, and inequality among social groups are concepts typically examined at the macro-level of analysis (van Dijk 2015, 468). The use of language is closely related to how discourse expresses and reproduces underlying thoughts (e.g. stereotypes) and ideology. Ideology and translation are interconnected, both on the level of language and of culture (Venuti 1992, 5). The purpose of rewriting is to make the texts acceptable to the target audience, and to conform to the patronage by implementing a dominant or alternative ideology (Hostová and Kusá 2020). Patronage (the copyright owner) may care about the alternative ideology of progressivism contributing with the value of authentic representation, however, when looking through pragmatic lenses the maximization of profit appears to be a more influential factor in supporting "sensitivity rewrites" (Steel 2023).

In the "airbrushed" edition (Dahl 2023) the changes realized either by omission (deletion) or modification (using an alternate word or a synonym) aim to: a) prevent or reduce stigmatization and discrimination of marginalized groups – these

"socially sensitive biases" of the classic edition were discussed by Cheetham (2006) – according to current standard of political correctness; b) adapt children's literature to promote inclusivity; c) cater to the needs of parents. Two prevailing meta-themes in these rewrites are the application of identity politics and progressive ideals through inclusive language, and the problematic issues made implicit or invisible through rewriting.

CONCLUSION

The sensitivity rewrites of texts, especially in children's literature, reflect a significant socio-cultural shift towards inclusivity and diversity. These alterations extend far beyond simple rewording or intralingual translation for better comprehension; they represent a deliberate effort to align classic texts with contemporary ethical standards. Historically, fairy tales such as those collected by the Brothers Grimm (Nilson 2021, 175) and Hans Christian Andersen (Holbek 2003, quoted in Zipes 2006, 90) often contained themes of violence, death, and even incest, which were later softened or omitted entirely to suit modern sensibilities.

Whether these modern-day sensitivity rewrites are understood as a "censorial layer" (LeClerc 2024; Lawrence 2020) or as necessary revisions, they often seek to address issues such as ageism, ableism, sizeism, and cultural stereotyping. By eliminating stigmatizing language, these rewrites aim to reduce the potential for harm while fostering inclusivity and protecting marginalized groups from biased or inauthentic representation (Inclusive Minds 2024). Advocates argue that such changes are essential for creating narratives that resonate with and include all audiences, particularly in an increasingly diverse society.

However, the public's mixed reactions to these changes illustrate the ongoing negotiation of what is considered acceptable or offensive. This negotiation has even led some publishers to release both the original and revised versions of texts, recognizing that readers often have a deep emotional attachment to the "unfiltered" versions. The existence of these dual editions reflects the dynamic nature of literature as a cultural artifact, continuously evolving with societal values while preserving links to its historical origins.

A comparative reception study of how sensitivity rewrites affect the perception of literary value and authorial intent – similar to reactions surrounding Roald Dahl's readership in media paratexts – could provide valuable insights into how modern audiences interpret these revised classics. In particular, it would be revealing to explore whether the softened, sanitized versions are regarded as lesser in literary value, or whether they come to be appreciated as necessary evolutions of stories that remain relevant in a changing world.

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Translation as a scholarly dialogue

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Translation as a scholarly dialogue

Translation. Dialogue. Culture. Historicity. Humanities texts. Transfer. René Descartes. Jean-Paul Sartre. George Steiner.

This study is based on the concept of translation being a dialogue between the author and translator, between the source text and the mode of translation, and between two intellectual environments in two cultures. The translation of texts in the humanities is an academic activity, a type of scholarly dialogue which translators enter at several levels – by the gesture of selecting the text to be translated, by the ways of transferring the text to the receiving environment, and by choosing the method of translation. In relation to the choice of texts for translation, this article discusses the effect of the historical context of the receiving environment, the translator's relationship to relevant scientific disciplines, and the receptibility of the text in the receiving environment. These will be demonstrated through an analysis of both Slovak and Czech translations of the work of René Descartes (1954 and 2016) and Slovak translations of Jean-Paul Sartre (1964) and George Steiner (2022), while considering the different periods of their creation.

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Insights about the function and nature of dialogue as a verbal and cognitive act, or as a confrontation of attitudes and opinions, are not new in the history of either translation or literature. Dialogue happens through language expression in written form: in its essence, it is "the principle of contradiction and conflict (gr. Agôn/ἀγών): on the basis of a common subject matter, it is intended to create an argumentative confrontation that provokes action and enables the disclosure of […] [the participants of the dialogue] through words, but also semantic progress" (Triau 2024, n. p.). If we define dialogue as "scholarly", referring to texts of an epistemic nature (in the case discussed here, the study of the humanities), this assumes an intellectual exchange taking place between two cultural spaces and intellectual traditions, which makes demands on the translator and the recipient for a correct and consistent understanding of the epistemic text. Related to this requirement is an orientation to the receiving cultural, scientific, and intellectual context and knowledge of this context, which influences the formulation of the translation text and is an active element of the dialogue on the side of the translator, who thus contributes to the scholarly discourse. It also opens the dialogue to the third member of the translation metacommunication: the reader, who is often confronted with otherness in the sense of the way of thinking, reasoning, stereotypes in thinking and in language, which has its own conventions and established ways of expression. This is where commentaries, explanatory notes, supplementary translations of texts needed for clarification, references to other texts, etc. have their function.

The thinking of two conceptually and temporally distant French philosophers, Michel de Montaigne and Jean-Paul Sartre, may serve as an example. Montaigne understood the work of translation as a participation in dialogue, as a process of bringing knowledge of the author and the text, as a type of inner conversation with the author, necessary to fix and implant the idea in the mind of the translator. The search for its language expression only completes the initiated dialogue. Before Montaigne published his famous *Essais* (1580), he translated *Theologia Naturalis* (1436), by the Catalan physician and philosopher Ramon Sibiuda (1385–1436) – which was barely readable by that time – reproducing it in the form of an elegant and *explained* humanistic text. Montaigne described his translation method by stating that the author and the translator are bound together by an interpersonal relationship, with each being indebted to the other as writers. He perceived translation as the reincarnation of the author of the past in living and contemporary language (Compagnon 1984, 42).

Sartre argues for the notion of dialogue in his essay "An Explanation of *The Stranger*" (1947) when he writes that "dialogue is a moment of explanation, of signification of meaning; to give it a privileged place would be to admit that things have meaning"[1] (2010, 145). If we apply Sartre's words in the context of the topic of the present study, to admit translation-dialogue is to admit that translation reveals explanations, marks meanings, and has a privileged place in culture.

George Steiner explains the hermeneutic motion in *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation* (1975), discussing the appropriation and transfer of meaning in four steps in the context of translation: an act of trust (in the meaningfulness

of the text), an act of aggression ("hacking" the text, contradictions), the embodiment (appropriation of the text, assent), and the restitution of the text (Steiner 1998, 296). Here, the work with opposites is present as well, when tension is created between the author and the translator as participants in the dialogue.

DIALOGUE

To clarify the etymology, the word "dialogue" comes from the Greek verb dialegomai (διαλέγομαι) – I converse.[2] Therefore, dialogue may be understood as a conversation which, in the search for truth, brings us through the word to the essence of an idea. For a conversation in the Socratic mode, as a way of arousing the need to think, dialogue can be internal and silent. Direct interaction between the speakers is not required for it to take place; it is enough that the author encourages thinking. This could also correspond to translation, which we understand as an exchange of ideas by transferring them into another language and culture, on the condition that we want to understand and comprehend the original/source text. We seek its truth, and the translator's ambition is to offer the truth of the translation.

> The problem is also seen in this way by Antoine Berman, whose hermeneutic traductology involves the idea of the fundamentally conflicted nature of translation. The translation is essentially "an open work, a dialogue, a creolization of cultures, a divergence from the original", but it is also "broken", full of contradictions that cause differences between languages […]. The aim of Berman's traductological project is not to deny or abolish "the constant presence of contradictions", […] but to overcome them by revealing *the truth* of translation. (Cosculluela 2009, 66)

It is in the encounter of different cultures, traditions, time-spaces, linguistic structures, and differences in doxa where the agens of argumentative confrontation (agôn) should be activated in translation, and this agens can be a paratext that helps to restitute the content. It cannot be a matter of mitigating of the conflict by "creolizing" cultures, as Anton Popovič (1975) understands the term in literary translation, encouraging a kind of compromise in the sense of balancing losses and gains in translation, moving between exoticization and naturalization, or between historicization and actualization. The translation of epistemic texts should preserve the character of argumentative confrontation for the sake of "semantic progress", since the original can introduce new concepts of thought into the receiving environment, whose understanding can be aided by paratexts and parallel texts as additional interpretations. In this sense, the naturalizing and actualizing translation operations to which Berman refers are indirectly applied.

Scholarly dialogue is influenced by the gesture of selecting a text for translation. The translation enters the research environment as a missing link of knowledge or as a text bringing new knowledge, so the translator's particular scholarly interest is also relevant. The selection of texts for translation is influenced by institutional practices and strategies in various publishing houses and their specific academic series with a systematic focus on humanities texts, as well as scholarly or cultural journals that can prepare/anticipate or compensate for book translation. The openness, relevance, and character of scholarly dialogue are influenced by the conditions of the transfer

of academic knowledge – on the one hand, free choice and creation, on the other hand, the obstacles, restrictions and enforcement of a certain type of literature, depending on the environment in which the translation activity takes place. Historical conditioning and the nature of the social, cultural and translation situation play an important role. Important factors include the continuity of the production of the translation and the original scholarly discourse; the openness of the receiving environment (existing translations on the topic in general and by the author in question); the appropriateness of the target language for expressing concepts and notions in a meaningful way (the developmental stage of the language, special vocabulary and means of expression, abstract lexical system, etc.).

History has shown that society, academia, and culture are not willing to create the conditions for dialogue in all circumstances. Totalitarian societies are particularly aware of the subversive side of translation and condemn its existence.

MODEL SITUATIONS OF SLOVAK TRANSLATIONS OF HUMANITIES LITERATURE

For much of the second half of the 20th century, the cultural and translation space of the former Czechoslovakia found itself in such a situation. For over 40 years, from the adoption of the Press Law in 1949 (which nationalized private publishing houses and created a state-controlled publishing sphere under the pressure of ideological interventions), until 1990 (when censorship was abolished and the private sector was restored), the intensity of state interference in cultural affairs, under the influence of communist ideology, changed every decade. The repression of the 1950s was followed by a period of relative freedom in the so-called "golden 1960s", followed by the reimposition of hardline ideology in the "normalization" period of the 1970s and 1980s.

In his 1975 open letter to Gustáv Husák, then general secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, Václav Havel responded to the devastating consequences of normalization in almost all spheres of life:

> How much greater still may be the long-term effect of the vacuum in the humanities and in the theory and practice of the social sciences? Who dares measure the consequences of the violent interruption of the long processes of self-knowledge in ontology, ethics, and historiography, dependent as they are on access to the normal circulation of information, ideas, discoveries, and values, the public crystallization of attitudes? (1987, 23)

Havel uses the powerful and alarming image of cultural activity "being estranged in large measure from its proper substance through its *total emasculation as an instrument of human, and so of social, self-awareness*" (17). He writes not only of the cultural police (whose forms of censorship included the destruction of books in typesetting and removal of books from libraries and bookstores), but also of the thwarting of literary and scholarly *possibility* in general:

> For even those other countless flashes of knowledge which never illuminate the path ahead for society as a whole have their deep social importance, if only through the mere fact that they *happened;* that they *might have* cast light*;* that in their very occurrence they fulfilled a certain range of society's potentialities either its creative powers, or simply its

liberties; they, too, help to make and maintain a *climate of civilization* without which none of the more illuminating flashes could ever occur. (22)

This lack of continuity and fragmentation in the reception and dissemination of scholarly, intellectual, and cultural material was also characteristic of the Slovak (and more generally Central European) cultural space to varying degrees. It also reflects an underestimation of the power of culture and an attempt to manipulate it. For Havel, dialogue is encoded as a possibility of a free exchange of intellectual contents. It is not only access to study sources, it is also ongoing public confrontations, the natural circulation of information, ideas and knowledge. Behind all this there are translations as well.[3]

The historical conditionality is behind the various situations of translation in the Slovak cultural space. Three model situations can be documented from the 1950s, the 1960s, and after 1989. Translations into Czech also play a role in them, considering the still persistent situation of the complementary function of the more numerous Czech translations reciprocated in Slovakia, given the linguistic proximity and passive bilingualism between Czech and Slovak.

RENÉ DESCARTES: *LE DISCOURS DE LA MÉTHODE (ROZPRAVA O METÓDE)*

During the 1950s, a decade marked by increased ideological pressure, translations were published mainly of classical philosophers and later Enlightenment writers (Voltaire, French encyclopedists, P. H. D. von Holbach, John Toland, etc.), with editors emphasizing the materialist and anti-religious line in philosophical thought. The culmination of this tendency was the publication of the 1962 anthology *Francúzski osvietenci o náboženstve* (The French Enlightenment writers on religion). Although the texts were translated by Ján Žigo directly from the French, the selection was compiled on the basis of the Russian edition *Francuzskiye prosvetiteli 18. veka a religii* (Moscow, 1960). Thus the anthology is introduced by an editorial text written in the spirit of Marxist-Leninist ideology and scientific communism, in which the authors justify their intention to point out the groundlessness of religion in human life. Such an ideological accompaniment or curatorship of "Soviet science" was common in Czechoslovakia and other communist countries in the 1950s and early 1960s.

René Descartes's *Le Discours de la méthode* (Discourse on Method, 1637) marked a linguistic turning point in philosophical writing, which from the perspective of the past centuries complicated the work of translators. Descartes himself was not a problematic author, as he was one of the philosophical "classics". However, his first translation in Slovak was preceded by a pamphlet by the Soviet writer Vasilii V. Sokolov – *Descartesova filozofia a ideologický zápas v súčasnom Francúzsku* (Descartes's philosophy and ideological struggle in contemporary France, 1951). Anton Vantuch's translation of *Le Discours de la méthode* (*Rozprava o metóde*) was published in 1954, together with Július Špaňár's translation of the Latin treatise *Regulae ad directionem ingenii* (*Pravidlá na vedenie rozumu* [Rules for the Direction of the Mind], 1701).[4]

Vantuch translated Descartes from the 1902 edition, which preserved the historical orthographic conventions and morpho-syntactic forms with minimal changes. His translation oscillates between historicization and actualization of the text, mostly preserving the atmosphere and partly also the simplicity of the French language, historicizing the translation in accordance with contemporary ideas and knowledge, often expressed by figurative names and descriptions. It is the historicizing principle that seems to be important when reading the translation; although it helps to understand the aging of aesthetic structures, the shifts in the French language, and the historicity of the text, it does not contribute to comprehensibility. Descartes's use of first-person singular and Montaigne's emphasis on self-knowledge suited the translator's nature to such an extent that the translation followed the idea of dialogue with the reader as Montaigne intended. Vantuch interpellated the reader at the beginning by replacing the French indefinite personal pronoun "on" (one) with the noun "the reader", and then translates the other expressions "on peut imiter", "on trouvera" with the periphrasis "among the examples worthy of following" and the second person plural "you will find".

The Slovak translation includes footnotes that focus on the interpretation of historical events, brief biographical notes of the persons mentioned in the text, and clarification of the time-space coordinates and intertextual connections in Descartes's work. However, they deal with the problem of language, the transition of concepts and expressions from earlier stages of the French language, and from Latin to the new language of science. In translating, Vantuch has followed only the commentary of the French edition and has not produced an updated critical edition of the translation, which would have been necessary in terms of confronting contemporary ideas about scholarly phenomena and their expression in language. The translation can be considered annotated, but not yet scholarly. The decisive factor was the underdeveloped tradition of translating philosophical texts into Slovak. To explain this, it should be added that in Slovakia, epistemic texts were still read in Latin and in the original languages until almost the end of the 19th century; there was no need for translation, since the circle of percipients was only a small group of scholars.

If we take a closer look at the translation of *Le Discours de la méthode* in the Czech context, we find that there was a Czech translation of this work as early as 1882. From the commentary in the most recent Czech translation by Karel Šprunk (2016), it is clear that it was created in comparison with the earlier Czech translation by Viera Szathmáry-Vlčková (1933, 1947), two German versions (2001 and 2013) and one English translation (1981). Šprunk's commentary is based on a comparison of commentaries from all editions, and the translation creatively builds on the previous ones, creating a network of comprehensible insights and a more refined expression. There are no more recent translations in the Slovak language, only reissues of old translations in the original version. The translation of Descartes thus remains at the level of knowledge of the late 1980s (see note 4).

After 1989, Slovak philosophy returned to Descartes and to the rehabilitated Cartesian philosopher Juraj Cíger, who had a dialogue with Descartes pro domo. New translations of Descartes, however, did not stimulate this effort, unlike in the Czech

context. The translations have not been continued, the secondary literature on Descartes refers to foreign language versions of his work, and the Czech compensatory translation also plays its role as a reference for Slovak scholars.

JEAN-PAUL SARTRE: *ŠTÚDIE O LITERATÚRE* (STUDIES ON LITERATURE)

The second model situation is represented by the reception of Jean-Paul Sartre in the Slovak translation space of the 1960s. Sartre's dialogue with the literary community and philosophers was disrupted by the official form of socialist culture. The reception of his work was manifested in the unsystematic translation of mainly dramatic and prose works, mainly published in the 1960s, when he had basically stopped writing fiction. The question of philosophical attitudes and the relationship to Marxism was problematic, and therefore the dialogue with Slovak intellectuals and philosophers was not open. Sartre's visit to Czechoslovakia in November 1963, when he met with a small circle of journalists, translators, writers, and philosophers in Bratislava, was very important. A selection from his works was published the following year in Anton Vantuch's translation as *Štúdie o literatúre* (Studies on literature, 1964), although the volume had most likely been prepared long before that.[5] It consists of an annotated selection of texts taken from *Situations I* and *II* (1948) and from the journal *Les Temps modernes,* as well as the essay "Baudelaire", arranged in chronological order.[6]

The philosopher Dagmar Smreková sees the following key moments in terms of the Slovak reception of Sartre's work:

> 1. The interest in Sartre in Slovak philosophy was an expression and part of the sensitivity of some Slovak intellectuals to the current in Western European thinking and culture in general and the desire to know existentialism closely.
> 2. This trend was also related to the developing discussion of the philosophical problem of man in our country.
> 3. Finally, Sartre also attracted attention in our country because he underwent a certain development of thought during the two post-war decades and, as a left-wing intellectual, he espoused Marxism. (Smreková 1996, 69)

These three theses can be accepted in a general sense. It should be added, however, that Sartre was perceived by official culture as a representative of the left-wing intellectuals, a committed member of the Communist Party of France, a "Marxist", and a sympathizer of Soviet communism until 1956, when he criticized the government's intervention in the Hungarian counter-revolution. He also denounced the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, shortly after which he signed the French petition to grant political asylum to his translator Fedor Ballo, who was then working at UNESCO in Paris.

The complicated and contradictory personality of Sartre as an existentialist philosopher and Marxist writer was perceived by the Slovak intellectual sphere immediately after World War II. In the latter half of the 1940s, the philosopher and art historian Marián Váross published an essay entitled "Pohľad na súčasnú francúzsku filozofiu" (A view of contemporary French philosophy), in which he analyzes the philosophy

of existentialism ([1946–1947] 1993). In this same period, the cultural journal *Slovenské pohľady* published Marcel Girard's essay "Jean Paul Sartre a jar existencializmu vo Francúzsku. Panoráma francúzskych časopisov" (Jean-Paul Sartre and the spring of existentialism in France, 1946).[7] The Czech translations of the first two volumes of *Les chemins de la liberté* (*The Roads to Freedom*, 1945–1949), published in 1946 and 1947 as *Cesty k svobodě: Věk rozumu* (*The Age of Reason*) and *Cesty k svobodě: Odklad* (*The Reprieve*) were also being read in Slovakia at the time.[8]

However, Sartre first entered Slovakia as a writer and representative of literary existentialism thanks to the literary historian and translator Jozef Felix, whose translated excerpts from *Les Mouches* (*The Flies*, 1943) were published as *Muchy* in *Slovenské pohľady,* also in 1946. The following year, Felix translated Simone de Beauvoir's play *Les Bouches inutiles* (The useless mouths, 1945, Eng. trans. *Who Shall Die?*) as *Neužitočné ústa* for the Slovak National Theater, where he worked as a dramaturge, and he wrote a comprehensive study on existentialism for the bulletin accompanying the performance. In the 1950s, there was only one Czech translation of Sartre, the play *Georges Nekrasoff* (1957, trans. by Antonín Jaroslav Liehm). In the 1960s, translations of Sartre's works such as *The Flies*, *Nausea*, *The Wall*, *Words*, *Hurricane over Sugar*, and various plays appeared in Czech.

Sartre became known in Slovakia in the 1960s mainly as a playwright, thanks to Fedor Ballo's translations of *Le diable et le Bon Dieu* (*The Devil and the Good Lord*, 1951, Slovak trans. *Diabol a pánboh*, 1965) and *Les mains sales* (*Dirty Hands*, 1948, Slovak trans. *Špinavé ruky*, 1968), as well as Ján Sedlák's translation of *Les Séquestrés d'Altona* (*The Condemned of Altona*, 1961, Slovak trans. *Altonskí väzni*, 1968). Ružena Jamrichová's translation of the prose collection *Le Mur* (*The Wall*, 1939, Slovak trans. *Múr*, 1966) also appeared during this period.[9] It should be noted that the translations of the plays were not published in book form, but in a series published by the DILIZA agency, which had an editorial office focused on dramatic literature.[10] It published translations in cyclostyle form, available to professional and non-professional theater companies as texts for internal use (without legal deposit). In rare cases they also found their way into public libraries, but they were not freely available in bookstores.[11]

The 1960s in Slovakia marked a shift from socialist realism in literature, and socialist reality was questioned. Philosophy began to turn its attention to the problem of humanity, becoming interested in anthropology, existentialism, and phenomenology. The discussion with Sartre on existentialism and Marxism led to the image of Sartre being an orthodox leftist and eschatological visionary; the facet of dogmatic Marxism had already receded into the background. In a 2002 issue of the journal *Kritika & Kontext* devoted to Sartre's 1963 visit, several of its participants agreed that the visit of Sartre and Beauvoir had been a sign of the easing of the political situation in Czechoslovakia.[12] Sartre was not one of the personalities who had been welcomed there before, as his philosophical works and political positions were too independent and unpredictable, although as Agneša Kalinová stated, "he was no longer attacked as fiercely and unequivocally as he had been in the first postwar years", when he considered himself an existentialist, not a Marxist (Bžoch et al. 2002, 8–9). The philosopher

Ján Bodnár expressed his disappointment at the visit, "since Sartre found it necessary to stress his Marxist worldview and to prove that a truly great novel can only be written on the basis of socialist reality" (10). Sartre's attitudes towards the end of the Stalinist cult of personality and the revival of the debate on Marxism in Western Europe were consistent with the liberalizing discourse of the time in Slovakia. However, what was surprising was his insistence on the thesis of the great novel of socialist reality, and his statement that such a novel should not shy away from anything of the harsh experiences and bitterness of its protagonists, while learning from the formal practices of literature such as that written in the West.[13] The significance of Sartre's visit was summed up by the critic and translator Jozef Bžoch: "the 1960s opened the door – at least for a while – to relative freedom, and Sartre appeared in this door with his philosophy of man, which had an undeniable impact on the thinking of the time and on Slovak literature as well" (18). Before this door was slammed shut again, this decade brought translations of Sartre the philosopher, albeit in a modest way, through Anton Vantuch's 1964 translation *Štúdie o literatúre*.[14]

The selection of the texts in Vantuch's translation is based on the dominant features of Sartre's literary activity of the late 1940s and 1950s. The selection does not directly refer to Sartre the philosopher, but presents such topics as his founding participation in the journal *Temps modernes*, the situation of the writer and literature in the postwar decade, his political involvement, his polemic with Albert Camus, and his literary-critical and art-historical studies. Some of the materials are presented in the form of an integral text, such as "Manifest revue 'Les Temps modernes'", "Vysvetlenie 'Cudzinca'" (An explanation of *The Stranger*), "Prejav na kongrese pre odzbrojenie v Moskve roku 1962" (Speech at the Congress for Armaments in Moscow in 1962), and "Július Fučík: 'Reportáž spod šibenice'" (Július Fučík: "Report from below the gallows"). The others are excerpts presented with connecting texts: "Situácia spisovateľa v roku 1947" (The situation of a writer in 1947), "Čo je to literatúra?" (What is literature?), "Znárodnenie literatúry" (The nationalization of literature), "Baudelaire", "Polemika s Albertom Camusom" (A polemic with Albert Camus), and "Benátsky väzeň" (The prisoner of Venice).[15] The connecting texts by Vantuch explain the contemporary French political, social, and literary context related to the text and summarize the omitted passages.

Štúdie o literatúre ends with an anonymous editor's note ("Poznámka redakcie") that comments on the selection: "Many important critics (Faulkner, Mauriac, Joyce and others) could not be included in the selection because of the lack of Slovak translations of the works to which they refer" (1964, 232). Many of the works and authors to whom Sartre specifically refers in the translated texts had not yet been translated, including Camus's *L'Étranger* (*The Stranger/The Outsider*, 1942), *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* (*The Myth of Sisyphus*, 1942), and *L'Homme révolté* (*The Rebel*, 1951).[16] From this point of view, a translated selection of Sartre's studies should not have been published at all. The editor's note suggests the potential for translation to be a dialogue, but one that should be conducted in the sense of "not talking about something we don't know". The translation vacuum of the 1950s is evident here, but there is also an aspect of the compilers' internal discussion present, which may be a passable thing from

Sartre's work. The dialogue is flawed, lacking parallel texts. In the "dialogue", which is aimed more at the receiving environment than at the author, the debate on Sartre is conducted primarily from the point of view of literary criticism and the aesthetic problems of literature: from the point of view of one "current of criticism that also notices non-aesthetic criteria" (1964, 232), by which we mean the philosophical and political perspectives. The translator, who is an expert on Sartre and French literature, enters the dialogue only with the selection, but his intention encourages reading between the lines. At the end of the translation there are further explanatory notes, which are of a rather strictly factual nature (an alphabetical list of names and background information).

The editor's note, which introduces Sartre the writer and philosopher, relies on the controversial perception of him at the time: the entire paratext, together with the explanatory notes, bears the marks of camouflage. Its aim was to confuse the attention of the cultural police and the censors, to avoid their intervention. Sartre's portrait unfolds through ambivalent rhetorical questions directed towards his political attitudes and his relationship with Marxism. The use of rhetorical questions expresses a degree of uncertainty and doubt that allows a direct opinion and position to be avoided. Responsibility is delegated to a virtual participant in the dialogue:

> Sartre is not really one of those authors who can be easily defined based on familiar categories. Does his development since *Being and Nothingness* (1943) provide sufficient guarantees of the sincerity of his adherence to Marxism? How can one explain his clinging so tenaciously to the notion of a freedom undetermined by anything, his astonishing desire to act, to change, to intervene, to take a stand, his persistent efforts to win an audience, to influence them, to impress them? (227)

Then we read two more passages addressed initially to the external observers of the dialogue, that is, the cultural police, and then to the readers of the translation:

> Sartre opted for dialectical materialism, the philosophy that alone explains the universal connectedness of everything. The following years are only years of constant convergence, which was not even disturbed by the discussion – not polemic – of the Hungarian events of 1956. […]
>
> The selection of Sartre's literary essays in Slovak translation is placed in the reader's hands in the hope that it will fulfil its mission properly – it captures the main features of the development of this complex and profound author, it is an overview of one current of criticism that also notices non-aesthetic criteria, and it is the first comprehensive contribution to the knowledge of a work that has been much discussed in this country recently. To know – and then to evaluate. To know in order to be aware, in order to agree or disagree. (232–233)

It is questionable to what extent it was possible for Jean-Paul Sartre to be known in a wider circle of readers, and for his work to be evaluated based on its defective form. The final question is also ambiguous. Behind the entire edition of this selection, however, resonates a call to dialogue, even if in doubt. In terms of George Steiner's trust in the text of the original, in the meaningfulness of the text, the act of trust and aggression is infused with the knowledge that translation can

at some point emphasize the subversiveness of the text under given historical conditions. Trust in the text is undermined, but not in terms of what the original says, but in terms of how the text may sound in the receiving environment.

GEORGE STEINER: *LESSONS OF THE MASTERS (LEKCIE MAJSTROV)*

After 1989, the publishing field in Slovakia was reorganized, and the paradigm of the translation situation rapidly changed. The selection of texts for translation was differentiated by the actual requirements of the receiving environment. One way to overcome the lack of key materials caused by the ideological criteria of the previous regime is the publication of earlier texts that were missing in the corpus of the humanities and belles-lettres. However, it is equally essential to publish translations of contemporary and relevant scholarship, which could have a greater effect on current research and education. Given the situation of non-translation in earlier decades, the work of translators is complicated by the fact that the impact of the original makes great demands in the response of translation: it often requires scholarly research on the topic, targeting the reader as well as the imagination and working with the receiving metalanguage.

A relevant example in this context is the translation of George Steiner's *Lessons of the Masters*, a series of lectures written in 2001–2002, when he was a visiting professor at Harvard University.[17] Steiner presents the paradigm of the didactic archetype of teacher/student in its historical and cultural particularities, up to its threat and possible extinction. He explores the nature and significance of the pedagogical process in its various forms from ancient times through the beginnings of Christianity, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, and the Modern Age. Steiner's arguments rely on scholarly fields and phenomena such as the history of philosophy, the history of literature, science and art, religious studies, Judaism, the function of language and translation, the status of the humanities, the significance of religious experience, and the relationship between culture and literacy. This sets the limits within which the translator must grasp and comprehend the text. He or she should be a partner to the scholar who is a literary comparatist, as well as to comparatists within religious studies, philosophy, linguistics, translation studies, and many more. However, Steiner's text has no visible scholarly attributes and moves in a plurilingual space: the original text is written in English, but it also touches on Greek and Latin, French, Italian, and German, as in its explanation of the concept of "master" (*magister*, *maître*, *maître à penser*, *Meister*).

Martina Ivanová, the translator of the Slovak edition *Lekcie majstrov* (2022), is present in the book not only through the translated text, but also through the concluding study and extensive apparatus of notes. In the afterword, she reflects on the characteristic features of Steiner's text, highlighting the key points on which she builds her method of translation, which she names and justifies. This appears to be both a method of translation and a method of broader content transfer. The translator identifies the genre characteristics of the text as lecture and essay. The texts are not primarily scientific in their form, but didactic, reflecting the vivid nature of thinking and contact with the reader. Steiner extensively uses intertextuality, quotations, and

references to various works and personalities. The quotation practice in Steiner is obviously vigorous; as Ivanová notes, there is a lack of precise bibliographical grounding, and in many places neither the origin nor the author of the quotation is obvious. The loose quotations (or Steiner's own translations from the literary works he reflects on) are very closely related to the way he presents his arguments. However, the translator clarifies the unquoted fragments in the footnotes by referring to the source of the quotations or to possible allusions in Steiner's interpretation, in this sense carrying out supplementary and exploratory literary research. The apparatus of notes also provides a more detailed description of the personalities about whom Steiner writes. The exceptions are persons and works who are part of the cultural collective memory, or persons and works that are characterized in the text in a general way. Another area in which the translator must intervene is the relevant terminology of the various fields of the humanities. The footnotes contain brief definitions and explanations of Steiner's terms and concepts for which the receiving language has no equivalents. The final area addressed by the translator is Steiner's linguistic polyphony. In the notes, Ivanová provides a loose translation of the foreign-language fragments quoted, or supplements existing Slovak translations of these texts.

An important step in translation and in the formulation of a translation strategy is the identification of the type of Steiner's interpretation and argumentation as exoteric-esoteric. The translator works with the passage on the interpretation of Plato's teachings, where the exoteric version of knowledge (intended for a wider audience) and the esoteric version of knowledge (intended for a small circle of insiders) are applied. The reader can perceive the text through the visible part – the text itself, or he or she can also focus on the spaces "behind" or below the text. The reader can follow only the textual line, or the textual reality becomes a starting point to explore context and information that leads him or her to other texts and expands the possibility of dialogue.

The conclusion of the general part of the afterword characterizes the type and form of epistemic transfer and the possible approach to it regarding the doxa of the receiving environment, i.e. regarding the area of the Central European education and the world of knowledge. Ivanová thus also determines and justifies meta-transfer as her principle of rendition which can be deduced from the formulated poetics of translation and the specific notes or commentaries on the text. The different steps of thinking about the nature of the translation, which Ivanová herself admits can be controversial, show that with regard to the reader and the intelligibility of the text, she has chosen a method which has led to the exoteric form of reading. In this way, the translator has shifted the ratio of the exo-eso in the original.

Ivanová has transformed a loosely reflective and argumentative mode of interpretation into a more rigorous and overtly scholarly text, for example by pinpointing quotations without scholarly attributes, thus filling in and completing even the unfinished parts of the text to be precise with respect to the reader. This translation method also includes a commentary of a scientific nature in the apparatus of notes. The translator discusses the need for compromise and reasons her methods. The question is whether the author's original intention is undermined. The translator put herself

in the position of a responsible mediator, giving herself the task to produce a "responsible" and clearly explained translation. In order to transfer the information as accurately as possible, she must understand the text as fully as possible and formulate it in the receiving language in such a way that the reader would also understand it. However, the question remains: who is the reader, what is his or her educational background, and what kind of reader did Steiner have in mind when he wrote the lectures?

CONCLUSION

The three described model situations of translation of a humanities text perceived as a (scientific) dialogue illustrate the three ways in which translators engage in dialogue with the author and the reader, and the extent to which they are allowed to do so.

In the case of the 1954 Slovak translation of René Descartes, the object of translation is a philosophical text of cultural heritage. Since Vantuch's translation *Rozprava o metóde* lacked a sufficient tradition and distinct method of translating philosophical texts, the dialogue does not take place to a sufficient extent for the reader. Because of its historicity and antiquity, Descartes's treatise is the type of text that can open up to the reader to a greater extent with each of the new translations, taking into account the sequence of previous versions, the current state of the doxa. It is an exegesis, and thus an improvement in the sense of Berman's understanding of the translation project. This is how the Czech edition of 2010 was carried out.

The personality of Jean-Paul Sartre was perceived in the Slovak cultural space in a controversial and heterochronic way, in a movement between the possible and the impossible, between acceptance and rejection, between ideological pressure and the pursuit of free knowledge. Vantuch's 1964 translation *Štúdie o literatúre* consists of a selection that is built on camouflage and reading between the lines. By omitting passages, the author's speech is taken away, replaced by enthymeme. The dialogue with Sartre takes place in several directions – translations of prose and drama, attempts at philosophical engagement, commenting on or analyzing texts that were not translated in the 1960s, that is, indirectly. If we accept the view that a book is translated because there is a conviction of its necessity, that it will enrich thought or a scholarly discipline, in the case of the translation of Sartre's literary-critical and philosophical work, the 1960s were not about specific originals, but about the overall phenomenon of existentialism. It was primarily about strengthening contact with it, about knowledge of and continuity with Western European thought and culture, as suggested by Dagmar Smreková.

The translation of George Steiner's *Lessons of the Masters* was created in completely different social and cultural conditions than the previous two translations. It exemplifies translation as a hermeneutic and practical exercise of language that overcomes the diversity of cultures and worlds of knowledge in time and space. However, in doing so, it encounters the consequences of the situation that Václav Havel so precisely named: the thwarting of literary and scholarly *possibility*, the consequences of a political situation that prevented the natural circulation of information, ideas,

knowledge, and values. Translation overcomes this deficit by intensifying the dialogue with the author, with the contents of the text and with the reader. It responds to the author's challenges by searching for the transmitted knowledge and contexts of the dialogue and scientifically rigorously processing this knowledge and contexts; at the same time, it guides the reader with this input, but also leaves him or her with the possibility of autonomous thinking prompted by the author's speech.

Translated from the Slovak by Zuzana Močková Lorková

NOTES

[1] "Le dialogue, en effet, c'est le moment de l'explication, de la signification; lui donner une place privilégiée, ce serait admettre que les significations existent". In this reflection, Sartre refers to dialogue as part of a literary text (Camus's novel *The Stranger*), but the overlap in meaning is evident. Unless otherwise stated, all translations into English are by Zuzana Močková Lorková.

[2] The prefix dia- means "through", "via, between, to different sides", or "because"; the verb legō (λέγω, I say) leads to the polysemous noun logos = "word", "reason", "thought" (and others).

[3] Significantly, during the transitional period of the Velvet Revolution, public and political discourse called for the opening of dialogue; this demand was heard even from crowded squares.

[4] Špaňár later published a translation of Descartes's *Principles of Philosophy* from Latin (Bratislava: Pravda, 1987) with an introductory study by Juraj Cíger (1914–2005), a Slovak philosopher and psychiatrist who had to leave the Slovak Academy of Sciences for political reasons. With his wife Viola Cígerová, from the Faculty of Arts of Comenius University in Bratislava, he published a translation of *Meditations on First Philosophy* from the French, but only after 1989 (the second edition is dated as 1997; the date of the first edition could not be found). In 1967, Cíger had prepared a monograph called the *Enigmatic Descartes*, which was not published until 1999 (Martin: MS).

[5] At that time, the printing of the book itself took two years, and the titles were planned ahead of time.

[6] The selection was published in the series "Library of Aesthetic Education" (Knižnica estetického vzdelania), edited by Juraj Klaučo at the Slovak Publishing House of Belles-Lettres (Slovenské vydavateľstvo krásnej literatúry). Between 1961–1969, the series published about 30 titles by authors such as Lion Feuchtwanger, Sergei M. Eisenstein, Roman Ingarden, Friedrich Dürrenmatt, Le Corbusier, Henri Bergson, Kazimir Malevich, Václav Zykmund, Arthur Miller, and others. It was a small edition: the number of pages ranged from 150 to 300; the print run of each title ranged from 600–5,000 copies. Sartre was published in an edition of 2,000 copies at a length of 200 pages.

[7] Girard, a professor of literature and diplomat, worked at the French Institute in Prague in 1945–1951. He wrote his essay at the request of the journal editors.

[8] *Vek rozumu* (*The Age of Reason*) was published in Slovak only in 1994 in a translation by Michal Bartko.

[9] The first translation of the novel *The Wall* was published in *Slovenské pohľady* in 1963, No. 6 (trans. by Vladimír Halenár). A new translation by Vladimíra Komorovská of the entire collection was published in 2011, with an afterword by Jozef Felix first published in 1966.

[10] The theater and literary agency DILIZA was transformed in 1969 into the Literary Agency LITA and was managed by the Ministry of Culture. The agency had a monopoly on copyright for Slovak and foreign literature.

[11] The only book edition in that period was the anthology *Moderná francúzska dráma. Giraudoux, Salacrou, Camus, Sartre* (Modern French drama), which includes Sartre's play *The Flies*, translated by Felix (Giraudoux et. al. 1965, 237–313).

[12] In the special issue dedicated to Sartre and de Beauvoir (1/2002); the participants in the dialogue were Jozef Bžoch, Michal Nadubinský, Agneša Kalinová, Milan Hamada and philosophers Elena Várossová and Ján Bodnár (Bžoch et al. 2002).

[13] Kalinová further comments on Sartre's attitudes as follows: "This must have seemed acceptable to me at the time, although today I find Sartre's determinism unbearable when he posits the past, present and future of the Soviet bloc as something fundamentally positive over and above the perspectives of the world in which he lived as a free man. And that was his reasoning that a truly great novel can only be born where socialism is supposedly being built!" (Bžoch et al. 2002, 17–18)

[14] In addition to Oldřich Kuba's Czech translation of *Critique de la raison dialectique* (*Marxismus a existencialismus*, 1966), Slovak excerpts from *L'Être et le Néant: essai d'ontologie phénoménologique* (*Bytie a ničota*) and *Critique de la raison dialectique* (*Kritika dialektického rozumu*) translated by M. Krajčovič were included in *Antológia z diel filozofov: Pragmatizmus, realizmus, fenomenológia, existencializmus* (Anthology of the philosophers' works: Pragmatism, realism, phenomenology, existentialism; Bodnár 1969). There were also philosophical reflection on existentialism by Slovak philosophers (Bodnár 1965, 1967; Zigo 1967), as well as translations of György Lukács, Roger Garaudy, and Adam Schaff, but these source texts were few and came too late.

[15] The bibliographical entries at the end of the book accurately indicate the omitted pages and the sources from which they were translated.

[16] They were published in Slovak translation successively in 1992, 1993, and 2004; Sartre's *L'existentialisme est une humanisme* (1946) was published in Slovak in 1997 (*Existecializmus je humanizmus*, trans. by Ján Švantner).

[17] Steiner's book *The Death of Tragedy* (1961) was translated into Slovak by Zuzana Vajdičková as *Smrť tragédie* (2011), and several other translations are available in Czech: *After Babel* (*Po Bábelu: Otázky jazyka a překladu*, 2010, trans. by Šárka Grauová), *In Bluebeard's Castle: Some Notes Towards the Redefinition of Culture* (*Na Modrovousově hradě: Několik poznámek k redefinici kultury*, 2020, trans. by Michal Kleprlík), *My Unwritten Books* (*Knihy, které jsem nenapsal*, 2019, trans. by Michal Kleprlík), *Real Presences: Is There Anything in What We Say?* (*Skutečné přítomnosti: Je něco v tom, čo říkáme?*, 2019, trans. by Ondřej Hanus, Sylva Ficová, and Michal Kleprlík), *Errata: An Examined Life* (*Errata: Prozkoumaný život*, 2011, trans. by Lucie Chlumská and Ondřej Hanus), *Language and Silence: Essays 1958–1966* (*Jazyk a ticho: Eseje o jazyce, literature a nelidskosti*, 2023, trans. by Michal Kleprlík).

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Translated, transgressed, transported: A century of Whitman in Slovakia

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Translated, transgressed, transported: A century of Whitman in Slovakia

Walt Whitman. Slovak literature. Literary translation. Intertextuality. State socialism.

This article examines the reception and influence of Walt Whitman's poetry in Slovak literature from the early 20th century to the present day. Through thorough analysis of translations, tribute poems, and paratextual material, the author traces Whitman's journey into Slovak literary consciousness, highlighting key moments of engagement and adaptation. From early translations in the 1950s under state socialism to contemporary retranslations, the article maps out Whitman's evolving presence in Slovak poetry, shedding light on the challenges and opportunities of translating his work in different socio-political contexts. Furthermore, it explores the complexities of literary translation and the shifting dynamics of cultural capital in post-socialist Slovakia, where Whitman's enduring appeal continues to resonate within a fragmented and ever-changing literary landscape.

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ACT I: ENTER, HESITANTLY, WHITMAN – EARLY DECADES OF THE 20TH CENTURY

Contrary to popular expectation, it appears that Slovak literati did not readily succumb to the charms of Walt Whitman's poetry. While the first Czech translations were published only a few years after the poet's death in 1895 (Kalandra 2007, 48), it took more than half a century before the literary magazine *Slovenské pohľady* published Ján Boor's translation of the poem "Years of the Modern" (Whitman 1950) – the earliest Slovak translation of Whitman I have discovered.[1] Walt Whitman's reception in Slovak literature was hesitant, to say the least. However, he certainly did not approach his own domestic scene with hesitation and the celebratory reviews he wrote for his *Leaves of Grass* proved to be self-fulfilling prophecies:

> An American bard at last! One of the roughs, large, proud, affectionate, eating, drinking, and breeding, his costume manly and free, his face sunburnt and bearded, his postures strong and erect, his voice bringing hope and prophecy to the generous races of young and old. We shall cease shamming and be what we really are. We shall start an athletic and defiant literature. We realize now how it is, and what was most lacking. The interior American republic shall also be declared free and independent. (Whitman 1855, 205)

The ambitious thirty-six-year-old aspiring poet had his first edition of *Leaves of Grass* printed in a local print shop in 1855 and did not stop revising it and publishing new editions until his death in 1892. His strategy proved successful, and he became the key American poet – and not only in the United States. Whitman's style and democratic vision mesmerized poets, translators, and critics all around the world – and that is true for the Americas and the Old World, as well as for Asia, Africa, and Australia (Kummings 1984, 108). He became known for his radical refusal of poetic conventions including traditional verse and his long King James Bible-inspired lines are considered as the major impulse for the development of free verse in many literatures.

His influence on the development of Slovak free verse, however, was less pronounced. At a time when Slovak poets were experimenting with less rigid verse forms, they sought innovations – among other places – in the poetry of one or several literary generations younger European poets influenced by Whitman. These mainly included Emile Verhaeren and Maurice Maeterlinck, both of whom drew on Whitman (Scott [1980] 2010, 218; Erkilla 1980, 91). The first Slovak translations of their work, by the priest, politician, and poet Ignác Grebáč-Orlov (1888–1957), were published in the early decades of the 20th century. Following Grebáč-Orlov, a prominent Slovak poet of the era, Emil Boleslav Lukáč, undertook the translation of Maeterlinck's poems. From among the more prominent innovative poets, Slovak literary figures showed a keen interest in Guillaume Apollinaire and generally drew more on French avant-garde poetry. The close connection Slovak poets felt towards Apollinaire's writing can also be observed in the allusions they made to his work – such as in *Nedeľa* (Sunday, 1927), the first collection of poems written by the avant-garde poet Laco Novomeský (1904–1976): "My friend puffs a cigar and jokes about the light and dusk and evening air, / while to his girlfriend I expressive-

ly recite translations from Apollinaire" (Novomeský 2004, 89).[2] The indirect path inspiration often takes to Slovak literature can, however, be observed here as well – as the comparatist Pavol Winczer (2000, 54–55) notes, the quoted Novomeský poem was not in fact directly influenced by Apollinaire's poetry, but was modelled on the epic poem "Svatý kopeček" (Holy hill) from the collection of poems *Host do domu* (A guest on the threshold, 1921) by the Czech poet Jiří Wolker (1900–1924). Czech translations of French poetry – especially Karel Čapek's translation of Apollinaire – and Czech poetry as such (Vítězslav Nezval, Jiří Wolker, Stanislav Kostka Neumann) were the most important sources of verse innovation in Slovak poetry in the early 20th century. As to the style and character of Slovak free verse which was forming at that time, Czech translations of modern French poetry had a much greater impact (Kochol 1960, 354) and the free verse of the *nadrealists* (lit. above-realists) – the Slovak surrealists – was derived from European avant-garde movements. The 1938 comment of Jozef Felix (1985, 173–174), a major literary critic of that period, is significant in this respect: "We would surely be happier with a Slovak Whitman than a Slovak Breton in our poetry!"

Free verse in Slovak writing has therefore very little in common with Walt Whitman's writing and a more direct relationship between Slovak literature and the "father of American poetry" can be found in several tribute poems written in the first half of the 20th century. One such was the poem by the modernist and symbolist poet Vladimír Roy (1885–1936) "Za more" (Beyond the sea) from his collection of poetry *Cez závoj* (Through the veil, 1927) in which the poet and translator expresses his inclination towards Whitman's poetic form: "From time to time I like to leap in Whitman's style: / […] / It has been said, I'm also fond of Whitman's run" (Roy 1963, 146).[3] The poem also exhibits several characteristics of Whitman's style: it partly violates the regular metre, uses enumeration (e.g. of occupations), and alludes to "Song of Myself" (146).

One of the most intriguing impacts Walt Whitman had on Slovak poetry during the early decades of the 20th century lies in the relatively unexplored intertextual references found in the collection of poems by the leftist avant-garde poet Ján Rob Poničan (1902–1978). Poničan was a writer, journalist, and lawyer who studied in Prague (1920–1926) and in 1924, together with a group of leftist intellectuals, he co-founded the literary-political magazine *DAV*. The title of the magazine is both a noun denoting a crowd (of common people) and an acronym of the names of lawyers, politicians, and political scientists who co-founded it: Daniel Okáli (1903–1987), Andrej Sirácky (1900–1988), and Vladimír Clementis (1902–1952), the last being a victim of a communist anti-Semitic show trial. A year before *DAV* was first printed, Poničan self-published his first book of poetry, the formally and thematically diverse *Som, myslím, cítim a vidím, milujem všetko, len temno nenávidím* (I am, I think, I feel, and I see, I love everything, only darkness I hate). Amongst the poems in the book is "Dav, milujem ťa!" (Crowd, I love you!) which refers to Whitman's "Song of Myself". The Slovak poem combines expressionistic, modernist, and decadent images with engaged verses and passages expressing a love for the people:

Crowd, I love You!

I love You:
I guess:
from a million of atoms similar to me
that you are alloyed, –
I guess:
that you don't have a home –
(you are home in every place where something sprouts, –)[4]
(Poničan 1923, 55)

One cannot but hear in the passage the beginning of Whitman's most famous poem and its "For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you. / […] / I lean and loafe at my ease observing a spear of summer grass" (1891–1892, 29). Although the Slovak translation of "Song of Myself" was not published before the centenary of the first edition of *Leaves of Grass* (Whitman 1956), Poničan, who studied in Prague, could have easily read the American poet in the Czech translation by Jaroslav Vrchlický (1853–1912), one of the most important Czech poets of the 19th century and a prolific translator. Vrchlický's translation of Whitman was published in 1906 and was the first book-length Czech translation of the American poet. The leftist sentiment of unity with the people and sympathy for the masses which permeates Poničan's poem strongly resonates with Whitman's writing and the "loved crowd" – the masses advocated for by the magazine *DAV* and by the group of lawyers and other intellectuals named after it (*davisti* – the davists/crowdist) – is the same humankind celebrated by Whitman.

The very title of Poničan's collection *Som, myslím, cítim a vidím, milujem všetko, len temno nenávidím* is a Whitman-style line – the assertively positive attitude towards the world and its sensory properties combined with the visibly central position of the speaker and the unusual length of the title remind the reader of Whitman's poetic revolution. This direct textual inspiration, however, has not been explored yet – while the literary historian Michal Habaj does assert that some of Poničan's poems "can also be read in the context of the prewar civilizational poetry which drew on Verhaeren's and Whitman's poetry and which confronts urban-industrial and technicist themes with a social […] stance" (2008, 268), he does not mention any intertextual references. That is perhaps due to the fact that Poničan's collection was inspired by a host of different styles, and references to Whitman poetry are not too frequent. A more pronounced one – besides the book's title and the poem quoted above – is another reference to "Song of Myself" in the lines "I celebrate life, / I celebrate humankind, I celebrate their allies: proletariat, / and I celebrate also the proletariat's youth"[5] (1923, 12) from the poem "Sviedol ma život" (Life has seduced me) and in several cases, Poničan also uses the technique of cataloguing. What Poničan's case shows most importantly though is that the democratic, humanistic, and leftist orientation of Whitman's poetry was appreciated in his Slovak reception even before Marxism became the state ideology after the communist coup d'état in 1948.

Whitman's presence persisted in Slovak literature throughout the first half of the 20th century, not primarily through translation, but rather through individual inclinations and engagements with his work. After Roy and Poničan, the spirit of love for humankind and freedom that so strongly emanates from the American poet's verses appealed to the poet, journalist, and diplomat Theo H. Florin (1908–1973). Born as Teodor Herkeľ in the small Slovak town of Dolný Kubín, Florin worked abroad as a journalist and politician since the early 1930s, living in Novi Sad (Serbia), Paris, London, and in 1946–1948, in the USA, where he traveled extensively and wrote poetry inspired by his travels. After returning to Czechoslovakia from Washington, Florin worked as personal secretary to Vladimír Clementis until 1950, when he was unjustly imprisoned during the communist show trials. He was released in 1953, but after that he withdrew from political life and spent the rest of his life in his hometown. The poems Florin wrote in the USA were published during the period of political thaw in Czechoslovakia in the 1960s by the Stredoslovenské vydavateľstvo (Central Slovak regional publishing house). The collection *Oheň na Potomacu* (The fire on the Potomac river, 1965), written during the time Florin spent in the USA, tackles the racial issue and the poet's American experience. The first words of the author's foreword state that his "first love was a black girl"[6] (1965, 5) – and the book also contains "Spev o Waltovi Whitmanovi" (Song of Walt Whitman), written in Virginia in 1947. In his introduction, Florin frames his collection through the memories of pre-World War II Paris, using the old Czech exonym for the Seine River, *Sekvana* (5) and referring in this way to the Gallo-Roman myth (Sequana was the goddess of the river). The introduction and title of the collection in a similar synecdochic fashion refer to Washington, D. C., as a city on the Potomac River. Florin's "Spev o Waltovi Whitmanovi" addresses the American poet in the second person, delves into the time Whitman spent in Washington, and tracks the traces the poet left in the city. The speaker of the poem identifies with the American poet, celebrates his life, and admires his gentle and manly qualities.[7]

Surprisingly enough, this poem, together with six others, appeared in 1971 in the Canadian literary magazine *PRISM International*, at one of the peaks of totalitarian state socialism in Czechoslovakia. The English translation of Florin's poems was done by the philologist James St. Clair-Sobell who, according to the note accompanying the translation, was staying in Dolný Kubín as a guest of the Slovak poet when the armed forces of the U.S.S.R. entered Czechoslovakia in 1948 (1971, 14). The Whitman poem is the last of Florin's seven poems that open the third issue of the magazine which contains, among others, the texts of such poets as Philippe Soupault, Raymond Queneau, Bertolt Brecht, or Stanislaw Jerzy Lec. The publication of these translations is most probably the result of a combination of several factors – the existing personal contact between Florin and Clair-Sobell, the high ethos connected with anti-communist and anti-racial sentiments woven into the poems and the biographical note, the fact that Florin took as his topic in these poems American themes including the "[b]earded and wild, gentle and hard" (1971, 14) Whitman, and that the collection *Oheň na Potomacu* was published during the political thaw

of the 1960s. Thanks to these circumstances, the book found its way to the translator – and to several libraries located in the UK and US.

Owing to such idiosyncrasies as Ján Rob Poničan's declared love of the crowd and Theo H. Florin's travel poems, Walt Whitman served as a bridge between American and Slovak poetry – a skewed, slanted, and feeble one, but still a bridge. The following section will take a look at the first translations of Walt Whitman into Slovak.

ACT II: ENTER STATE SOCIALISM, ENTER WHITMAN THE COMRADE – MID-CENTURY TRANSLATIONS

The tone and message of Whitman's texts, their vocal anti-elitism and optimistic view of the world, was equally consistent with the authentic values promoted by leftist intellectuals before World War II as with the official communist ideology in totalitarian Czechoslovakia after 1948, and a translation of a Whitman poem was published in the literary magazine *Slovenské pohľady* – one of the few that were allowed by the regime – soon after the Communist coup. "Years of the Modern" was published in the last issue of the 1950 volume as "Roky novej doby" (Years of the new times) and was meant, like many other texts of the period, to discursively create a beginning of the new era in Slovak culture, politics, and life in general. The poem was rendered by the critic and translator Ján Boor (1915–2002) who modified the text in his Slovak version so that it would be clear that the poem was acutely topical: instead of "years of the unperform'd!" (Whitman 1891–1892, 370), the translation speaks about years of the new changes[8] (1950, 711). Boor was also the translator of the first book translation of Walt Whitman, published in 1956 as *Pozdrav svetu* ("Salut au Monde").[9]

Before the book translation was published, a few of Whitman's poems also appeared in *Ľudové čítanie* (Popular reading), a literary magazine intended to cultivate and educate the general public. The poems included were "Gods", "I Sit and Look Out", and a new version of "Years of the Modern" which was translated there as "Roky vekov budúcich" (Years of the ages of the future). The curator of the Whitman piece, Ž. Augustínová, was most probably unaware of the fact that Ján Boor was working on his translation – not only did she include a new version of the poem previously published in *Slovenské pohľady*, which, in the context of how few translations of Whitman were available in Slovak, is unusual, but the poems were not even translations from the English originals, but retranslations from Czech. The text does not give the full name of the re-translator, only the initials J. Z. The noticeable interest in the poem "Years of the Modern" in post-World War II Slovakia is explicitly explained in the introduction to the three relay translations – it "resounds with the prophetic voice of what is to come, of what we are already living" (Augustínová 1955, 274).

The first Slovak book translation of Whitman's poetry was published upon the occasion of the centenary of the first U.S. edition of *Leaves of Grass* in 1956. This first concentrated Slovak interest in Whitman might have sprung from the fact that the World Peace Council, a post-World War II organization founded in the Eastern Bloc "designed to draw non-Communists closer to the Communist movement", and listing prominent members from 74 countries (Grünzweig 2007, 344–345), pro-

claimed the centenary of *Leaves of Grass* a great cultural anniversary and in this way incited numerous ways in which Whitman was recognized in Eastern and Central Europe.

The Slovak translation was done by Ján Boor. Its title *Pozdrav svetu* is the Slovak translation of the poem "Salut au Monde" and as such is very fitting for the first proper introduction of Whitman into Slovak. The translator's foreword – like other period Czech and Slovak texts on Whitman – accentuated Whitman's democratic vision. The elements of his work and life that did not align with communist ideology could be readily adapted, reinterpreted, or even misinterpreted to present Whitman as a prototype of the desired revolutionary poet – a poet who preaches "true democracy, active mutual love and druzhba [friendship], progress, health, optimism, humanity" (Boor 1956, 17). Boor's preface to his 1956 translation is full of period rhetoric – it uses expressions like "revolutionary and bloody class struggle" and "son of the people" (10, 11) and at one point, it even claims that Whitman "[d]id not know what the American way of life was, because the bourgeoisie, its carrier, was alien to him" (12). A few pages later, the translator twists the idea in the opposite direction, claiming that his poetry contains "the pernicious influence of the bourgeois liberalism of those times" (18). In *O západných realistoch* (On Western realists), the collection of essays Boor published two years before the translation, he presents Whitman as a representative of realism – the only literary technique supported by the regime – and an author admired by Joseph Stalin at that (1954, 54). The translator brings Whitman very close to the target culture of those times – he even interprets his "camerado" as "comrade" – a word that bore a very specific meaning in socialist Czechoslovakia: "If we use the word comrade in the passages when Whitman speaks of friends, all the powerful lines pregnant with love and action, all these manly songs and enthusiastic visions strikingly fit our times, quite naturally, without a change, as if they were written for us long ago!" (59)

During the following decade, the period of political thaw of the "Golden Sixties", Slovak poets and translators were more fascinated by avant-gardists and the poets of the Beat generation than by the leftist democratic ideas of Whitman. The contents of the periodical focusing on world literatures in Slovak translation, *Revue svetovej literatúry*, testifies to that: founded in 1965, it brought renditions of Lawrence Ferlinghetti, T. S. Eliot, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Ingeborg Bachman, Paul Celan, Dylan Thomas, Samuel Beckett, Roland Barthes, André Breton, Max Bense, Saul Bellow, Umberto Eco, Jack Kerouac, Sylvia Plath, John Barth, and Vladimir Nabokov in the 1960s. New translations of Whitman were only published during normalization – a period roughly demarcated by the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia (1968) and the Velvet Revolution (1989).

ACT III: WHITMAN THE NORMALIZED – THE SECOND HALF OF THE STATE SOCIALISM

In the 1970s, during so-called normalization, many authors stopped publishing their work – either completely or to a certain degree – because of the restrictions imposed by the regime after the invasion of the Warsaw Pact troops, and turned

to translating instead. Ján Stacho (1936–1995), a prominent poet of the 1960s, who also translated a few poems by Whitman, was one of them. His translation of part 6 of "Song of Myself" and "To a Locomotive in Winter" were published in the Sunday supplement of the *Pravda* daily in 1971 and part 32 of "Song of Myself" and the poems "Aboard at a Ship's Helm" and "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd" were aired on radio in 1972 before they were included in his collected translations (Stacho 1983). Since Ján Stacho did not speak English and his other translations from that language were done in collaboration, it can be supposed that the method he used in translating Whitman was either compilative translation, or some other relay form of translation which was very common in poetry translation into Slovak in the second half of the 20th century. Stacho's input into this rendition, therefore, concentrated on the aesthetic modelling of the text, and his Slovak versions accentuate such aspects of the poems as striking stylistic color, wide connotative potential, and heightened expressiveness.

In 1972, two Whitman poems were also included in the ambitious translation project of the émigré poet Karol Strmeň (1921–1994), who emigrated from Czechoslovakia in 1945, settling in the USA in 1949. The two volumes of his anthology *Návštevy* (Visits), containing translations of more than 200 poets from around the world, were published in 1972 by the Pontifical Slovak Institute of Saints Cyril and Methodius in Rome. Strmeň was an editor, teacher, poet, and translator of poetry from more than twenty languages. The two Whitman poems in his 1972 anthology, "I Hear America Singing" and "The World below the Brine", are preceded by translations of Henry David Thoreau's "The Summer Rain" and followed by Charles Baudelaire's "Correspondances" and "Spleen". As the translator's note about the author suggests, they were probably only included because an "anthology of world lyric", as the subtitle of the book states, would be incomplete without it:

> Walt Whitman, the poet of democracy, the virtues of which he unjustly equated with his own eloquence, 1819 – 1892. The translator agrees with everything what Henry James had to say about him, in all basic things, but also saw in him the possibility of the surprisingly lively mosaic. Whitman wanted to be the American jungle when his home country has not been a jungle for a long time – neither with respect to the colonizers, nor to what they discovered. Nevertheless, open Whitman anyway, he still orates, recites, shines, amasses – not even after death is he at peace. (Strmeň 1927, 206)

The translator's distaste perhaps partly explains Slovak culture's more general lukewarm reception of Whitman – the form and tone of the American poet simply does not appeal to many Slovak poets.

The second Slovak translation of Walt Whitman's work was published in 1974 under the title *Tráva a tŕstie* (Grass and reeds). Like *Pozdrav svetu* (1956), this translation was also done by Ján Boor. Although the new selection partially overlaps with the 1956 volume, its whole editorial concept is different from the centenary volume. Reflecting a shift back towards aesthetics in literature after the ideologically charged 1950s, this edition enhances the book's qualities as an aesthetic artefact. Unlike the 1956 edition of Whitman, where the translator's commentary opened the book, in this instance it is discreetly placed at the back and nearly devoid of ideological bias,

which often served as paratextual camouflage during the totalitarian era (Tyšš 2017; Bachledová 2018). The translator's afterword not only offers the reader a neutral and scholarly analysis of Whitman's poetry but also explicitly outlines the translational and editorial approach followed by Boor. It contains, among other things, the translator's credo:

> The spirit of his [Whitman's] poetic language has to be preserved, his expressiveness, the character of his verse, his way of writing, the character of his poetic imagery and ornaments, his imagination. Whitman must not be made more polished or more genteel. However, here and there the translator can take the liberty of experimenting with language. (Boor 1974, 191)

Boor then goes on to say that "Whitman can be translated freely or strictly" and that he – the translator – alternated between the two concepts in his translation (191). Comparison shows that Boor's translation indeed is more philological than Stacho's, for example.

Since the late 1950s, Slovak translation critics have concurred that poetry translations are most effectively executed by poets themselves. However, few of these poets possessed sufficient proficiency in foreign languages to undertake translation work. In a discussion on literary translation published in 1966 in the renowned literary periodical *Mladá tvorba* (Young writing), writers, poets, critics, and translators agreed that Slovak literary translation had only achieved satisfactory quality standards for a select few languages. Unsurprisingly, Russian was among them, as it had been a compulsory subject in primary and secondary schools since 1948. One of the leading Slovak translators from English, Ján Vilikovský, went on to note that

> [t]here are only a few outstanding translators in Slovakia […]. The vast majority of translators merely produce books for reading. Of the total publishing production, ten per cent of translations are done by 'quality' translators and 90 per cent are done 'routinely'. Then it is no wonder that the Slovak reader prefers Czech translations; the greater part of them are also done routinely, but this 'routine' is of a much higher level. (Vilikovský et al. 1966, 11)

The continuous appearance of Whitman in Slovak language and literature, where he achieves recognition without gaining full acceptance, mirrors a distinct facet of Slovak culture: its fragmented interaction with the outside world across various domains, including translation (Bednárová 2013, 42). Even after the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989, engagement with Whitman's writings remained sporadic and incomplete within Slovak culture, despite the altered political and economic landscape. A telling example is found in the work of the contemporary poet Katarína Kucbelová, who, in her 2006 collection of poems, chooses to reference Whitman's original English edition rather than the Slovak translation (7).

ACT IV: WHITMAN FOR FREE – SLOVAK WHITMAN IN THE GLOBALIZED PRESENT

Following the collapse of state socialism, the primary foreign language spoken by Slovaks shifted from Russian to English. However, reliance on Czech translations, or the preference for them, persists among Slovak readers, necessitating consider-

ation when conducting research or entering the publishing market. This prevalent influence of Czech translations in the Slovak literary landscape is evident in the case of Whitman. There have been no initiatives to translate his complete works, and it took nearly four decades for another book translation to be published after *Tráva a tŕstie* from 1974. In 2013, "Song of Myself" was retranslated as *Spev o mne* by Juraj Kuniak, a relatively obscure poet operating his own press, Skalná ruža, which received only marginal attention from critics and poets during that period. The translation of Whitman, however, propelled him to the heart of the Slovak poetry world. It inaugurated the successful "Poetry" series, which has since featured prominent Slovak poets and a diverse range of translations. Kuniak's translation garnered generally favorable reviews and was even shortlisted for Slovakia's most prestigious literary translation prize, the Ján Hollý Prize.

CONCLUSION

The positive reception of a translation has little bearing on the fact that poetry in translation remains a marginalized genre in Slovak literature, largely surviving due to subsidies. The publication of translations that are not financially viable – as is generally the case with poetry translations – relies on the funding independent publishers can secure from various grant schemes. Literary translation, along with related fields such as editorial practice and publishing, has become increasingly disorganized and haphazard compared to the era of state socialism when large publishing houses attempted to create standards.

Poets like Whitman, whose work is well-known and no longer under copyright, present a low-risk opportunity for small presses to generate cultural capital and obtain cultural funds. This trend is evident on projects like that of the musician Robert Pospiš. *Spev tebe – Budúcnosť* (Song to you – Future, 2019) does not aim to create a more comprehensive Slovak translation of Whitman. It is a selection of Whitman's poetry – even of parts of poems – translated by the poet Martin Solotruk and contains poems the musician did not include in his eponymous album. As Pospiš explicitly states in the afterword, he was not even interested in selecting whole poems (2019, 48). Such arbitrary treatment of the original text contradicts translation norms established during the decades following World War II and highlights the increasingly unsystematic nature of literary translation – and the closely connected field of editing (Navrátil 2018, 2020; Rácová 2020) – in contemporary Slovakia.

NOTES

[1] An unpublished translation of a segment of "Song of Myself" by the poet Pavol Gašparovič Hlbina (1908–1977) is listed among the holdings of the Archives of Literature and Art of the Matica Slovenská under the title "Dieťa sa pýta čo je tráva" [The child asks what is grass]. The translation is, however, undated (Mrušovič 1997, 273).

[2] "Môj priateľ zapáli cigaru a robí vtipy si z noci a z šera, / ja jeho milenke s pathosom vykladám preklady z Appolinaira [sic]" (Novomeský 1927, 10).

[3] Unless stated otherwise, all translations from Slovak into English are mine. "Ja zavše rád i whitmanovsky pozaplesám: / […] / Rád tiež, jak vravím, I whitmanovský beh."

[4] "Dav, milujem Ťa! / Milujem Ťa: / hádam: / z milionov mne podobných atomov, / že si sliaty, – / hádam: / že nemáš domov – / (doma si všade, kde čo klíči, –)"

[5] "Velebím život, / velebím ľudstvo, velebím ich gardu: proletariát, / a velebím I proletársku mladť"

[6] "prvá láska bolo čierne dievča"

[7] Although the collection in no way mentions any such thing, according to his contemporaries, Theo H. Florin identified as queer. This would, however, be unacceptable to admit openly during that time. Theo H. Florin's admiration for Whitman, his life and writing, may also have the dimension of appreciating the homoerotic elements of the American writer's poetry.

[8] "Roky nových zmien!"

[9] The book was introduced by a translator's foreword which provided political interpretation of Walt Whitman and contained a selection of Whitman's poetry and his *Democratic Vistas* – the latter was translated by the Esperantist and translator Magda Seppová.

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Publishing poetry in translation in Slovakia 2013–2023

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Publishing poetry in translation in Slovakia 2013–2023

Translated poetry. Publishing practices. Small poetry presses. Survey of translations in Slovakia. Survey of translations 2013–2023.

Poetry's peripheral position in translation affects the book market by leaving its production to small and non-profit presses that compensate for their economic loss with state and cultural subsidies. This has been the reality in Slovakia during the last decade (2013–2023), with most poetry translations published by small semi-professional presses headed by single managers who, in most cases, happen to be authors, poets, and poetry translators themselves. In the period under review, 158 poetry translations were published by 24 presses, four of which published 88 of the collections (55.7%). The most prolific publishers include three presses run by poets – FACE (run by Ján Gavura), Skalná ruža (Juraj Kuniak), and Modrý Peter (Peter Milčák) – while the fourth press is Vydavateľstvo Spolku slovenských spisovateľov (VSSS), the publishing house of the Slovak Writers' Society. Each press has a specific policy of selection for publishing, with the diversity of poets being one of the main criteria, and translators' input being another. Unlike other genres of translation, the English language is not as dominant in the portfolio of the four most prolific presses, followed by Serbian and Polish. A semi-peripheral language position is held by Spanish, German, Hungarian, Norwegian, and Slovenian, but there are also translations from other 13 languages.

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In *Translation Changes Everything*, Lawrence Venuti remarks that "[t]oday poetry may well be the least translated literary genre" that comprises "a tiny fraction of total annual [poetry] output hovering at 5–8%" (2013, 173). He then supports his observation with a brief statistical overview: in 2009, the percentage of translated poetry out of the total number of poetry books published was 5.2% in the US, though slightly higher in Slovenia (11%) and Italy (13.77%) (173). Translated poetry is undoubtedly a marginal matter, and it can hardly be otherwise if non-translated poetry nowadays only meets with limited interest from readers. For Slovak literature, this is hinted at by a brief look at the number of book reviews published over the last ten years in the magazine *Knižná revue* (Book revue)[1]: on average out of 120 reviews per year, only ten are of poetry and just two or three of poetry in translation, i.e. less than 3%. *Knižná revue* is a valuable source of information as it considers all genres of new and recent books (fiction and non-fiction, art and commercial), mirroring the current status and tendencies in publishing. Its extensive review section is a relevant indicator of readers' preferences as perceived by the magazine editors. Statistically, it shows that most reviews are of translated fiction and non-fiction books, followed by fiction written in Slovak, children's literature, and Slovak poetry. In the ten years of 2013–2023, there were years when there were no reviews of translated poetry volumes (e.g. 2023) and other years with a maximum of four reviews (2013), with usually two or three reviews in other years including in the present research.

From the translation point of view, it is decisive for Slovakia that on the core-periphery scale (Heilbron 1999), Slovak is one of the peripheral languages (Hostová 2023, 160) and the natural flow is from the major languages to Slovak. In absolute numbers, this means that translations currently account for almost a third (to be exact 2,655 publications and 32.2%) of all publications printed in Slovak (Ministerstvo kultúry SR 2024).

The quantitative indicators confirm that poetry is a marginal genre and that translated poetry represents the periphery of the periphery in the book market. Yet, despite the obvious unprofitability of creating, translating, and publishing verse, it has not died out. Poetry still possesses a significant amount of symbolic capital as "any property (any form of capital whether physical, economic, cultural or social) when it is perceived by social agents endowed with categories of perception which cause them to know it and to recognize it, to give it value" (Bourdieu 1998, 47). This can be seen in the lists of winners of prestigious international or national literature prizes, the Nobel Prize for Literature or the Pulitzer Prize, which include fiction writers and poets. Poetry finds itself in a permanently ambivalent position, marginal but at the same time appreciated by a small but highly specialized community of culturally and academically active audiences.

METHODOLOGY PREVIEW

Research on the production and distribution of translated poetry addresses the book publishing industry's sociological, economic, and cultural aspects. In this article, drawing mostly on interviews and quantitative methods, as well as

personal correspondence and archival materials, I wish to contribute to the knowledge of the contemporary landscape of publishing poetry in Slovakia, with a focus on the decade 2013–2023. This decade was chosen for three main reasons: it provides a sufficiently long interval for conducting a quantitative analysis reflecting current trends; secondly, it deals with contemporary movement, enabling us to outline predictions for the near future. However, the most important reason is the fact that two significant poetry-related events occurred in Slovak culture in 2013. That year, a special poetry series "Poézia" (Poetry) was established by the press Skalná ruža, which boosted the publishing of original and translated poetry. The series opened with a selection from Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* (in Slovak *Spev o mne* – "Song of Myself"), and the press became one of Slovakia's leading poetry publishers over the following decade. Also in 2013, the first Slovak journal devoted specifically to poetry, *Vertigo – časopis o poézii a básnikoch* (Vertigo – a journal of poetry and poets), was founded.

In the further analysis, I include books of poetry translations published from 2013 to 2023 that were listed in Slovak distribution (databases of distributors and booksellers), in the National Library catalogue as well as in the journal *Knižná revue*'s "Nové knihy" (New books) section.[2] From the assembled list, I excluded reprints of earlier publications, books for children and young adults, books aimed at other than the general public (e.g. theaters, festivals, and books published for research purposes), online editions, and amateur books.[3] In cases where it was unclear whether the texts should be seen as poetry or poetry for adult readers, other aspects were considered (artistic intention being the most important). The number of published poetry translations in the following period was 158 books published by 24 presses. The article does not take into account the aesthetic quality or the level of translation, which would require a different approach and methodology. The following section will present a detailed quantitative survey of publishing houses and their contribution to the publication of translated poetry.

POETRY PUBLISHERS IN SLOVAKIA 2013–2023: QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

As mentioned above, poetry publishing is peripheral in almost all countries, Slovakia being no exception. With regard to publishers, the situation here is not very different from how Venuti describes it in the USA: "In the United States, most poetry translations are issued by small and university presses, limiting their print run and distribution and making many of them ephemeral publications" (2013, 174). The status of "ephemeral", i.e. less visible and with limited impact on readers, is confirmed by reviewers and the media, who prioritize fiction and if they focus on poetry then on poetry originally written in the native language. Nevertheless, poetry – also in translation – still attracts translators, authors, and publishers who invest large amounts of energy into its creation and circulation.

The change of political regime in 1989 led to the collapse of the central planning of book production, which was based on the previous ideological preferences (ties to the Soviet Union and other socialist countries) with restrictions on both business

and freedom of speech. Immediately after the end of socialism, small presses began to emerge that first published original Slovak poetry and prose, followed by translated literature. Each of these small publishing houses was specific to a particular field of literature (contemporary Slovak fiction, poetry, children's books), with poetry presses singled out from the newly formed group of independent and commercial, i.e. not state-run publishers (Gavura 2019).

The 1990s, often referred to as "the transition period", was a decade in which previous large publishing houses were privatized and transformed into joint stock or limited liability companies:

> The decisive influence on the production of quality books in the field of contemporary Slovak poetry and prose has been acquired by small, often more specialized, publishing houses while larger publishing houses (e.g. Slovart, Ikar) or those with a long cultural tradition (Tatran, Slovenský spisovateľ) are less involved in the field of artistic production. (Passia and Taranenková 2014, 28)[4]

Companies with publishing activities rely either on state funding (non-commercial basis) or on economic profit generated by sales. All large publishers operate on the latter system and have only a limited space for less profitable projects that sometimes include translated poetry. The exceptions, mentioned later in the article, are selected with regards to potential commercial profitability, to widening their portfolio (satisfying divergent groups of customers) and, occasionally, as an aspiration to higher aesthetic achievements.

In the first half of the 1990s, five small poetry presses which also put out translations were established: Skalná ruža (August 1990), Modrý Peter (August 1991), F.R.&G. (August 1992), Solitudo (November 1992) and Drewo a srd (1994). Only three of these five publishers were active in publishing poetry during 2013–2023 with two publishing poetry in translation, Skalná ruža (published 21 volumes) and Modrý Peter (16 volumes). Alongside these two publishers, two other presses began publishing poetry in translation and, when compared numerically, outperformed them in the decade under review. As can be observed from Table 1 and Table 2, a significant contribution was made by the newly established press FACE, Fórum alternatívnej kultúry a vzdelávania (Forum of alternative culture and education, 29 volumes) and Vydavateľstvo Spolku slovenských spisovateľov (The publishing house of the Slovak writers' society, VSSS) with 22 volumes.

The publishers of translated poetry can be divided into three categories according to frequency (Table 2), which shows that four presses cover more than half of the total production (55.7%, 88 volumes altogether). Three of the four presses fall into the category of small publishing houses run by poets: Skalná ruža, run by Juraj Kuniak, Modrý Peter, run by Peter Milčák, and FACE, run by Ján Gavura. The fourth press, VSSS, is the publishing house of Spolok slovenských spisovateľov (Slovak writers' society), one of several associations of writers in Slovakia, with more than 400 members (www.spolok-slovenskych-spisovatelov.sk).

Publisher	Number of published volumes	Percentage from total volumes published in 2013–2023
FACE	29	18.35%
VSSS	22	13.92%
Skalná ruža	21	13.29%
Modrý Peter	16	10.13%
Perfekt	10	6.33%
Drewo a srd	8	5.06%
Literárna nadácia Studňa	7	4.43%
Ars Poetica	6	3.79%
MilaniuM	6	3.79%
Ikar	6	3.79%
Slovart	4	2.53%
Lindeni	4	2.53%
Pectus	3	1.9%
Literárna bašta	2	1.26%
Fraktál	2	1.26%
Asociácia Corpus	2	1.26%
publishers with only 1 volume	10	6.33%
Total	158	100%

Table 1: The list of translated poetry publishers and their production share from all volumes of translated poetry

Publisher	Frequently (15+)	Occasionally (6–10)	Rarely (1–5)	Total number
Number of presses	4	6	14	24
Number of volumes combined	88	43	27	158
Percentage of total number of volumes	55,7%	27.2%	17.01%	100%

Table 2: Frequency of publishing by the presses, 2013–2023

MOST PROLIFIC POETRY PUBLISHERS IN SLOVAKIA 2013–2023: FOUR CASE STUDIES

As stated above, the four most active publishers of poetry in Slovak translation include three presses run by poets: FACE, Skalná ruža, and Modrý Peter, while the fourth press, VSSS, is the publishing house of the Slovak writers' society. The three small publishers operate as civic associations with the status of a legal entity but, like a non-profit organization, have concessions in how they operate. They are headed by a single manager who represents the publishing house in its business dealings and guarantees the content of the publishing activity. Significantly and crucially, these managers are themselves authors, poets, and poetry translators.

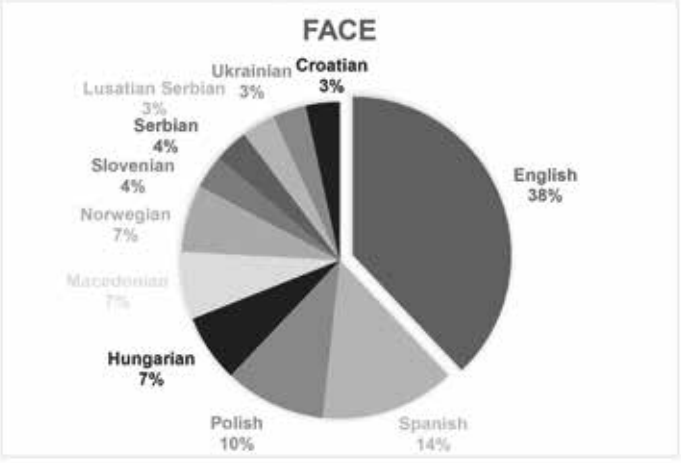
Publisher	Number of volumes	Number of translators	Number of languages	Most frequent language
FACE	29	20	11	English (38%)
VSSS	22	12	8	Serbian (63.6%)
Skalná ruža	21	18	10	English (42.9%)
Modrý Peter	16	10	9	Polish (31.3%)

Table 3: Most prolific publishers of poetry in Slovak translation 2013–2023, number of volumes, translators, and languages

FACE is headed by the present author – poet, translator, and literary critic Ján Gavura (1975) and was founded as an organization with a university background, with its portfolio of art and academic publications related to education. It is associated with experts from universities and research institutes and, with their input, produces publications in Slovak literature, translation, books for children, and scholarly monographs on literature. It has two book series, which publish equally original and translated literature, mainly poetry, and a special edition of pamphlets ("Veršeonline"), which are published and distributed together with the journal on poetry and poets *Vertigo*. The press published 29 volumes in the decade under discussion: 12 full-length books and 17 pamphlets.[5] Table 4 and Graph 1 show that 11 languages with 20 different translators confirm scouting aims and diversity as the primary goal of the press. The diversity is also applied in Anglophone literature, though the statistics partly distort this fact; the authors come from England (1), Scotland (3), Canada (1), the USA (1), Palestine (1), and in one case a British resident in Slovakia (1). These 11 poets are translated from English by seven different individual translators or translation teams.[6]

Language	Number of volumes	Number of translators
English	11	7
Spanish	4	2
Polish	3	2
Hungarian	2	2
Macedonian	2	2
Norwegian	2	1
Slovenian	1	1
Serbian	1	1
Lusatian Serbian	1	1
Ukrainian	1	1
Croatian	1	1
Total	29	21

Table 4: FACE – number of languages and translators



Graph 1: FACE – proportion and percentage of languages

The second most prolific publisher on the list is the VSSS, which produced 22 translated poetry collections between 2013 and 2023. The Slovak Writers' Society has seen itself as a continuation of the writers' organization operating during state socialism, a position it adopted in the early 1990s:

> [The Slovak Writers' Society] pressured other writers' associations to push for solutions that would be in its favor. At the same time, it was inclined towards initiatives that entered the political life of the early 1990s with various demands falling under the so-called national agenda. […] The Slovak Writers' Society derived its claims of protectionism and favoritism from the new ruling party, the populist authoritarian Movement for a Democratic Slovakia, from its role in the establishment and resolution of the national agenda within the framework of the common Czech-Slovak state […]. As the largest writers' organization, from the beginning of the 1990s, it significantly contributed to the fact that Slovak literary culture in the 1990s was characterized by several elements that were transferred into it from the practices of the political field. (Šrank 2015, 17)

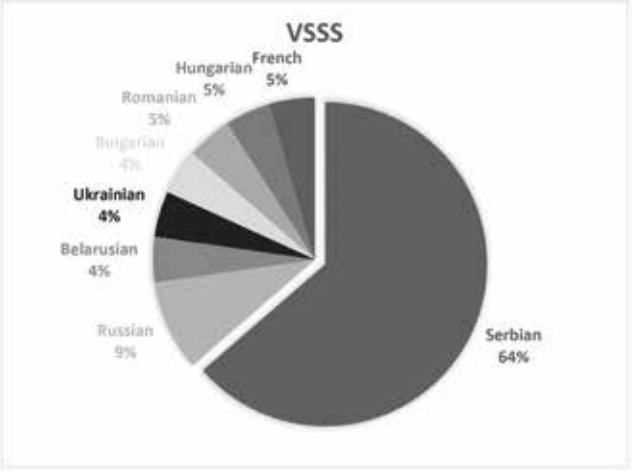
The Slovak Writers' Society has always been seeking connection and cooperation with political parties using nationalism and common ideological views for their benefit. As cultural bodies, journals, and literature publishers have traditionally depended on state subsidies, political parties used the grant system to eliminate their ideological opponents and favor allied writers and organizations. This was apparent mainly in the 1990s during the three governments of Vladimír Mečiar, whose "very name became associated with corruption and economic stagnation" (Kellman 2024), a man who was one of the earliest prototypes of post-communist populist and authoritarian prime ministers, whose main concern was to be re-elected and kept in power and even altered the Slovak electoral system in his favor (Birch et al. 2002, 75–79). The practice of undermining the fairness of grant systems returned in 2023 when the Ministry of Culture was taken over by the Slovak National Party, which is now systematically changing all media, cultural and artistic institutions in order to control the content and financial operations. In 2024, the most pressing problems have been the takeover of Slovak public television by pro-government factions and the distortion of the objectivity of the Slovak Arts Council's decision-making. Expert committees have become only advisory bodies: the decision-making process is now in the hands of the council's highly-politicized board creating room for non-transparent decision processes.

Regarding the period under discussion here and the corpus of translated poetry, it is significant that VSSS publishes only the writing and translations of the members of the association that runs it. In contrast, other presses are (virtually) open to all authors and translators who send manuscripts or suggest a project. Even though the Society is the largest organization of Slovak writers and translators, it does not represent the full spectrum of poetic approaches but rather national-oriented, conservative, and traditional literary works (Šrank 2015, 16–19). Its language stratification and selection of translated poets began before the fall of state socialism in 1989. With one exception (French), all source languages of its translations are of former socialist countries (Russian, Belarusian, Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Romanian, and Hungarian), and the selected authors are often classics (e.g. Alexander Blok, Vladimir Mayakovsky, Jean Arthur Rimbaud, or the Belarusian Janka Kupala). The high number of translations from Serbian (14 volumes, 64% of all poetry translations published by the VSSS) is a consequence of the involvement of translators from the Slovak diaspora in the Serbian region of Vojvodina. The 14 volumes were translated by three Slovaks from this diaspora: Miroslav Demák (1948), Zdenka Valentová-Belić (1975),

and Martin Prebudila (1960). As Table 5 and Graph 2 show, the publishing schedule of VSSS is asymmetrical and reflects the intentions and abilities of the Society members rather than diversity. The positive effect of this is that Slovak audiences can get to know much of contemporary Serbian poetry; conversely, from the readers' perspective, the one-sided VSSS production does not sufficiently support other cultures.

Language	Number of volumes	Number of translators
Serbian	14	3
Russian	2	2
Belarusian	1	1
Ukrainian	1	1
Bulgarian	1	1
Romanian	1	1
Hungarian	1	1
French	1	1
Total	22	11

Table 5: Vydavateľstvo Spolku slovenských spisovateľov – number of languages and translators

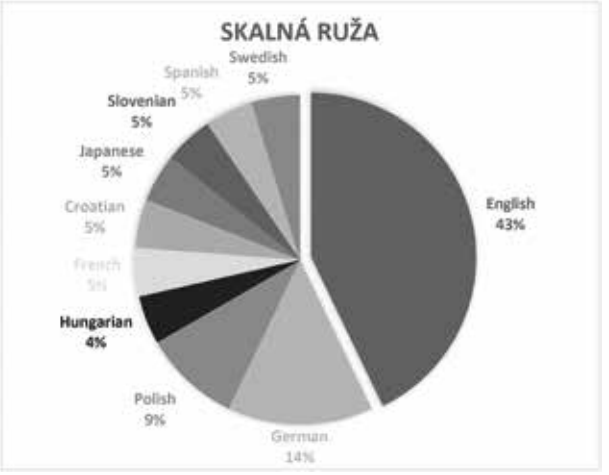


Graph 2: Vydavateľstvo Spolku slovenských spisovateľov – proportion and percentage of languages

The small press Skalná ruža is headed by Juraj Kuniak (1955), who in 2013 started the Poézia (Poetry) series, which over the following years became a highly regarded series of its kind in Slovakia. Since 2013, it has published 38 volumes, half of which are translations. The books have a distinctive, rather luxurious design – hardback and clothbound – and the selection of authors follows strict criteria set when the series was founded. The decision-making involves three associates of Skalná ruža; besides the poet and translator Kuniak, they are Erik Jakub Groch (1957) and Rudolf Jurolek (1956), both distinguished Slovak poets and former publishers. A book gets included in the edition only if all three give their consent. If the consensus is not reached, the press places the book in the less prominent series (Solitudo) or excludes it from its publishing plan. Table 6 and Graph 3 show that Skalná ruža has published translations from ten languages, and has collaborated with 18 translators. Though Anglophone literature is dominant (43%), nine other source languages are used. The variety of English language and realia is preserved by translating classics (Walt Whitman, James Wright, and Ted Hughes), recent prize winners (Louise Glück, Robert Hass) and famous contemporary poets (Alice Oswald, Donna Stonecipher, and Ilya Kaminsky).

Language	Number of volumes	Number of translators
English	9	6
German	3	3
Polish	2	2
Hungarian	1	1
French	1	1
Croatian	1	1
Japanese	1	1
Slovenian	1	1
Spanish	1	1
Swedish	1	1
Total	21	18

Table 6: Skalná ruža – number of languages and translators

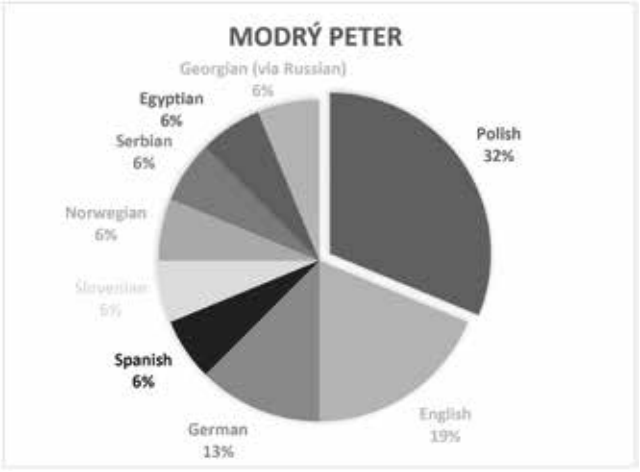


Graph 3: Skalná ruža – number of languages and translators

The publishing house Modrý Peter is headed by Peter Milčák (1966), a poet, translator, and literary scholar, who for most of his career has worked as a Slovak language instructor at universities abroad (Poland and Belarus) as well as a publisher in Canada (1999–2002). The central edition of the publishing house is "Mušľa" (Seashell), which publishes Slovak authors (almost 70 volumes to the present); it also pays great attention to the presentation of Slovak literature abroad, especially poetry. In the first half of the 1990s, it produced several anthologies introducing Slovak poetry in English, German, French, Polish, and Belarusian (*Not Waiting for Miracles*, 1993; *Blauer Berg mit Höhle* [Blue mountain with a cave], 1994; *Les jeux charmants de l'aristocratie* [The charming games of aristocracy], 1996; *Pisanie* [Writing], 2006; *Paljemika z aptymizmam* [A polemics with optimism], 2015). The press publishes poetry in translation in a series titled "Súčasná svetová poézia" (Contemporary world poetry), but also publishes translated poetry outside this series, including canonical works of John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (2020) and *Paradise Regained. Samson Agonistes* (2022), the poetry of Gary Snyder, *Stretnutie s horami* (Encounter with mountains, 2023), and ancient Egyptian poetry, *V severnom vetre čítaš správy ďaleké: staroegyptská ľúbostná poézia* (In the north wind you read messages from afar: ancient Egyptian love poetry, 2023). Unlike the managers of FACE and Skalná ruža, Peter Milčák is more involved as a translator in his press; all five Polish translations were done by him, and all English translations by his close friend and co-editor of the press, Marián Andričík.[7] As shown in Table 7 and Graph 4, the publishing house also scouts for new and unknown poetic areas, old Egyptian and Georgian (via Russian) being the most exotic for Slovak audiences.

Language	Number of volumes	Number of translators
Polish	5	1
English	3	1
German	2	2
Spanish	1	1
Slovenian	1	1
Norwegian	1	1
Serbian	1	1
Egyptian	1	1
Georgian (via Russian)	1	1

Table 7: Modrý Peter – number of languages and translators



Graph 4: Modrý Peter – proportion and percentage of languages

As can be seen from the brief outline, all four of the most prolific publishers of translated poetry reflect the editorial board's aesthetic, ideological, and linguistic preferences. The publishers run by poets are rather tightly connected with the interests of their managers, which is partly reflected in their book portfolio. For example, Juraj Kuniak, a former active alpinist and rock climber, has produced numerous publications on mountaineering at Skalná Ruža, as well as publications involving the author himself and people in his immediate circle. The manager of Modrý Peter, Peter

Milčák, has been working most of his life as a lecturer of Slovak language and culture at foreign universities and has therefore put a lot of effort into publishing anthologies of Slovak literature in translation. He has spent the longest time in Poland, and it is from this literature that he has published the largest number of poetry translations. The manager of FACE also takes into account to a great extent the connection of the publishing house with the university environment; the translators are usually university teachers or students of translation programs, and the needs of universities in terms of awareness-raising are also taken into account. An important link is the quarterly *Vertigo*, which opens further possibilities for presenting literature, especially poetry, with information on important figures in literature and translation (interviews, insights into forthcoming manuscripts, thematic blocks, or reviews). The press manager is also a translator from English, and between 2013–2023, he translated five books (one in co-operation).

THE SELECTION STRATEGY OF THE PRESSES RUN BY POETS

The selection process for the annual publishing schedule by all three small presses that are run by poets pursues primarily the same goal: "a strategy of complementing and confirming the domestic literary tradition" (Kaplická Yakimova 2015, 101). In doing so, they deal with two groups of authors: on the one hand, world-renowned canonical authors with whom the recipients in the target culture are familiar; on the other, unknown or lesser-known authors who may or may not already have a central position in their home tradition, but who primarily "complement" or otherwise interact with the target culture.

These two categories (renowned vs. unknown) are also adapted to the method of publication (hardcover – paperback – pamphlet), the inclusion of an afterword, explanatory notes, and promotion (to avoid "ephemerality"), which has proven to be much more challenging with foreign authors or long dead classics. The most prestigious of these editions, Poézia (Skalná ruža) included canonical authors from various national literatures (Walt Whitman, Louise Glück, Ted Hughes, Czesław Miłosz, Octavio Paz or Basho), as well as contemporary authors who occupy a prominent place in their national literatures, but whose canonical place is still in the making, and are relatively new to Slovak readers (e.g. Dorta Jagić, Barbara Korun, Robert Hass).

A different approach towards selection and presentation is provided by the "Veršeonline" pamphlets which since 2006 include 55 volumes, 23 in Slovak, and 32 translations. The history of the pamphlet edition has two stages: between 2006 and 2012, when they were sold separately, and since 2013 when they became a book supplement to the journal *Vertigo*. The editions "Poézia" and "Veršeonline" have a joint founder – the poet and book designer Erik Jakub Groch. He created not only the concept of the former, the prestigious poetry series, but also the latter, an edition designed for scouting contemporary literature, a risk-free, "pocket" edition, a literary chapbook with a nominal price (1.00€), which was intended to help readers discover new authors and poetics. The Veršeonline series was launched at the end of 2006. Its publication was discontinued after 20 volumes following cancellation of the subsidy from the Ministry of Culture with pamphlet-size publications no longer being con-

sidered "books" because of their size. Despite the edition's popularity, the ministry could not, in its bureaucratic rigidity, find a way to support the idea. Publication was resumed with the foundation of *Vertigo* magazine in 2013, and the pamphlets were published as supplements.

Both strategies – publishing canonical works and literary scouting of unknown authors – are also used by Modrý Peter, whose edition of world poetry mostly presents authors familiar in Slovakia only to specialists in the given national literature and to a lesser extent authors who have become well-known in the course of their publication and presentation (such as the awarding of the Nobel Prize to Jon Fosse). The books in this series are published as paperbacks and without paratexts such as forewords or translator's notes, focusing primarily on the direct aesthetic experience. In addition, Modrý Peter also publishes books by canonical authors, which have a different format (hardcover, extensive notes on the work, the author, and the method of translation). Of these books, John Milton's pair of books stand out in particular. The translation also received a proper response in society, which was reflected not only in the sales of the work but also in the winning of several awards for Modrý Peter and the translator and long-time co-editor Marián Andričík – the Krištáľové krídlo (The crystal wing) prize for prominent Slovak personalities in the field of science, culture, philanthropy and sport (2020) and the Ján Hollý Award for the most notable literary translation of the year (2020, 2022). The extraordinary resonance of Milton's canonical works reflects both the rarity and scarcity of publications of this type and the fact that their preparation rests on the shoulders of individual translators and publishers. The following section provides more details on how awarding literary prizes affects the sale of poetry translations and how poetry presses try to navigate through the complex relationships of book production and preparation of publishing schedules.

READERSHIP AND SALES

In the period 2013–2023, among the authors whose poetry was published in Slovakia, two, Jon Fosse and Louise Glück, won the Nobel Prize, which influenced the sales of the books. Kuniak, the manager of Skalná ruža, shares his experience with how this fact affected the demand:

> An exceptional example is Louise Glück, who was utterly unknown in Slovakia at the time of publication. From 2017 to October 2020, only about 60 copies of her book *Village Life* were sold. However, on 12 October 2020, the media released the news that she had won the Nobel Prize, and by 30 October, it had sold out. I took a chance and ordered a reprint from the printers as early as October 13, and by St. Nicholas' Day in December 2020, Glück's book was on sale again. This was a successful "action" because the sale was not interrupted. But trees don't grow into the sky even in such a case. Slovak capacities limit sales. A reprint of 400 copies is still being sold today, it will probably be sold out in 2024. (Kuniak and Gavura 2024)[8]

The example of Glück's award shows a significant difference between mere personal inclination towards the poet – the reason why she was chosen for translation – and the commercial impact or motivation which increased the number of readers

of translated poetry several times thanks to those who are not ordinarily interested in this type of literature (Kaplická Yakimova 2015; Palková 2024). However, other literary prizes (primarily national, like Magnesia Litera in the Czech Republic, Nike in Poland, or even the Pulitzer Prize in the USA) have little positive economic effect on the Slovak book market. As Kuniak states, from 2017 to 2020, only 60 copies of Glück's book were sold, although the author had won numerous awards, including the Pulitzer Prize for poetry (1993) and National Book Award for poetry (2014), and she was a United States Poet Laureate (2003–2004). Only the Nobel Prize, it seems, can make translated poetry appeal to the general public in Slovakia, making winners of it the safest publishing option for having both great literary value and the least risk of economic loss. A more detailed Table 8 suggests that besides the Nobel Prize, publishers can count on possible commercial attraction of modern classics though with less immediate selling power as the annual winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature.[9]

Author	Volume	Year of publishing	Number of copies	Status
Walt Whitman	*Spev o mne* (orig. *Song of Myself*)	2013, 2019	1000	sold out immediately
Basho	*Haiku*	2019	500	sold out within 2 years
Octavio Paz	*Každodenný oheň* (orig. *El Fuego de Cada Dia* [Everyday fire])	2017	500	sold out within 5 years
Czesław Miłosz	*To* (orig. *To* [This])	2014	400	sold out within 8 years
Robert Hass	*Čas a materiály* (orig. *Time and Materials*)	2019	500	last copies available

Table 8: Bestselling volumes of edition "Poézia" (Skalná ruža)
(Kuniak and Gavura 2024)

Although the managers and directors of the small presses run by poets have the final say in the poet's choice to be translated, it is never just one person's decision. This decision is usually crucial when the question of execution is considered, i.e. whether the press can publish the work in question and whether the time and financial resources are available in the first place. As already mentioned, publishing houses in Slovakia apply for support from the state-funded Slovak Arts Council, where applications are assessed by a 5–7-member expert committee which determines not only the amount of funds allocated but also which works from the submitted editorial plan it recommends and which it does not.

DIVERSITY AND VOLATILITY OF TRANSLATION POETRY PRODUCTION

The exceptional challenges of translated poetry are precisely mirrored in the state of publishing and the conditions under which it operates. The genre thrives on the dedication and efforts of a small group of people, usually authors, who value poetry to such an extent that they devote their time to expanding the quantity and quality of poetry, both native and translated.

Venuti identifies one of the few benefits of such a peripheral situation of translated poetry: "Released from the constraint to turn a profit, poetry translation is more likely to encourage experimental strategies that can reveal what is unique about translation as a linguistic and cultural practice" (2013, 174). However, translation in translated poetry is not the only unique aspect or practice. The limited number of participants (translators, readers, publishers, etc.) makes the whole production chain more dynamic and volatile. Shifts such as introducing a new poetry series (Skalná ruža, FACE), systematic overproduction from one language (VSSS), a change in publishing focus (e.g. Drewo a srd), deliberate or involuntary production hiatus (e.g. Modrý Peter's three-year pause 2015–2017 from publishing poetry translations) result in an acceleration or decrease of variety or quantity of volumes. Another effect is multiplicity of roles at all levels; frequently, the translators work as editors, proofreaders and experts who write epilogues (like in the "Poézia" series by Skalná ruža), or they are involved in the post-production phase as reviewers, book presenters, etc. The poetry readers, publishers and other actors constitute a community that functions efficiently but has limited reach beyond its borders. Exceptions could be either rare publications, e.g. John Milton's biblical epics, Leonard Cohen's poetry testament *The Flame* (translated in 2020 as *Plameň* by Ján Gavura, FACE) or Nobel Prize awards.

Data from Table 4 and Table 6 show that Skalná ruža and FACE build primarily on diversity of languages and translators. Both presses have published translations from ten and 11 languages, including rare ones like Lusatian Serbian and Japanese, though even French has become scarce since 1989 (Palková 2024). Tables 4 and 6 also reveal that the two publishers have the lowest ratio of translators per volume (1.16 for Skalná ruža, 1.38 for FACE), which suggests that both presses have less or no preferences for translators for a particular language. The ratio of Modrý Peter (1.6) and VSSS (2.0) is higher, proving that for some languages, the presses prefer particular translators. For Modrý Peter, all five Polish translations were carried out by Peter Milčák, and three English by Marián Andričík; for VSSS, the 14 Serbian translations were done by three translators: five by Miroslav Demák, three by Martin Prebudila and three by Zdenka Valentová-Belićová, and the remaining three as collaborations by the translators mentioned earlier (in one case with the help of Anna Vršková). It also means that in the latter case, the publishing schedule is determined by the translators' offer and not solely by the manager's decisions or, in Skalná ruža's case, the editorial trio.

As the data from Table 9 show, selected books do not copy general trends in translated literature. Drawing on Johan Heilbron (1999), three stages of central-(semi)

periphery positioning of languages and cultures quite distinct from global tendencies can be observed.

Position	Central position (+10%)	Semiperipheral position (3–10%)	Peripheral position (1–3%)
Languages	English (26.13%)	Spanish (6.8%)	Macedonian (2.27%)
	Serbian (18.18%)	German (5.68%)	Ukrainian (2.27%)
	Polish (11.36%)	Hungarian (4.5%)	Croatian (2.27%)
		Norwegian (3.4%)	Russian (2.27%)
		Slovenian (3.4%)	French (2.27%)
			Lusatian Serbian (1.14%)
			Belarusian (1.14%)
			Bulgarian (1.14%)
			Romanian (1.14%)
			Japanese (1.14%)
			Swedish (1.14%)
			Egyptian (1.14%)
			Georgian (via Russian) (1.14%)
Totally out of 100%	55.67%	23.78%	20.47%

Table 9: The position and share of published translations languages of the four prolific presses (FACE, VSSS, Skalná ruža, Modrý Peter)

Comparison with data on all genres of published literary translations for 2013, as presented in Pliešovská and Popovcová Głowacky (2020, 104), shows that the source languages for translated poetry are radically different. While for all translated literary texts, the majority of which is commercial fiction, the primary source language is by far English, with almost 80% of translations being of US American or British literature, poetry translations from English form only just over a quarter of the volumes produced in 2013–2023 (26.13 %). English is the most translated language globally, and with 50–70% of translations on the European continent in the late 20th century being translations from English (Heilbron 1999, 434), the relatively small number of poetry translations by the four presses under discussion here points to a significant curatorial input springing from intense agency and personal and group involvement in the matter – a movement against the dominant flow of translations.

Table 9 also shows that the movement from the center to the periphery is gradual. The three most frequent languages, however, show their central positioning,

and combined, make up more than half of the production (55.67%). The primary position of Anglophone poetry is not surprising, though it is much less dominant than expected. The second position of Serbian poetry is due to the close relationship of the Slovak diaspora in Serbia as well as the support of VSSS for the trio of translators (Demák, Prebudila, and Valentová-Belić) in their creative intentions. The third position of Polish poetry reflects the long-term and lively tradition of reading and translating Polish literature and poetry into Slovak (Káša 2020, Obertová 2022); apart from VSSS, the publishing houses run by poets include Polish poetry in their output introducing Slovak audiences to new authors (Marcin Świetlicki, Dorota Koman, Wojciech Bonowicz, Bohdan Zadura, Justyna Bargielska, Franciszek Nastulczyk, and Marzanna B. Kielar) and new volumes by canonical authors (Czesław Miłosz, Wisława Szymborska).

OTHER PUBLISHERS OF POETRY IN TRANSLATION ACTIVE IN 2013–2023

The publishers who produced ten or fewer books of poetry translations in the researched period fall into two main categories. The first group consists of other small presses run by poets, e.g. Literárna nadácia Studňa ([Literary Foundation Studňa] seven volumes) or MilaniuM (six volumes), mainly focused on classics (Heinrich Heine, Paul Claudel, Paul Celan, or Juan Ramón Jimenéz) with occasional space for contemporary poets (Maja Vidmar and Pia Tafdrup). Due to specific difficulties, some small poetry publishers have reduced their previous frequency of poetry translations. According to the director of Drewo a srd, Peter Šulej, the reasons for this are a lack of good offers and the low quality of proposed translations, as well as the condition to publish 500 copies per volume (Šulej and Gavura 2024) set by the principal benefactor, the Slovak Arts Council. Although the Slovak Arts Council intended to move publishers towards promoting books more via advertising and live readings and, in this way, sell more copies (Kuniak, Gavura and Palec 2024), this task was unrealistic and a large number of print runs would remain unsold. Fortunately, after persistent pressure from publishers, this condition was reconsidered, and since 2024, the number of minimum copies has been reduced to 300 (Kuniak, Gavura and Palec 2024). The press Ars Poetica plays a vital role in introducing new contemporary poets from all over the world, primarily through the literary festival of the same name. The festival is held in Bratislava, and the audience can see poets perform in their native languages and find their poems in the original and in translation in the festival anthology and short online pamphlets.

The second category of occasional publishers of translated poetry is major publishing houses with approximately 200–300 books per year (fiction, non-fiction, prose, children's literature, etc.) that either choose bestselling poets of the present like Rupi Kaur (Lindeni) or past like the Beat Generation (Slovart), Charles Baudelaire, and John Donne (Ikar), or Alexander Pushkin (Perfekt). Besides commercial motivation, the publishing houses take pride in building their symbolic capital, often successfully competing in national and international literary exhibitions and competitions such as Book of the Year, The Most Beautiful Books of Slovakia, etc.[10] Two good examples

of how big commercial publishing houses contribute to the production of translated poetry is a book by the canonical 17th-century author John Donne, whose Slovak translation *Vzduch a anjeli* (Air and angels) won the Ján Hollý Award for the publisher Ikar and translator Jana Kantorová-Báliková in 2017. Another case is a publication that required immense financial backing for which a small press would not have the resources – the limited handmade edition of *Haiku v obrazoch: klasické japonské básne* (Haiku in pictures: classic Japanese poems) by Ikar in 2022 for book collectors and design enthusiasts.

CONCLUSION

Literary criticism has tried to explain the marginal character of contemporary poetry and the peripheral position of poetry translation. Some reasons are general and valid for all literature; the spread of the internet and new types of media have usurped some functions of literature and led to their marginalization (Piorecký 2016). Poetry has gone through a process that resulted in distancing poets from a once large audience. What we have witnessed since the late 19th century confirms the observations of theoreticians like Roland Barthes, who sees that modern poetry has taken on whole new dimensions and reinvented concepts of poetic structure. Modern poetry is "a monolith or a pillar which plunges into a totality of meanings, reflexes, and recollections: it is a sign which stands" (Barthes 1970, 48). The freedom of "modern" poetic speech is "terrible and inhuman" (48) and significantly reduces the number of critically engaged readers. Similar conclusions were made by Czesław Miłosz, who states that new poetry is born from a deep quarrel. Bohemian poets set up new values and rules beyond the reach and taste of the rest of the population. As Miłosz says: "the symbolists discovered the idea of a poem as an autonomous, self-sufficient unit, no longer describing the world but existing instead of the world", which eventually led to the creation of a gap and mutual antagonism between poets and the "great human family" (1983, 19).

Consequently, modern poetry attracts a much smaller number of recipients than in the past, and the interaction between the poetic community and the rest of what Miłosz calls the "great human family" is limited. Size constraints lead to the individuals involved taking on multiple roles: poets and translators become publishers and vice versa; it is not rare that the whole production process (scouting, selection, copyright and license agreement, translation and layout) is done by a single person. Size limits give birth to a phenomenon of presses run by poets, currently the backbone of original and translation poetry in Slovakia; of the 25 publishing houses in my bibliography, ten are run by poets and are responsible for an impressive 63% of all published poetry translations. The unique correlation between the number of presses and the number of books published becomes even more pronounced when we consider that the three most active publishing houses run by a single manager and poet (FACE, Skalná ruža, and Modrý Peter) produced together almost half (45%) of all translated poetry volumes.

A look at the situation in publishing poetry before 2013 shows that small presses can quickly perish, e.g., Q111 (1991–2019) or Solitudo (1992–2003), later trans-

formed into an edition within Skalná ruža. Fortunately for Slovak readers, the number of new presses with poetry translations is growing, e.g. Literárna bašta (since 2018) and Fraktál (with two new collections from Slovenian in 2023), as is the number of translators whose role in poetry promotion proves significant, as they often take the role of "ambassador" for the translated author or source culture (Kaplicka Yakimova 2015). Besides experienced translators, publishers accept younger translators who, again, frequently are active poets and apply their poetic skills to the translation process (Silvia Kaščáková, Mirka Ábelová, Viliam Nádaskay, etc.) or in-depth knowledge of poetry and translation as theory and practice (Ivana Hostová, Peter Trizna, Patrícia Havrila and others), which seems to be a decisive factor in differentiating translators of poetry from translators of other genres.

The limits of poetry, whether it is Barthes and Miłosz's words, the translatability of poetry, the economic or other aspects of the book production which we consider, do not give reasons for us to expect radical changes despite the volatile character of the poetry translation processes. The number of recipients will stay small and closed-off, like a private community, and its demands will differ from readers of other genres. The off-center position of translated poetry enables some publishing houses, their owners and managers, to assert their will and publish books they enjoy translating and producing (besides VSSS and Modrý Peter, the best example is the press MilaniuM with Milan Richter translating all six volumes of its poetry translations between 2013–2023).

Twenty-five out of all the publishers in Slovakia (around 1,250 in the 2020s; Združenie vydavateľov a kníhkupcov SR 2021–2022) represents a tiny fraction, and as expected, the pace of new volumes is slow and at most five volumes per publisher and year. This factor puts pressure on the decision-making process, and the most significant is the diversity that prevails over global translation tendencies from the Anglophone cultures. This is reflected by new volumes released in 2024: old Japanese poetry of the 10th century (Vydavateľstvo Matice slovenskej), the Italian 16th-century poet Torquato Tasso (Perfekt), the Russian post-avant-garde poet Konstantin Vaginov (Európa), the Palestinian canonical poet Mahmoud Darwish and the renowned Ukrainian poet Serhij Zhadan (both FACE). This diversity is an unexpected outcome of publishing translated poetry because even in poetry translation, translators from English are the largest group by a wide margin. It is almost as if the release "from the constraint to turn a profit" (Venuti 2013, 174) preserves, more precisely, world diversity.

NOTES

[1] *Knižná revue* (est. 1991) is a cultural magazine focused on new books and all those who are involved in the book industry; in addition to professional representatives from the ranks of writers, translators, editors, publicists, publishers, booksellers and librarians, it also addresses readership across the whole spectrum of interests and typologies of readers (Makara 2021, 41). Originally it was published by Združenie vydavateľov a kníhkupcov Slovenskej republiky [Association of publishers and book-

sellers of the Slovak Republic], an organization focused on the development and support of entities operating in the book culture and industry.

[2] Each issue of *Knižná revue* contains a detailed list of new books registered in the national distribution. The list provides classification according to a library catalogue system and serves as an information database of new books for booksellers, librarians, literary agents, and possibly readers.

[3] Amateur books are publications produced by self-publishers or publications that are not intended for or available to the general public because of their limited importance; they are not included in the national distribution and if sold then only in selected places.

[4] If not stated otherwise, all translations from the Slovak and Czech are those of the present author.

[5] Two of the pamphlets (Zoltán Lesi, 2019 and Pavlo Petrovyč Korobčuk, 2013) were turned into books (Lesi 2022, Korobčuk 2014) but in the survey they are statistically counted as one publication.

[6] A translation team is a couple or a group of translators who author the translation. For statistical purposes, each single, couple or a group of translators is counted separately as a new subject.

[7] Marián Andričík stands out not only as a translator from English (he has translated John Keats, Billy Childish, Beat Generation etc.), but also as a researcher in the field of literary and poetic translation (Andričík 2013) and a comprehensive in-depth research of Slovak poetry translated into English (Andričík 2021).

[8] See Glück (2017, 2021).

[9] From the literature under research, FACE published two volumes by Wisława Szymborska, the Nobel Prize Winner for Literature in 1996. The press did not choose the form of selected poems, the most usual manner of presenting poets as in Szymborska's case, this had already been done three times before (1966, 1999, and 2009). FACE published complete volumes of original Polish books: the 1976 volume *Wielka liczba* as *Veľké číslo* (A big number, 2016) and the 1962 volume *Sól* as *Soľ* (Salt, 2019). The sale of the books was steady and 300 copies of the volume *Soľ* were sold within three years, approximately 40 copies (out of 400) of *Veľké číslo* are still available.

[10] The exhibition "The Most Beautiful Books of Slovakia" is organized by Bibiana – medzinárodný dom umenia pre deti (International house of art for children) and the main prize is inclusion in the list of the ten Most Beautiful Books of Slovakia.

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Addressing power imbalances in research and translation studies

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Addressing power imbalances in research and translation studies

Translation studies. Power hierarchies. Academic positionality. Ethical research. Inclusivity.

The upheavals of recent years have underscored the depth of global interconnectedness, with events like the COVID-19 pandemic, advancements in AI, and armed conflicts prompting swift and unpredictable economic and social changes worldwide. In particular, the discussion delves into the power dynamics within academia, the unequal positioning of researchers in the global knowledge market, and the fundamental right of translation within economic relationships. Drawing from a conference held in Bratislava, Slovakia, in September 2023, this article addresses issues of translation and interpreting-related power dynamics against the backdrop of contemporary political, economic, and cultural developments. Speakers from diverse backgrounds explore how academia can respond to prevailing power hierarchies and disparities in visibility, and whether such structures can be challenged or altered. The discussion extends to the subjectivity inherent in research, including sources of funding, national affiliations, and personal values. Ethical considerations surrounding researcher positionality and appropriating research topics are scrutinized, with a focus on inclusivity and participation. The article emphasizes the importance of considering diverse perspectives and ensuring representation in research teams, particularly when studying topics related to minority groups. Overall, the dialogue offers insights into navigating power dynamics within academia, advocating for ethical research practices, and promoting inclusivity in scholarly pursuits.

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IVANA HOSTOVÁ

Events of the past few years have shaken numerous paradigms, highlighting the extent of global interconnectedness. The swift dissemination of COVID-19, groundbreaking advancements in AI, and alarming armed conflicts, among other occurrences, have catalyzed rapid and sometimes unpredictable economic and social transformations on a global scale. These events have evoked strong emotions, significantly influencing political sentiments worldwide.

Current events have also sparked a debate in the humanities regarding the unequal recognition of research originating from diverse regions and linguistic backgrounds. In response to the Russo-Ukrainian war, fields such as Slavic studies, East European studies, Eurasian studies, and translation studies have shifted their focus to Ukraine while simultaneously endeavoring to decolonize knowledge production. By challenging existing infrastructures and fostering internal collaboration, "peripheral" cultures (Heilbron 1999) can generate research that benefits both local and international audiences which are notoriously difficult to reach for cultures which struggle to extricate themselves from relative obscurity. The urgency of cooperation, hospitality, and ongoing interaction in addressing complex societal issues – within the realm of translation studies – and outside it is critical.

Surges and dips in positions of languages and literatures in intricate webs of cultural flows and hierarchies and the search for the reasons behind these shifts are topics frequently discussed when attempting to understand and explain power relations in regions that have experienced pronounced totalitarian regimes and navigating the unequal interactions in knowledge exchange requires actors entangled in these networks and/or engaging with them to account for their position in these landscapes – and in the research process.

This multi-perspective article is based on the discussion held at the conference "Translation, Interpreting & Culture: Virality and Isolation in the Era of Deepening Divides" held in Bratislava, Slovakia in September 2023, and addresses issues pertaining to translation and interpreting related power dynamics in the light of current political, economic, and cultural developments, including the issues of (new) isolation, rewriting, and the effect of virality in the current political, economic, and cultural situation. The panel wished to tackle the challenges posed by power hierarchies within academia, the unequal positioning of researchers within the globalized knowledge market, and the notion of translation as a fundamental right within the framework of economic relationships.

In what follows, three speakers with different geographic, economic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds approach the question of how research and academia might respond to prevailing power hierarchies and disparities in visibility, and whether such structures can be challenged or altered. This inquiry pertains to disrupting the prevailing order that disproportionately favors powerful entities over weaker ones, such as dominant languages, economically robust nations, well-developed literary traditions, historically significant regions, and research originating from prestigious universities, which may be more accessible (also production-wise) to scholars from privileged economic backgrounds.

Besides these issues, Daniele Monticelli from Tallinn University, Oleksandr Kalnychenko from V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University and Matej Bel University, and Martin Djovčoš from Matej Bel University approach the issue of how the subjectivity inherent in research (sources of funding, national affiliations, and personal values, etc.) influences the researcher's approach. They explore the ethical dimensions of researcher positionality and analyze criteria to define boundaries when appropriating research topics, aiming for inclusivity and participation. In this respect, topical issues also concern the question of whether it is appropriate for researchers to investigate the literature and cultural aspects of minority groups to which they do not belong and if so, what ethical considerations should be taken into account (e.g. should research teams be composed of members from minority groups when studying topics related to those groups?).

Finally, discussants also explore the question of when translation to or from a language with a limited number of (often bilingual) speakers is necessary and what implications the act of (non)translation has. They approach the issue of translation in the context of linguistic minorities and economically disadvantaged groups. These often receive information primarily in the majority language, since depending on translation in such cases can delay or impede access to crucial information. On the other hand, the absence of translations into minority languages risks eroding linguistic identity and cultural heritage. While volunteering may serve as a form of resistance, its long-term viability is tied to individuals' economic realities. Balancing the imperative to translate with individual economic needs over extended periods presents a complex problem that needs to be addressed on an individual basis.

DANIELE MONTICELLI

Isolation and virality in the digital age

I think that before we start using notions such as "isolation", "virality", or "connectedness", we should reflect on the way in which the new digital condition, that informs our lives, has changed the sense of these notions and the relations between them. Even more than in the context of the present wars in Ukraine and Gaza, we have experienced it in a particularly painful way in the context of another crisis – the Covid-19 pandemic. During the lockdown we were pushed into an unprecedented situation of isolation and, at the same time, hyper-connectedness. We spent many hours a day behind the screens of our computers, participating online in many events that we probably would never have physically attended, expanding our networks and connections. But we could not, I think, evade a feeling of isolation and loneliness, which for many people (particularly young people) has been a rather traumatic experience with a negative psychological impact. So, what does isolation really mean in a world where we spend an increasing amount of our time in a digitally mediated environment? How does this reshape human relations and connections? What does it mean to break out of isolation in such a context? To have thousands of followers, views, digital friends on the internet, or maybe rather to shut down our computers and get out to meet people in the real world?

It is interesting to consider what isolation and virality mean also from an academic perspective. Academic institutions have long ceased to work as isolated ivory towers. Research has become for the most part a cooperative enterprise also in the humanities and societal impact and knowledge exchange are fundamental criteria for research funding decisions. However, the present situation of permanent crisis is quite challenging for scholars, because even if we have broken out of isolation and feel a responsibility to address these crises, research is by nature a slow enterprise and it implies distance from the phenomena we study.

I believe that most of us have experienced in this respect as scholars and students in the humanities a certain hopelessness when facing the crises of our times. On the one hand, the attempt to decelerate and create the distance needed for research and understanding is constantly frustrated by the tidal waves of constantly new crises which we are immediately asked to take a position on, say something smart, and hastily rethink our research topics in order for them to continue to be relevant. But clearly a full and committed immersion into the crises makes it difficult to work, to think and to study. So, a certain degree of isolation and disconnectedness seems to be a necessary condition for research.

Isolation and decolonization in academia

The war has made the issue of isolation a particularly painful one in another respect too. Namely, while as scholars we have always promoted the values of dialogue and openness, we have now been called to enforce isolation. After Russia invaded Ukraine, some Estonian universities made the decision of excluding Russian and Belorussian student candidates from admission. With many other Estonian and international colleagues, we initially protested against this discrimination, arguing that many of those prospective students were probably young people fleeing their country due to opposing Putin's regime and the war. Why should we isolate them too? Now, more than two years have gone since this terrible war started, and I am not so sure about this argument: we have chosen a side in the war and we should do all in our power to internationally isolate its enemy and diminish its influence not only in world economics and politics, but also in culture, sports, and academia, focusing at the same time on supporting Ukrainian students and colleagues.

That's why I think we should push further in the decolonization of Slavic and East European Studies. It is not a question of "erasing" Russian culture, but of 1) critically revisiting its imperialist and aggressive aspects, just as was done for German culture after World War II, and 2) giving space and voices to the many other cultures, literatures and languages in Eastern Europe that have been until now at best considered as satellites or "little brothers" of Russia. This is an important opportunity to break out of isolation for Eastern and Central Europe as a whole and we should not miss it.

Translation: building bridges and affirming difference

Finally, recent crises have become also an occasion to rethink isolation and connectedness from the perspective of translation. In the minds of most of us, translation is pre-eminently understood as a builder of bridges, which brings cultures and

people closer to one another. This comes from our commitment with intercultural dialogue and openness to diversity as universal values. We are at present increasingly understanding that translation is not only this, as it has historically had different and also opposing functions. It has been and continues to be also an instrument to affirm cultural and linguistic identities, not a bridge, but rather a gatekeeper, which maintains the distance between the source and the target culture and language. This was the case for instance with translation from Russian into the Ukrainian in the 1920s and 1930s. The very fact of translating marked the difference of the Ukrainian language from the Russian one and the difference of Ukrainian cultural identity from Russian cultural identity – here translation both establishes and maintains a distance. That is why Ukrainian translations of Russian works, Russian-Ukrainian dictionaries and more generally books in Ukrainian were suspicious to Tsarist as well as Soviet authorities, which aimed to erase differences, making of Ukraine a "little Russia" in which translation from Russian was superfluous and harmful. Thus we must learn to notice and appreciate the cases when translation functions as a gatekeeper and generator of difference and identity (isolation in a sense) as much as we notice and appreciate the cases in which translation builds bridges, enhance connections, crosses differences.

Toward academic equality

I think we should always address the issue of privilege and marginalization in all the situations in which we are involved as scholars as well as human beings. And we should commit with equality not in the Soviet and socialist sense, but rather in the perspective of radical democracy, as it has been suggested, for instance, by the French philosopher Jacques Rancière (1991). For Rancière, equality is a presumption that we are asked to verify in every social relation (academic relations included). This verification always starts from the exposure and dispute of some wrong and inequality (specific privileges and marginalizations), that must be corrected in order for the presumption of equality to be confirmed. So equality is never a final achievement, but rather this infinite process of verification which addresses always new forms of privilege and marginalization.

As for academia, I think there is no copyright on research topics – we are all free to choose any topic, even if someone other is already working on it. But of course, we cannot ignore other work in the field, and the best way to take it into account is to start a cooperation between scholars working on the same topic. Research is a collective enterprise and we all are dwarves standing on the shoulders of giants, so it is bad that we have come to understand ideas as some kind of private property. The fundamental issues for me here are stability, inclusivity, and accessibility of research. First, in order to avoid privileges and marginalization and to secure the sustainability of research teams and fields, we need much more base funding for research in Europe, as competitive project-based research is unstable and unequally and unreasonably distributed. The majority of money for research projects does not go to the universities with the best scholars and ideas, but to the ones with the best project writers and research support structure. Second, we need universal accessibility to all research

outputs. The present open access system is a scandal as it transfers a huge amount of research money to academic publishing corporations and it is often a privilege of the richer universities, which have also the best libraries and access to the most expensive research databases. For the moment, grassroots and free sharing (including "pirate" initiatives like Sci-Hub and Libgen) is a good way of counterbalancing such inequalities, but for the future we need a new copyright system, which would grant to all of humanity unlimited and free access to all research publications. This is the prerequisite for real equality of opportunities in the academia.

The need for translation

Sometimes it makes sense to speak of the necessity of translating some text – think, for instance, of the necessity of making the laws and regulations of a given country accessible to linguistic minorities living in that country. But for instance in the case of literature, it is not so much a matter of necessity as it is of cultural richness. As we well know, literary translation not only makes a foreign text accessible to people who do not read in foreign languages, but it has always played an important role in the development of target languages and cultures too. In general, as a kind of general principle, we could say that the more linguistic variations of a certain text we have, the better. A translation is always a particular way of interpreting a text, a particular view of that text, so every new translation in principle enriches also the initial source text.

As for policy makers, I think they have the certain duty to grant translation wherever it is necessary in order to respect linguistic rights and the principle of linguistic equality. The key issues here are resources and quality – that is, policy makers have to understand that not every person who knows a foreign language is a translator/interpreter, they have to set up qualification and quality standards and be ready to spend enough money for translation and interpreting services. Volunteering is always good, as it is nice when people directly engage in community activities, and all are happier. But this cannot replace public services and professional interpreting/translation. So, when volunteering, we should at the same time commit to the struggle to raise awareness of policy makers on linguistic rights and the need to invest public money in language services, which includes investing money in the training of interpreters and translators at universities and other institutions.

As for literature, I think that we also need state policies here, which would counterbalance the mere logic of the market. State funding of culture should include support for the translation of important texts with a possibly limited readership.

OLEKSANDR KALNYCHENKO

Power hierarchies in academia

In translation studies, addressing existing hierarchies in power and visibility is crucial for fostering a more equitable and inclusive scholarly landscape. In this connection, we can discuss gender, racial, and ethnic hierarchies, postcolonial translation… But the issue I want to focus on is that translation studies often grapples with the tension between global knowledge centers (predominantly concentrated within Western academic institutions) and local knowledge (indigenous practices and

thinking on translation). Power imbalances are about whose knowledge is privileged. If we want to challenge Western-centric views of translation, we need to make other – politically previously non-Western – perspectives distinctly visible.

In the 1920s, researchers in several countries later belonging to the Eastern Bloc initiated systematic research into translation, while the West's conceptualization of translation gained momentum after World War II. However, Europe's division into capitalist West and communist East created barriers to scholarly exchange, driven by geopolitical, linguistic, and ideological disparities. Eastern and Central European nations developed their own translation traditions, but unfortunately, many key texts from this region remain untranslated in Western languages. As a result, global academic audiences have limited access to these crucial works. Despite occasional contacts, Western knowledge of Eastern and Central European translation theories remains incomplete (with a focus primarily on the Russian and Czechoslovak schools). Meanwhile, the scholars from the 1950s and 1960s in Eastern and Central Europe laid the groundwork for the translation studies of the 1970s, even if their influence has been overlooked (for details see Kalnychenko and Kolomiyets 2024). So it is crucial to recognize the impact of Eastern and Central European theoretical schools on each other and acknowledge their contribution to the field of translation studies.

According to a 2020 study by Brian James Baer, the standard narrative of the discipline's history, where TIS (translation and interpreting studies) remains predominantly represented as a Western scholarly tradition originating in the 1970s, constitutes a 'mythhistory'. Baer highlights a crucial aspect often overlooked in the dominant narrative of TIS: the geographical diversity of its origins. For instance, this dominant discourse disregards the fact that translation studies had already been introduced as a formal academic subject at the university level in Kyiv and Moscow in the early 1930s (Kalnychenko and Kamovnikova 2020; Kolomiyets 2020).

It is true that recently Central and Eastern European translation scholarship has been gaining international attention, shedding light on theoretical approaches and translation traditions that were previously overlooked in Western discourse (see, e.g., Schippel and Zwischenberger 2017). In this regard, "Nothing Happened: Translation Studies before James Holmes", a conference held at UCL, London, 9–10 November, 2023, and co-organized by the UCL Centre for Translation Studies and School of Slavonic and East European Studies, was symptomatic, as is the anthology *Translation Studies before James Holmes: A Critical Reader*, being compiled under the editorship of Kathryn Batchelor and Iryna Odrekhivska.

A good example of a work that aims to avoid Western and Anglo-American bias in TIS and to explore non-Western thinking on translation as vital components of global TIS history is the *Routledge Handbook of the History of Translation Studies* (Lange, Monticelli, and Rundle, 2024).

It also has to be stressed that scholarship is practiced at the local, national, and transnational levels, all worthy of analysis. Knowledge on translation is produced locally but validated globally. And as long as national systems of higher learning exist, one should take into account national scholarly traditions.

In the early 1970s, there were several programmatic suggestions for a separate discipline that would study translation. Thus, in 1971, Viktor Koptilov mapped literary translation studies in his article "Perekladoznavstvo yak okrema haluz filolohii" [Translation studies as a separate branch of philology], holistically elaborated in his 1972 book. Anton Popovič, in the same year, outlined his conception of the discipline to study translation, introducing his classification of translation theory as a discipline (Popovič 1971; expanded in his 1975 book). However, James Holmes's mapping as presented in his English article "The Name and Nature of Translation Studies" (1972) became foundational, in no small part due to its visualization by Gideon Toury (1995). Thus, the presentation of a scholarly work is of paramount importance and serves as an advantage in spreading ideas (see Djovčoš and Perez 2017).

Trajectories traced by theories

Research ethics in the humanities encompasses considerations of the situatedness and geopolitics of knowledge, as well as the complexities surrounding knowledge translation or non-translation and the manner in which knowledge is conveyed. The issue of research ethics in TIS covers several aspects. These include the presumed "Western" identity of translation studies and the dominant "Western" thinking in the theorization of translation (see, e.g., van Doorslaer and Naaijkens 2021), the researcher's positionality and associated power dynamics, as well as the awareness that knowledge is formed and adopted differently in different languages. By the positionality of the researcher, one means the social and political context that creates their identity in terms of race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability status and describes how their identity influences, and potentially biases, their understanding of and outlook on the world. It is also desirable to consider different languages and cultures in translation research. Additionally, ethical considerations arise when disseminating research findings and sharing research data (see, e. g., Mellinger and Baer 2021).

It is not for nothing that one of the functions of the history of translation studies is to establish historical justice. It so happened that during the 20th century the works of Ukrainian translation scholars written in Ukrainian were subjected to a double erasure. On the one hand, since the mid-1930s, when the Bolsheviks adopted the position of Russian chauvinism, it became politically incorrect to refer to and quote Ukrainian publications in the USSR, as "Ukrainian nationalism" was proclaimed by Stalin to be the main enemy of the Soviet power. On the other hand, the Cold War confrontation did not contribute to the dissemination of information in the West about the findings of Ukrainian translation scholars. Here is just one example. Professor Oleksander Finkel of Kharkiv University, the author of the first monograph in Eastern Europe on translation theory, *Teoriia i praktika perekladu* (The theory and practice of translation, 1929b), was perhaps the first scholar anywhere to treat the topic of self-translation in a systematic way. In August 1928, as a 29-year-old researcher, he wrote the article in Ukrainian, "H. F. Kvitka as the Translator of His Own Works" (13,438 words), which was printed the following year in a scholarly collection to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Ukrainian writer Hryho-

rii Kvitka-Osnovyanenko. 33 years later in Leningrad, Finkel published the article in Russian, "Ob avtoperevode" (Eng. trans. "On Autotranslation. (Based on Material Relating to Hryhorii Kvitka-Osnovianenko's Authorial Translations)", 2021; 7,184 words), which is, in fact, a self-translation of his own 1929 article (Finkel 1929a). It is to this 1962 Russian article that Anton Popovič referred both in his seminal work *Teória umeleckého prekladu* (Theory of literary translation, 1975) and in his *Dictionary for the Analysis of Literary Translation* (1976, 18), containing the entry on auto-translation, which introduced the concept in English-speaking countries. However, for some reason, none of the authors of English-language articles on auto-translation (later referred to as self-translation) in various encyclopaedias and handbooks had noticed for more than 30 years that the definition of this concept in Popovič's dictionary contains Finkel's name in parentheses. It was only in the last decade that references to his writings on auto-translation appeared in *The Bibliography on Self-translation* maintained by Eva Gentes (2023), and an English translation of Finkel's 1962 article by Mercedes Bullock was published in the journal *Translation and Interpreting Studies*. It would seem that historical justice has been done. However, this is not entirely true, as the English-speaking readership was introduced to the translation of the 1962 Russian article. When comparing the Ukrainian article of 1929 (Finkel 1929a) and the Russian article of 1962, one can see that both texts describe the same research based on authorial translations by Kvitka-Osnovyanenko, use the same numerous examples, letters, and nearly the same argumentation, with several paragraphs self-translated literally. Yet the 1929 version is twice as long and provides more details on Kvitka's personal and social motives to translate his own works; it also pays closer attention to theoretical issues. In his 1962 Russian article, Finkel quite clearly avoids discussion of any socially provocative issues, such as ethnic bilingualism, problems of stylistic differences between the Russian and Ukrainian languages, and socially distinct readership, as well as issues of censorship. Hence, although it has a more clearly delineated structure, the 1962 article lacks the young Finkel's observations on power relations. We can only hope that the first version will eventually be translated into major languages, that it will truly enter international circulation as the classic work that it is. Then we can truly say that justice has been done.

"Minor" versus "major"

The influence of languages' majority or minority status on translation practice is a fundamental point. Minority-language cultures heavily rely on translation for their informational demands, their economic, scientific, and cultural life. As Michael Cronin (2020) has remarked, the concept of minority in TIS is a dynamic and relational one. This emphasizes the fact that all languages have the potential to be minority languages. Even major world languages, like Mandarin, can occupy a peripheral position in specific domains such as science and technology. A language may be marginalized due to invasion, conquest, or subjugation by a more powerful group. Ukraine under Russian rule in the 1800s can serve as a quintessential case of such a suppression in modern culture, especially during the repressions and prohibitions of Ukrainian publications in 1863–1905. Thus, in accordance with the Valuev

circular of 1863 to the censorship committees, "the authorization of books in Little Russian with either spiritual content or intended generally for primary mass reading should be ceased" (quoted in Miller 2003, 264). Tsar Alexander II's Ems Decree of 1876 completely banned the printing of any translations into Ukrainian as well as any import of books translated into that language. The only parallel to this language ban that I am familiar with is the ban of the Irish language under Oliver Cromwell in the 17th century. Yet, in 1882, Mykhailo Starytsky published his translation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* as a separate book in Kyiv. How did he do it? The writer's daughter Liudmyla Starytska-Cherniakhivska admitted in a letter to Ivan Franko (16 December 1901) that the Ems ban had been circumvented with the help of a hundred-ruble bribe to the Kyiv censor Leimitz. To increase the likelihood of obtaining permission to publish in Russia, translators would occasionally send several versions of their translated texts under different names and pseudonyms to different censorship committees at the same time. A strategy to circumvent censorship was the publication of translations of foreign works as original works of Ukrainian literature. For instance, Borys Hrinchenko had to turn Leo Tolstoy's novella *The Prisoner in the Caucasus* into the story *The Black Sea Men in Captivity*. One other way to circumvent the ban on printing translations into Ukrainian was to publish the books abroad and then smuggle them into the Russian Empire.

All of these ways to bypass censorship barriers mean that we should take into account the non-systemic aspects of the context and the unpredictable interference of random events, that we should not ignore the fundamental importance of interpersonal relations, i.e., net of relations, acquaintances, schoolmates, neighbors, etc. in which people made favors in exchange for other favors bypassing generally accepted rules and laws in the intercourse with, e.g., censorial agencies, as Daniele Monticelli (2020) has demonstrated recently when he described such useful connections: the person responsible for reading the Estonian translated literature book series proofs at Glavlit (the Soviet censorship agency) was one of the Editor-in-Chief's university classmates which allowed for the obstacles of Soviet censorship to be lessened.

Translation can play an important role in nation-building for subjugated peoples by establishing boundaries between cultures. Whereas in the early 1920s, the common view was that translations of Russian belles-lettres into Ukrainian were a pointless waste of means and effort, as an average Ukrainian reader could read any work of Russian literature in the original, the late 1920s witnessed abundant Ukrainian translations of Russian prose, which pointed to the separateness of the Ukrainian language and culture (see Kalnychenko and Kolomiyets 2022). Recently, Lada Kolomiyets and I have been researching Russian-Ukrainian literary translation over the past hundred years (before 1917 there was practically no fiction translated from Russian into Ukrainian). This study (Kolomiyets and Kalnychenko 2024) proves that Russian-Ukrainian translation has both bright and dark sides. On the one hand, there are translations of Russian poetry by neoclassicists in the mid-1920s, philologically accurate translations of the collected works of Gogol and Chekhov, and other achievements of the Ukrainian translation school, which emerged in the late

1920s and early 1930s and was theoretically justified accordingly; on the other hand, through the Russian language and translations from Russian, the Soviet cultural space was established, which was deliberately isolated from the world cultural space and was supposed to replace it, contributing to the Russification of the Ukrainian language and the provincialization of Ukrainian literature.

When an empire disintegrates and national boundaries are redrawn, it can result in a shift where a previously dominant language becomes a minority one. The case of Russian in Ukraine after the breakup of the Soviet Union serves as an example of this phenomenon. Moreover, after 24 February 2024, Russian ended up being completely excluded from the public sphere in Ukraine. The overall rejection and denunciation of Russian literary products is now, for many in Ukraine, not just an aesthetic choice in a struggle for cultural identity. It is an existential necessity.

MARTIN DJOVČOŠ

The topic of this discussion, as suggested by its title, is virality and isolation. Nevertheless, despite the different vocabulary, I believe that once again we are talking about one of the key issues pertinent to translation studies at least since polysystems theory in the 1970s – namely the relationships between centers and peripheries. The issue might not be new, but like many other social phenomena connected with different distribution of power, it remains topical. The problem of inclusion and exclusion (of people, ideas, paradigms) has been reframed here to reflect the changing, and (although I hate to use this buzzword, the reality it names has become ubiquitous) digitalizing world. It is clear, though, that the central idea – the unequal distribution of power – remains the same, although mechanisms change. With new information and knowledge – often, unfortunately, also pseudo-knowledge – reaching global audiences literally instantly, it may become very hard to navigate the world and follow all relevant new developments. In this situation, rationalism can prove useful even today and indeed may be crucial now more than ever if we are to be able to critically evaluate rights and wrongs.

On marginalized ideas

One of the key issues here, as suggested in the introductory remarks, certainly is striving for the empowerment of marginalized groups, as the effort to give voice to the voiceless (authors, cultures, texts, organizations) has long been one of the main goals of translation and translation studies. However, I would like to speak about marginalized ideas. Ideas travel, they are not national, but can be prevented from spreading or be marginalized by nationalism/imperialism and get rediscovered again once circumstances change – e.g. when ideological restrictions are removed. One current example of this is the rediscovery of (older and current) research of translation and interpreting that originated in Ukraine and its dissemination in English (such as the publications by Kalnychenko 2023; Kolomiyets 2023; Shmiher 2014; or Odrekhivska 2021). This shift is not about ideas having existed or not, but about whether or not they have reached their audiences. Once ideas find a perceptive audience, they

may even go viral and create a new center which may lead to a revision of canonical ideas and rewriting of translation history. In the case of translation and interpreting in Ukraine and other post-totalitarian countries, this would mean freeing the history of narratives imposed on the territories dominated by the Soviet hegemony, which colonized memes of translation on this side of the Iron Curtain. I remember a conference in Kharkiv in 2019, where to my amazement scholars were talking about things I never heard before. Although most of the presentations were in Ukrainian, I was able to grasp their main message. From some presentations on translation history, it was quite clear that through reconstructing historical patterns in translation practice and agenda during the Soviet Union, one could expect the 2022 invasion to happen. After the invasion, the international translation studies community has finally become more perceptive to what they have to say. And here I wonder, does it really take a war for marginalized groups to be listened to? I also wonder how many interesting ideas there are for us to learn from in other countries that, at the moment, we do not think of listening to. All knowledge is fragmented, therefore one needs to be very careful when formulating "generally valid" statements. However, I would like to make myself very clear: ideas/narratives/stories belong to all, they are not national and they need to travel or as Vanessa Andreotti (2021) would say, dance with people in different contexts.

Empirical activism

We are talking here also about drastic and hardly "followable/predictable" changes. I believe that translation studies, particularly the examination of translation history, has the potential to forecast future developments. Translation serves as a litmus test for societal changes and advancements. It requires constant reinterpretation of facts based on new information as Karl Popper and Thomas Bayes invite us to do. The real fun of our research lies therein. Research is not static; it is extremely dynamic. As Taras Shmiher mentioned in his recent lecture in Banská Bystrica (2023), history deals with interpretation of facts. However, identity bias will always influence the process, which will, despite the effort, never be objective. And yet, I advocate for data-driven interpretation. In other words, we need to draw a strict line between activism/wishful thinking and empiricism. In my opinion, activism should always be based on empirical data. I have been engaged in an ongoing discussion with Christopher Rundle on what to do once we know or think we know something. As a brilliant historian of translation (not a historian of translation studies) focusing on fascism and para-fascism, he has a lot of knowledge about mechanisms which drive and fuel the system. Indeed, quite clear patterns are visible. What do we do when we see the same (or very similar) pattern recurring today? To know does not mean to stay impartial and quiet. Knowledge is responsibility, and translation carries a lot of knowledge since one of its main goals is to spread it (to whichever purpose this knowledge may serve).

Breaking out of isolation for translation studies as a discipline also means to abandon our comfort zones and internalize power asymmetries which, as I mentioned before, are very dynamic categories.

Deconstructing echo chambers

In other words, Andrew Chesterman's crucial question (e.g. 2011) still remains very relevant: so what? What is the ultimate goal of our efforts? Historical justice? I recall one conversation with a colleague some years ago, when I said I was sick of looking for who was "the first". He said that I may be right, but it is about looking for historical justice. I understand it as doing justice and recognizing those who were previously silenced. However, it is crucial to remember that achieving historical justice does not entail rewriting history according to our preferences. That would again mean we give our wishful thinking a superior role, and that must not happen. People frequently perceive what aligns with their desires, and scholars are not exempt from this tendency (e.g., confirmation bias and availability heuristics). Thus, we create these echo chambers where we feel comfortable. Deconstructing these chambers is what breaking out of isolation really means to me. Thus, I strongly advocate against all forms of anti-intellectualism in service of any ideology.

The issues under discussion here are only a fragment of the translation market. Significant? Probably not. Major? I doubt it. Interesting? Definitely. But let us not forget about everyday translators and interpreters and their work which, I dare say, forms the majority of the translation market and habitus and subtly shapes societies at large. Indeed, the social transformative power of translation is remarkable. For example, before 1989, literary translation formed the core of the translation market in Slovakia. Universities also focused mainly on teaching literary translation, as that was seen as the high art of translation. Certainly, it is important to note that since Slovakia, or rather Czechoslovakia, belonged to the Soviet sphere of influence, publications primarily focused on "friendly" languages and cultures – i.e. politically aligned ones. After 1989, the situation changed dramatically. Not only did the translated languages change (shifting from Russian to English), but also the nature of translation and social demand underwent dramatic changes. A shift towards "pragmatic translation" could be observed, and literary translation began to lag behind, mainly from an economic perspective. Nowadays, as Klaudia Bednárová-Gibová and Mária Majherová (2021) aptly note, literary translation has become a semi-profession. This has also been confirmed by research I conducted with Pavol Šveda (2023), showing that only 1% of translators in our sample (350) make their living solely from translating literary texts. However, up to 26% of translators and interpreters in our sample say they sometimes translate books for publishing houses. Oddly enough, based on the research, it seems that most literary translators are content with their social status and satisfied with their work. This means that we find ourselves in a rather paradoxical situation where an abundance of symbolic and cultural capital does not necessarily lead to higher economic capital. In Slovakia, this is also the case for other workers in the cultural sector. Thus, literary translation seems to be more about cultural activism than anything else. Up to 90% of translators mainly depend on technical translation. That being said, it appears that in the future, and even today, a professional translator/interpreter will be the individual who can effectively combine various translatorial activities (such as literary texts, audiovisual translation, technical translation, post-editing, interpreting, etc.) as effectively as possible.

In general, I would say that there is a call for the emancipation of the translation profession, which subsequently needs to integrate into the wider ecosystem of humanities. I think that we all need to calm down a little bit, take a deep breath, rethink our priorities, and then act accordingly. Slavoj Žižek (2009) warns that we are facing pseudo-activity, the urge to "be active," to "participate", to mask the Nothingness of what goes on. He adds that people intervene all the time, "doing something"; academics participate in meaningless "debates," etc.; but the truly difficult thing is to step back, to withdraw from it all. Thus sometimes doing nothing is the most violent thing to do. Therefore, I call for evidence based, data-driven, and possibly rational activism.

CONCLUSION

Against the backdrop of current events, this discussion addresses the issue of unequal recognition of research done in areas that are not at the center of international attention. Research originating in locales which are globally less visible, and knowledge produced in underrepresented languages, struggles to gain the same recognition as research produced in academic centers. This disparity marginalizes different perspectives and perpetuates a cycle of invisibility for these cultures within the global knowledge economy. In order to gain a more accurate understanding of the world and interactions within it, translation studies, among other disciplines, need to challenge existing power imbalances. This can be done by employing different strategies, including the promoting of inclusivity and more intense collaboration.

An important issue that emerged in this article is how to address our time of multiple crises from an academic as well as an ethical perspective. The most challenging aspect here is how to maintain the ability to see the complexity of phenomena in a situation in which we are also called to make inevitable choices that require some degree of simplification. In this respect it is interesting to observe different academic reactions to the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian aggression toward Ukraine. During the COVID-19 crisis, academics have, on the one hand, supported public policies for the containment of the virus, providing in some cases dubious "scientific evidence" grounded on insufficient data. On the other hand, academics have criticized unnecessary restrictions to the freedom and rights of people, in some cases involuntarily fueling conspiracy theories about power abuses. Only retrospectively, we are becoming able to evaluate the truths and shortcomings of these different approaches. In the same way, the Russian aggression to Ukraine splits the international academic community between the ones who unconditionally stand with Ukraine and the ones who instrumentally invoke "complexity" to claim that Russian interests should also be taken into account in order to end the war.

These differences bring to the fore the situatedness of knowledge and the embeddedness of the researcher in the culture and society where she works. Thus, scholars based in Eastern Europe obviously have a different perspective on the war than, for instance, scholars based in Slavic studies departments of US universities. Though this is probably inevitable, we should still maintain the necessary openness for international academic dialogue, instead of far too easily dismissing opinions and research results which diverge from our own. In the case of translation studies, it seems that we

are positively moving from past simplifications based on binary oppositions (source vs. target, foreignization vs. domestication, adequacy vs. acceptability) to more complex and historically-based approaches which study translation in specific cultural contexts.

The discussion also highlighted the interconnectedness of virality and isolation within translation studies. Analyzing power dynamics between centers and peripheries, marginalized ideas and empirical activism may be helpful in deconstructing echo chambers and fighting anti-intellectualism – a plague sweeping over the Western world. Marginalized groups and ideas must be heard since they are by no means national, although are often rooted in national contexts and one has to bear in mind the impact of historical injustices on shaping widely accepted narratives. Therefore, there is an increased need for evidence-based activism in the field. Translators face a lot of challenges in balancing cultural, symbolic, and economic capital. Rational activism based on empirical data within translation studies seems to be able to navigate the complexities of our ever-changing digital world.

The interplay of knowledge and power shapes and is shaped by what is translated, which is possibly most apparent in the translation of texts in social sciences and the humanities, including translation and interpreting studies. The translation of scholarly texts is integral to knowledge production, not merely an auxiliary process. It profoundly influences the field, emphasizing that translating academic work is a scholarly endeavor deserving recognition and assessment. Despite the numerous English-language handbooks and anthologies on translation studies published in the last two decades, Eastern and Central European tradition is still often overlooked. Taking into consideration the geographical diversity of the discipline's origins, even delayed translations can repair historical inaccuracies.

Translation in the humanities should be carried out not only into the languages of global distribution, but also into the native language, which is perhaps not so widely used. This is necessary not only for the dissemination of ideas, which is extremely important in itself, but also for the formation of national terminology.

Ultimately, fostering a more inclusive and diverse academic landscape is essential for addressing the challenges posed by global crises. By prioritizing ethical considerations and embracing nuanced approaches, we can better navigate the complexities of our interconnected world, ensuring that all voices contribute meaningfully to our collective understanding.

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Theater performances and their accessibility in Slovakia: Insights from the Deaf community

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Theater performances and their accessibility in Slovakia: Insights from the Deaf community

Theater. Accessibility. Participation. Inclusion. Deaf community. Theater sign language interpreting.

This article examines the accessibility of theater performances for Deaf audiences in Slovakia, with a main focus on the provision of Theater Sign Language Interpreting (TSLI). Drawing on analysis of current access strategies, the authors highlight examples of good practice aligned with more user-centred, inclusive and participatory access-provision models. Based on the results of an exploratory qualitative research interview with the key representative of the Deaf community involved in their development in the country, the main principles within these strategies are identified. Through this exploration, the article advocates for further enhancement of integrated and inclusive access strategies in Slovak theaters and further reveals the characteristics as well as the potential of professional TSLI.

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Existing mapping of sensory accessibility of cultural spaces in Slovakia suggests several examples of good practice, but also many deficiencies. Over the last decade, positive developments in the area of interest for this study have been documented in some national and independent cultural institutions, particularly in the Slovak national gallery and a few museums initiating provision of sensory access in the form of Slovak sign language translation and interpreting (Vojtechovský 2021); the *Nová scéna* (New stage) theater and a few independent theaters developing strategies in theater sign language interpreting (Secară and Perez 2022; Hefty and Hefty 2022); and two film festivals via subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing, Slovak sign language interpreting and Slovak sign language translation (Perez 2023). Identified developments, however, remain rather scarce, mostly tied to individual short-term projects of individual cultural institutions or associations of the target recipients (Secară and Perez 2022; Verebová 2023). In the case of provision of sensory access to cultural live events in particular, national legislation is almost non-existent, access provision is not regulated and professional access services lack systematic funding support (Perez 2023; Verebová 2023). Turning attention to theater performances, which are the primary focus of this study, provision of access services for audiences with sensory impairments is far from common and in general remains – in a negative sense – rather exclusive. In major productions, access to theater venues for spectators with hearing loss is significantly limited. For spectators with vision impairment, access provision in major Slovak theaters is broadly neglected.

Such a state of affairs is in contradiction with international declarations advocating for the rights of persons with disabilities, as well as with binding EU legislation aiming to ensure more accessible products and services to all. Calling for all countries to take measures to secure the right of access to all aspects of life and society on an equal basis was anchored in the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (2006), building on the principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity – including in cultural contexts. Access to culture is also considered an important area to be addressed by the EU Disability Strategy, which aims to move the EU towards participation and inclusion (Pasikowska-Schnass 2019). While the *European Disability Strategy 2010–2020: A Renewed Commitment to a Barrier-Free Europe* (2010) paved the way for accessibility to cultural organizations, activities, events and venues, the *Union of Equality: Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021–2030* (2021) aims at granting full access to and participation and inclusion in (among other areas) cultural life. Stemming from legislative and strategic support, as well as advocacy for accessibility to cultural spaces, cultural institutions in some European regions recently not only widely apply a broad scope of access strategies, but – especially in the case of theaters and opera houses – "challenge accessibility" and "experiment with how access could become integrated in the creative process" (Secară and Perez 2022, para. 2). Such creative integration of access is in good practice designed and performed in cooperation with target communities thanks to which it can lead to a unique inclusive experience for all (Di Giovanni 2022).

Despite our overall observations on accessibility of Slovak theater spaces being rather critical, in the case of accessibility of theater performances to Deaf[1] audiences, at least in some productions, creative, integrated and inclusive access strategies have been previously identified also in Slovakia (Secară and Perez 2022). The present study aims to introduce these strategies in more detail and provide insight into their initiation, development, specifics and application. Based on research interviews with the key Deaf access coordinator in Slovakia, this study reveals the potential of more inclusive and participatory access models, as well as limitations faced in the Slovak cultural context. The findings point out the potential of more user-centred and integrated access-provision models and advocate for better recognition of professional Theater Sign Language Interpreting (TSLI).

KEY CONCEPTS

The theoretical framework of the present study is based on proactive and user-centred approaches to accessibility (Greco 2016, 2018), shifting the interpretation of access provision towards inclusive (Di Giovanni 2022; Di Giovanni, Fryer, and Raffi 2023), participatory (Di Giovanni and Raffi 2022; Dangerfield 2023) and integrated (Fryer and Cavallo 2022) access-provision strategies. In the core of these shifts, understanding accessibility as a human right closely relates to interpretation of accessibility as a necessary requirement in general, as argued by Greco (2016). In the case of persons with disabilities, as he explains, "accessibility comes into play not because it is a special human right they possess, but because it demands that they be granted access to some material or immaterial goods" (11) in order to fulfil rights which are universal to all humans.

In the opinion of the authors of this study, such an interpretation is essential in opposing the hegemonic, ableism-rooted approaches to accessibility which in practice sometimes lead to insufficient and inadequate access strategies – not respecting the various abilities of varied audiences and neglecting the artistic value of joint inclusive artistic experiences. In such a traditional view, access services are commonly based on the creator's knowledge and their interpretation of users' needs, neglecting the insight, knowledge and participation of users in designing for accessibility (Greco 2018). User-centred approaches on the contrary aim to challenge the creator-user gap, invite users to share their insight and participate in access strategies and access provision (Greco 2018; Di Giovanni 2022). In the creation of inclusive design, access models aim for shared experiences where "different abilities are added value and not barriers" (Di Giovanni 2022, para. 4).

Such accessibility models then indeed call for integrated access strategies as described by Louise Fryer and Amelia Cavallo (2022). Contrary to traditional access-provision models where accessibility is often approached as an add-on at the end of the process, and the external expert is metaphorically expected to "wave their magic wand and solve the access challenges", Fryer and Cavallo (2022, 80) call for integrating accessibility into the (creative) process through collaboration between (creative) teams, persons responsible for access provision and representatives of target communities from the initiation and planning phase. Elena Di Giovanni and Francesca Raffi

aptly describe the movement from traditional access models towards inclusive practices more broadly as "shifting the attention from the barriers to the people" (2022, 169), proactively expanding beyond granting access towards participatory accessibility. In Di Giovanni's understanding, such a model refers to "the design, creation, revision and consumption of access strategies in an inclusive way" (2018, 158), bringing together audiences with different (dis)abilities in order to create shared access services and a shared artistic experience.

In the present study, the authors aim to examine access strategies applied in Slovak theaters in relation to Deaf audiences. In this respect, it attempts to reveal whether a movement towards more integrated, inclusive and participatory access can be detected, and to what extent and encountering what response. The main focus of the authors lies on the accessibility of theater performances to Deaf spectators specifically in the form of TSLI. Compared to more traditional, neutral conference-style interpreting – which is sometimes used in Slovak theaters – artistic TSLI aims to provide more than "what is said on the stage". It aims to ensure a theater experience equal to that of a hearing audience and thus bridges the linguistic and cultural differences among audiences resulting in a shared inclusive artistic experience (Gebron 2000; Richardson 2018; Hefty and Hefty 2022). TSLI applies integrated access models and places a focus on artistic expression of the interpreted performance. It is by rule designed and provided with the participation of communities, involving Deaf experts, coordinators, supervisors and actors together with theater sign language interpreters (Hefty and Hefty 2022). Based on perspectives of the key Deaf theater access expert in the country, the study will showcase how TSLI operates and what limits it faces in Slovakia.

METHODOLOGY

For the presented case study, the authors applied a qualitative research method – an exploratory personal interview conducted with Slovak Deaf community representative and Deaf access coordinator Michal Hefty (2023, pers. comm.). Hefty co-authored the first Slovak (and so far only) TSLI publication (cf. Hefty and Hefty 2022) which provides expert insights and guidance for good TSLI practice.

The primary case study interview design applied the community-engaged research model which is based on collaborative participation of Deaf community in research decision making (Singleton, Jones, and Hanumatha 2017). The design of this study was co-created and verified with members of the Slovak Deaf community in terms of the topical outline, research interest and research subject. Due to the language barrier between the authors of the study and their interviewee, as well as for the purposes of acquiring an approved sound recording of the interview, mutual communication was provided via a sign language interpreter. The interview focused on his insight and perspective as a professional access coordinator, access expert and recognized representative of the community and its culture. Interview questions aimed to gain knowledge on: 1) the accessibility strategies currently applied in Slovak theaters; 2) the perception of accessible performances by the Deaf community; 3) the challenges in access provision in the Slovak theater context.

FINDINGS

After analysis and interpretation of the transcribed recordings of the semi-structured interview with Michal Hefty, the findings presented below were classified into four categories: 1) the development of and demand for accessible performances by and from the Slovak Deaf community; 2) theater experience and audience preferences; 3) identified challenges of access provision; 4) and key limits to providing professional TSLI in Slovakia.

Development of and demand for accessible performances

There is no detailed list available of all accessible theater performances provided with TSLI, conference-style sign language interpreting or captions in Slovakia. Nevertheless, based on our own mapping via available online resources (e.g. in the news, websites and social media accounts of theaters), the quantity of accessible theatrical performances in Slovakia in general seems to be significantly low. Michal Hefty confirms that "opportunities are very limited. […] It's like a drop in the ocean compared to what's accessible to the hearing" (Hefty 2023, pers. comm.). There are more than 80 theaters in Slovakia of various kinds but only one or two theaters provide approximately one project with TSLI once per year. It is important to point out that the accessible performances take place predominantly in the capital Bratislava, therefore even though the demand for performances with TSLI by the Deaf is increasing, too large a distance demotivates or prevents potential viewers from attending them (Verebová 2024; Hefty 2023, pers. comm.). Despite Hefty's statement that "the Slovak Deaf are rather passive in their interest towards culture" (2023, pers. comm.), he has also observed a continuous increase in interest for the theater, from an average of four or five when he and his team started providing TSLI to a recent performance "attended by 80 Deaf spectators".

In terms of providing information about accessible performances, as the Slovak Deaf community is rather close, the information spread fast – nowadays mostly thanks to the Internet in general (Verebová 2024), social media, but also personal communication (Hefty 2023, pers. comm.). Another useful source for spreading information about accessible performances is the *Myslímnovinky* online periodical (cf. e.g. Slezák 2021, 10) published by and for the Slovak Deaf community.

As far as the language of accessible performances is concerned, Hefty (2023, pers. comm.) has so far collaborated only on TSLI provision for performances originally performed in Slovak, as it would be a challenge to work on a foreign-language production. As he says, however, it would indeed be an interesting experience and "the Deaf would certainly gladly accept it".

Challenges of access provision in TSLI

The research interview with Michal Hefty confirmed the partial results of our ongoing mapping of the accessibility of theater spaces in Slovakia. As identified earlier, from the point of view of theaters in the country, the greatest problem with provision of accessible performances lies in the lack of funding resources (cf. Verebová 2023, 49–50). The only theaters not to have a problem in financing accessible performances

are the larger ones, for example the national theaters (i. e. the only theatres in Slovakia which are funded by the state). The same aspect was pointed out also by this study where it was addressed as one of the crucial issues in this respect. Hefty emphasized that also limited in this context are the grant schemes and funding opportunities for professional TSLI teams and communities. The system of allocation of financial resources for communities is flawed, and the waiting periods for funding approval are long and inflexible.

The research interview also addressed the value of inclusive theater performances in Slovakia. Hefty evaluates that from his access-expert experience, inclusive performances for both the hearing and the Deaf are a very efficient way of raising public awareness about the meaning and significance of performances accessible to all. In relation to funding opportunities, he aptly adds (Hefty 2023, pers. comm.) that inclusive performances also allow for more efficient funding, with more possibilities. In spite of the effectiveness of inclusive performances, however, he points out the challenges in fully inclusive events for varied groups of people with different kinds of needs, mainly related to technical solutions. Examples of good practice in theater spaces in respect to this aspect are, unfortunately, so far non-existent in the country.

Key limits of TSLI provision

In the case of accessibility of theater performances in Slovakia, several issues have been identified, particularly in relation to the provision of access to Deaf spectators via TSLI: 1) limited preparation time leading to compromised quality in cases when an integrated approach is not applied; and 2) the limited number of qualified professional TSLI experts and interpreters in the country.

The surprising reality that Hefty and his team are the only TSLI access professionals in Slovakia (Hefty 2023, pers. comm.) explains the relatively low number (i.e. fewer than 20) of performances provided with this strategy in the domestic cultural space to this day (cf. Hefty and Hefty 2022, 63–74). Some other theater performances provided with conference-style sign language interpreting have already also taken place. At these performances, instead of an integrated approach (cf. Fryer and Cavallo 2022) and TSLI implemented with a focus on the artistic interpreting element, a traditional approach in the form of neutral conference-style sign language interpreting with one interpreter on stage interpreting "what was said on the stage" was employed.

It appears therefore that on the one hand, there are some efforts striving towards providing high-quality accessible performances, on the other there are those that are simply a box-ticking exercise in order to fulfil a requirement to provide accessible performances (Hefty 2023, pers. comm.). The results of such an approach thus might result in interpreting in which "quality, professionalism and preparation were completely absent" (Hefty 2023, pers. comm.). This just highlights the importance of an adequate and responsible approach of both the theater and the access provision coordinator. In addition, TSLI of high quality (and therefore a high-quality accessible theatrical performance or artistic interpreting in general) requires a thorough and appropriate preparation, both of which Hefty (2023, pers. comm.) greatly stressed.

CONCLUSION

The present article has examined the access strategies applied in Slovak theaters, with the main focus on accessibility of theaters to the Slovak Deaf community. It recognized several deficiencies, specifically in the limited numbers of accessible theater performances in Slovakia as well as insufficient geographical diversity. Furthermore, the study revealed restrictions within funding schemes potentially providing for accessibility – be it to the theaters, professional access teams or target communities. On the other hand, however, as identified by previous research in this context (Secară and Perez 2022; Verebová 2023), accessibility of theater performances in Slovakia to Deaf audiences is on the increase, specifically thanks to engagement, advocacy and activism by the Slovak Deaf community. In terms of TSLI in particular, it gains positive response for raising cultural awareness, accessibility and inclusive experiences in the context of Slovak theaters (Secară and Perez 2022) and obtains positive feedback from the community (Verebová 2024). In this respect, in the context of professional TSLI especially, continuous development toward user-centered and integrative access provision can be noted. Due to the drawback of an absent legislative framework and limited resources across the whole country, target viewers cannot fully nor often enjoy their human right to access cultural events.

Despite the increasing interest in and demand for accessible performances, mainly because of the lack of adequate financial support, time, access professionals and qualified TSLI interpreters, theater performances accessible to Deaf spectators remain a rare phenomenon. At this point, this case study provides more knowledge on *what, why* and *how* operates in terms of accessibility of the theater performances to Deaf spectators in Slovakia. These findings can serve as a basis for additional investigation aimed at diverse stakeholders (users, professional and non-professional TSLI interpreters, creative team members and other key theater representatives) and diverse audiences (Deaf, hard-of-hearing, hearing), motivating further research on their experience and/or reception.

NOTES

[1] The uppercase *Deaf* is used to specifically describe the Deaf community and its members actively sharing a sense of community, language (sign language), and a positive affirmation of Deafhood identity and culture, as opposed to lowercase *deaf* which understands deafness as the medical condition of not being able to hear (Vojtechovský 2011).

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MARIÁN ANDRIČÍK – TARAS SHMIHER: Translating Milton into the Slavic World

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On line 232 of *Paradise Lost*, John Milton writes of "[a] mind not to be changed by place or time", and yet, the subject of this review is arguably dedicated to a mind – since surely a literary text can be considered a kind of a mind, or a reflection of one – being altered by both place and time as it is transplanted into different cultural and linguistic contexts. In 2023, Marián Andričík and Taras Shmiher published a joint volume – in English – on translations of John Milton, *Translating Milton into the Slavic World*, which provides a look into approaches used by translators of Milton into Slavic languages. The distinction made in the title by using Slavic *world* rather than Slavic *languages* proves to be significant. The book explores how the poems *Paradise Lost* and *Samson Agonistes* were translated into multiple Slavic languages, but does not concentrate solely on linguistic aspects of translation: it pays attention not only to translation difficulties arising from strictly linguistic differences between Slavic languages and (Milton's) English, but also from differences in culture and history. Before we delve deeper into the content and the minutiae of the book, let us take a step back and introduce the volume as a whole.

Translating Milton into the Slavic World was published by a Slovak press specialising in publishing poetry and literary criticism in 2023 and was authored by a duo of translation scholars – Marián Andričík from Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice, Slovakia, and Taras Shmiher of the Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, Ukraine. It is comprised of four chapters, two by each author, and a short interview between them. The publication is introduced by a brief foreword written by Marián Andričík and closes with a summary.

The first chapter in the volume, "A Long Journey of Milton's *Paradise Lost* into the Slavic World", was authored by Andričík and provides a detailed overview of when, by whom and how the poem was translated into each Slavic language from the 18th century – when the first Russian and Polish translations appeared – until the present day, while placing emphasis on complete rather than partial translations. As Andričík states: "it is not surprising that its first translations appeared in major cultures such as Russian and Polish" (31). The long tradition of the *Paradise Lost* translation into Russian also results in many "firsts" apart from just the first complete Slavic translation – Russian also saw the first translations in prose, verse, indirect translation from Latin, and direct translation from English, etc. Translations through an intermediary language, most commonly French, and prose translations were common among early Slavic translations of *Paradise Lost* in general, owing to translational paradigms of the times (31). Some of the translations also include alterations, omissions, and additions of e.g. religious aspects due to religious differences between the source and target cultures as is evidenced, for instance, in the 18th-century Polish translation. The chapter also highlights the significance of certain translations for their target literatures, such as the 19th-century Czech translation, and discusses translation strategies

that arise from linguistic differences, such as longer lines and often expanded number of lines in translations. It is, however, worth noting that while the descriptions of the specifics of each translation are quite interesting, they would have benefited from the inclusion of illustrative examples. This lack of examples, however, is rectified in the remaining chapters, especially the last two.

The second chapter, "Trying Not to Get *Paradise Lost* in Translation" also by Andričík, includes some examples from Czech, but mainly focuses on the Slovak translation as the text presents Andričík's reflections on his own translation of the titular poem published in 2020. Andričík discusses his decision to adhere to the form of the original poem by preserving the number of lines and the blank verse of the poem. According to the author (35), neither is a common feature in Slavic translations as both are made difficult by "constitutional differences between the two languages and their different semantic density" (103–104). He also explains that the existence of the ecumenical Bible – which is the result of cooperation of all relevant Christian denominations in Slovakia and is thus generally accepted – helped him avoid tying his translation of biblical elements in the poem to any particular denomination. However, he also acknowledges most languages will not have an analogous version of the Bible available, hence translators into other languages will likely not be able to apply a similar strategy.

The third chapter is "Text through Time: Time-distant Originals, Time-distant Translations (John Milton's *Samson Agonistes* and Its Translations into Ukrainian by Ivan Franko and into Slovak by Marián Andričík)" by Shmiher. It is dedicated to the analysis and comparison of the Ukrainian translation of Milton's *Samson Agonistes* poem by Ivan Franko (1912, 1913) and Andričík's Slovak translation (2022) in terms of translation strategies and issues arising from linguistic and cultural or political differences between Milton's English and monarchical society, Franko's Ukrainian and imperial society (Austro-Hungarian Empire), and Andričík's Slovak society and republic. In regard to the latter, Shmiher hypothesizes that Franko would have understood Milton's poem better than Andričík, but ultimately finds that both translations render the text adequately and not so differently. Another hypothesis of Shmiher's is that Franko's translation would prove to be archaic after over a century, but it turns out not to be the case – Shmiher concludes that some editing "in the domains of spelling, grammatical forms, and punctuation" (62) would not be amiss, "but no essential shift in the lexical expression of the world-view is observed" (62). In other words, he believes Franko's translation is still fully functional and does not require any significant alterations or updates. As for Andričík's translation, Shmiher notes Andričík's use of abstract nouns in place of specific high-flown lexemes as an effective translation strategy to address lingual asymmetry.

The last and most expansive chapter, "'Royal English' as a Translation Problem for Kingless Nations (John Milton's Epic *Paradise Lost* via the Prism of Its Translation into Slovak by Marián Andričík and into Ukrainian by Oleksandr Zhomnir)", by Shmiher also analyses and compares two translations – Andričík's Slovak translation of *Paradise Lost* and Zhomnir's Ukrainian translation, and does so in great detail. The author focuses not only on "royal English", as the title suggests, but more generally on high-flown English as it is a highly elevated form of the language often associated with royalty. This association displays significant linguistic social stratification that is not present in either Ukrainian or Slovak. Translators are, however, "aided" by Biblical overtones Milton employed that are easier to decode in cultures "that share common a [sic] Christian collective memory" (97). Shmiher concludes that both translations largely succeed, although via different means – Zhomnir relies more on "incorporating formulaic folklore phrases and low colloquial senses", thereby contributing "to the Ukrainian linguoculture by stimulating searches for highly formal

vocabulary" (97), and Andričík relies more on neutral lexis to "construct a powerful text of glorification" (97).

As stated before, the book concludes with a brief interview in which Taras Shmiher questions Marián Andričík about his career, translation and literary interests, his translation of *Paradise Lost*, and more.

It is worth noting that three of the chapters in the book are based on previously published articles with a relatively narrow focus. A brief look into the previous versions of the articles suggests that the authors did not make many significant changes in the book version of the texts and perhaps – for the sake of greater coherence of the volume – some minor adjustments might have been made. However, the volume is unified by the thematic focus and the ruptures are not dramatic. The book then – perhaps by its very nature – also carries an increased risk of being repetitive to some degree. For instance, the first chapter discusses the history of *Paradise Lost* translations into Czech in some detail and the second chapter reiterates some of the same information in a more condensed manner. While this is certainly not the only example, it is not a significant issue as the repetitiveness is not excessive.

In conclusion, each chapter testifies to a deep interest and unquestionable expertise of the two authors. In the foreword, Andričík claims that the intention of the book is "to make a small contribution to Miltonic studies in both countries [Slovakia and Ukraine]" (7). I dare say their contribution is more than small and it represents a valuable and very interesting read for anyone interested in Miltonic translation studies.

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JÁN ŽIVČÁK: Sila a slabosť periférie. Stredoveká francúzska literatúra na Slovensku v rokoch 1900 – 2017 [The strengths and weaknesses of the periphery: Medieval French literature in Slakia in 1900–2017]
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The monograph of Ján Živčák is an original contribution to the scholarship on the presence – and present impact – of medieval texts and myths in 20th and 21st century literature. The manner in which the author approaches the given topic on the whole suggests an affinity to research and cultural production that treat the medieval period as a lasting intellectual and cultural influence on the present. In the book, this is mainly evident in the way medieval cultural characteristics are understood. However, since the book focuses on the interaction of the French medieval literature with the Slovak literary and cultural milieu after 1900, it can be also said to directly address the issues pertinent to French and Francophone medieval studies. These fields of research also analyze the historical facts and representations of the medieval period from the present day's point of view and cover their reception throughout various periods and in different contexts.

The author contributes to the said areas of research mainly by what he has concluded from analyses and reflections of concrete literary texts. He has analyzed a well thought-out set of selected literary works and studied the translational and other kinds of creative *réécritures* (i.e. non-translational metatexts) these works helped bring about in the Slovak cultural sphere. Živčák mostly focuses on four core publications: two Slovak translations of the chantefable *Aucassin et Nicolette* (the first translated in 1947 by Valentín Beniak, the second in 1975 by Mariana Pauliny-Danielisová and Gizela Slavkovská); the Slovak translation anthology *Danteho trubadúri* (Dante's troubadours, 1972, trans. Jozef Felix and Viliam Turčány); and the Slovak poetry collection by Anna Ondrejková *Izolda: sny, listy Tristanovi* (Isolde: dreams, letters to Tristan, 2010). The author compiled this corpus of Slovak literary texts in one way or another based on French medieval literature after a meticulous survey of their publication histories. Živčák summarizes the findings of the survey in an overview table on pages 36–39. Apart from factual information on the first editions of the prototexts and metatexts, the author also presents the textual genesis of the texts by employing a typology of metatexts based on the well-known classification by Anton Popovič. It is important to note, though, that Živčák's use of the system, which the Slovak translation scholar associated with the Nitra School pioneered in the second half of the 20th century, in no means indicates the backwardness of the approach or the author's ignorance of more recent scholarship. Quite on the contrary, the first chapter of the book, formulated as a kind of a theoretical prolegomenon and "a dialog with common approaches to defining and classifying interliterary relations" (16), clearly shows it was a voluntary and well thought-out decision. Using Popovič's classification in a 21st century research allows the author to steer clear of its 1960s overly scientific patina and show blank spots

in some of its original definitions. Moreover, it also demonstrates Živčák's ability to think critically, avoid absolutes, and bridge differences. As the author himself puts it, "in the humanities, many approaches are bound to one's point of view. If we are to argue that a translation is no metatext but a new original, dissimilar from the first one which itself was also a derivative, we are merely addressing one important aspect of the whole issue. At the same time, it is prudent to assume that translation is indeed a metatextual activity, related to other forms of intertextual relations" (46). The manner in which the author treats the theories of Anton Popovič is indicative of the manner in which he works with other theoretical concepts and incorporates them to his own approach. In essence, there is a constant and unique critical dialog which resonates even in the footnotes.

The terminological consistency and rich interdisciplinary and transversal movements of ideas presented in the monograph clearly result from comprehensive research. The author's complex and multi-faceted understanding of how the French medieval literature was received (not only) in modern Slovak culture shines throughout the book but is at its brightest in the theoretical chapter where even the most partial issues are explained thoroughly. Here Živčák deals for instance with the scope of French medieval literature, the ontology of the medieval text as opposed to the current one, the forms of interaction between medieval and modern cultural production, the differences stemming from different paces of development of the French and Slovak cultures, and the conservatism of medieval studies. It is perhaps as a reaction to the last of the mentioned theoretical issues that the author has chosen a mostly thematological approach to his literary analyses.

Apart from thematic analyses, however, the author also views the studied metatexts through the lens of sociology of literature. This is especially evident in the third chapter which deals with the conceptions and textological approaches adopted by Jozef Felix and Viliam Turčány in their anthology of translations of troubadour poetry. A sociological approach reveals that these two leading figures of Slovak intellectual and cultural life during the so-called normalization period adopted an editorial and translational method reflective of the era and their respective positions in the society at the time. This opens up interesting questions about aesthetic elitism, balance in cultural interchange, and a comprehensive approach to transferring Christian ideas.

The corpus of the texts analyzed by Živčák is representative in that it contains both translational and non-translational metatexts but also in that the analyzed works related to French medieval literature come from the 20th and 21st centuries. In his analyses, the author uses the comparative method. Although this is organically employed in analyses all throughout the entire book, the approach is most inventively used in the second chapter called "K dvom slovenským prekladom *Aucassina a Nicolety*" (On two Slovak translations of *Aucassin et Nicolette*). The most important criterion on which Živčák bases his comparative analyses is homogeneity. The corpus of analyzed texts can be said to be homogeneous because a) the aesthetic function plays a dominant role in all of the texts; b) all of them are poetic in nature or at least contain longer passages in verse; c) their origins are in the 12th or 13th century and roots in both historical cultural regions of France (Pays d'Oïl and Pays d'Oc).

On a personal note, it is very nice to see that the monograph also documents the author's professional and personal growth. The reader can clearly notice this development in the gradual "loosening up" of the theoretical and methodological discourse. It is also noticeable on the level of the prose which gradually becomes less structuralist and, on the contrary, deeper, more interpretative and dialogical. This culminates in the essay-like style adopted in the fourth chapter called "Tristanovský mýtus v Ondrejkovej zbierke *Izolda: sny, listy Tristanovi*" (The Tristan myth in Ondrejková's collection "Isolde: dreams,

letters to Tristan"). Such a style allows Živčák to embark upon nuanced and meditative "pilgrimages across the poetic text lead by the principles of thesis and antithesis" (13). This approach has also lead him to point out possible mystical inspirations in the motifs, as evident mostly in the treatment of love and suffering and the relationships between the lyrical subjects and Christ (Tristan).

In the bibliographical note on page 203, the author offers some hints about how his thinking on the subject developed. However, in the preface to the book, he addresses this matter directly and earnestly. He claims that researching and writing the book was a dynamic process "naturally influenced by the preferences and convictions of an early-career scholar" (13). This dynamism of evolving convictions must surely have also been caused by a certain initial awe a would-be scholar feels towards source materials, inspirational theoretical concepts, methodologies, and terminologies. This gradually makes room for the much-needed critical approaches to traditions and new, also often critical, viewpoints inspired by national and international perspectives.

One must respect and commend the author for having chosen to specialize in medieval studies, such a rare field in Slovak humanities. Apart from the standard skill set for literary studies research, focusing on the Middle Ages also entails specialized philological and exegetical knowledge about writing of the era, its literary and factual background. A literary scholar of the medieval period must also be able to combine and triangulate facts and notions from history, philosophy, cultural history, sociology, and medieval prosopography. By publishing his findings in the monograph *Sila a slabosť periférie. Stredoveká francúzska literatúra na Slovensku v rokoch 1900 – 2017*, Živčák clearly shows that he has much of the required wherewithal. Those of us who have already had the chance to cooperate with him or at least read his other publications know that he always conducts research with the utmost integrity, strives for methodological consistency, stylistic and semantic precision, and also for depth of (analytical and interpretative) conclusions. Of course, such work ethic is not exclusive to medieval studies scholars, but if they possess it, it greatly aids the deep research that the field naturally requires. This is due to the large time gap between the medieval period and present day which cannot be overcome without vigor and determination. One can easily imagine that attending the lectures and seminars of Georges Duby or Jacques Le Goff in the 1970s and the 1980s inspired the students with such vigor. However, it has always been and to date remains reinvigorated also thanks to the critical editions of medieval manuscripts, a fact Ján Živčák refers to several times throughout the book. Another thing that can spark interest in the Middle Ages is the certainty that it laid the grounds for the modern era, its humanism and in essence developed many of the values and the mental and social structures of contemporary societies. Even though Ján Živčák relies on medieval studies research and on authorities of the likes of Jacques Le Goff and Pierre Le Gentil, it is also evident that he, like Paul Zumthor, recognizes the need to understand the specifics of the period and how different in values and expressions it was when compared to today's world.

Translated from Slovak by Igor Tyšš

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SHARON DEANE-COX – ANNELEEN SPIESSENS (eds.): The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Memory

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The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Memory, edited by Sharon Deane-Cox and Anneleen Spiessens, is an ambitious and comprehensive volume that addresses the intricate relationship between translation and memory. This handbook provides a key resource for scholars across various disciplines, including translation studies, memory studies, cultural studies, and history. By bringing together an array of theoretical perspectives, methodological approaches, and case studies, this book offers a nuanced exploration of how translation shapes and is shaped by collective memory.

Throughout the book, numerous case studies provide concrete examples of the interaction between translation and memory. These case studies serve to illustrate theoretical concepts and demonstrate the practical applications of the ideas discussed in the book. By examining specific texts and translation practices, the contributors offer readers a deeper understanding of the complexities involved in translating memory.

The handbook is divided into four parts – "Translation and Memory of Trauma", "End-Users", "Figuring Memory and Translation", "Future Trajectories". Each of them presents a collection of chapters revolving around the interconnected topics of translation and memory. This review introduces one chapter from each part. The chapter selection was based on the author's interest in the topics discussed and on methodological approaches used in them.

The first part presents six chapters. Among these, the first chapter by David Bellos titled "Translating Holocaust Testimony: Translator's Perspective" draws attention not only because of the topic of the Holocaust, which is deeply rooted in the history of Slovakia as well, but also because Bellos clearly shows that translating testimonies from difficult times is no easy task for the translator either. One of the testimonies the author presents is multilingual (*Journal of Helene Berr*, 2008), which creates another layer of translation problems, and the author concludes that "even in a text that cries out to be translated and shared, there are brick walls between forms of speech, and they can never be knocked down" (21).

In the second part of the book, the pragmatic dimension of translating memory is presented. Out of the six chapters, the one by Min-Hsiu Liao titled "Reframing Collective Memory in Museums" presents a case study on how photos by John Thompson are used to re-narrate and re-interpret the history of Britain in China. With each new exhibition and intralingual translation of Thompson's notes, the collective memory is reframed to avoid colonial ways of seeing and remembering history. On the other hand, the interlingual translation into Chinese attempts to show a British photographer who empathizes with the Chinese people – a motive that is not present in Thompson's notes. Thus, the living memory of John Thompson is institutionally constructed.

Part three focuses on figuring memory and translation. These six chapters present translation as a distinct form of transcultural remembering. In "Collective and Corrective

Memories of a Classic: Oliver Twist's Memory in Translation", Julie Tarif explores different retranslations and reeditions, board and video games, and various other adaptations of *Oliver Twist*. Through a complex corpus analysis, Tarif shows how some themes are modified in order to include racial inclusiveness and queer representation into the collective memory.

The last part of the volume presents six chapters from areas that are ripe for future development and debate. Ruslan Mitkov explores an intersection between translation, memory, and technology in the chapter "Translation Memory Systems". Mitkov compares various translation memory systems and concludes that those based on the technology of deep learning seem to show the most promise. This finding holds true today in the age of AI and LLMs which are partly built upon the same technology of deep learning.

The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Memory redefines the boundaries of interdisciplinary scholarship by examining the boundaries between translation and collective memory. This volume, through its varied chapters, defines the critical role of translators as mediators of cultural heritage and history. By addressing both historical and contemporary issues, the handbook fosters a deeper appreciation of the complexities involved in the translation process. For academics and practitioners alike, this book provides essential tools and thought-provoking content that will inspire ongoing dialogue in translation and memory studies.

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MARTIN DJOVČOŠ – PAVOL ŠVEDA: Premeny prekladu a tlmočenia
[Changes in translation and interpreting]
Bratislava: Univerzita Komenského v Bratislave, 2023. 171 pp. ISBN 978-80-223-5651-0
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Martin Djovčoš and Pavol Šveda are well-known academics and active practitioners in the Slovak translation and interpreting (TAI) milieu. Together they have published several books and many articles about TAI, like *Mýty a fakty o preklade a tlmočení* (Myths and facts about translation and interpreting, 2020), *Translation and Interpreting Training in Slovakia* (2021), and several articles e.g. in *Forum* (2021) or *Stridon* (2022). Both authors are experts in the field of TAI and they focus on this changing field in their newest book in Slovak.

If we look at TAI as the axes of a graph mapping the current trends, interpreting and translation respectively represent a vertical axis – as a vivid and organic industry they react to the current situation and people's needs, adapt when needed, and are constantly moving forward. The horizontal axis in this case would be all the factors influencing the advancement of the TAI fields. Djovčoš and Šveda try to find correlations between those two axes and try to reflect a realistic picture of the situation in Slovakia. In their latest book, *Premeny prekladu a tlmočenia* (Changes in translation and interpreting), they work with data from 351 respondents to a questionnaire. The reviewed book maps the changes in the TAI field from the viewpoint of its agents, their economy, status, and methods of work as well as education provided at the Slovak universities, putting them into the context of pandemic and war in Ukraine, inflation or artificial intelligence or remote interpreting. The authors compare the newest data (2020) with the earlier facts (2015), showing how the Slovak field and market has changed and which factors influenced the current situation.

The first chapter of the book introduces readers to the legal changes applied on translation studies as a field, that as of 2018 was merged with other study fields to a single one – philology – that might influence the visibility of the field in the market. The authors also discuss attempts to change TAI from fixed trade license to a free one, the activities of civic associations of translators and interpreters, or inflation as a potential impact factor on the translation economy in the future.

The second chapter looks at the COVID-19 pandemic and its effect on TAI. The authors made a two-round survey, the first with 371 and the second with 240 respondents, who answered demographic, sociological and practice-oriented questions aiming to map changes in their working conditions etc. The rise of remote interpreting (RI) is the most significant change of the pandemic. The authors look at RI from the viewpoint of days interpreted, working environment, prices or stress – the prices were surveyed in the separate questionnaire by the Slovenská asociácia prekladateľov a tlmočníkov (Slovak association of translators and interpreters).

In the third chapter, the authors discuss the consequences of the war in Ukraine and shifts in the neighboring Slovak market, as well as the rise of public service interpreting (PSI). The authors specify the conditions of PSI education, its providers, and the readiness of Slovak interpreters for the situation,

as well as an academic focus on Ukrainian translation studies.

The fourth chapter maps the demography of Slovak translators and interpreters in 2020 with an aim to see what changed since 2015. The authors, as in their previous research, but with an extended questionnaire and different time of collection, based on the data of 351 respondents try to model profiles of translators and interpreters based on their basic characteristics (like age, specialization or working languages), technical competence (work with CAT tools), and market competence (like price-making process, price per standard page or future visions).

In the fifth chapter, the authors specifically focus on prices and the factors impacting the price-making process of translators like the number of translated pages, region, specialization or languages.

The sixth chapter looks at interpreters and the factors impacting their price-making process like the length of interpreting, number of interpreted days, minimum prices, regions, specialization or the length of experience.

The last chapter concludes the book with the evaluation of the authors' estimated development of the profession in 2017 and whether their expectations were accurate or inaccurate. They discuss external factors like public procurement, the demand of European institutions, the rise of artificial intelligence or RI, and internal factors including the ever-growing specialization, part-time translation or interpreting, the rise of the new generation or the possible cutback in study programs in Slovakia.

Martin Djovčoš and Pavol Šveda's book *Premeny prekladu a tlmočenia* is a valuable and needed map for Slovak academics and practitioners in the field of TAI, and its reflection of the past and the present shall continue in the future. It is probably one of a few sources that Slovak TAI explorers will constantly return to for a complex picture of our field.

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ADAM BŽOCH: Konverzácia a európska literatúra [Conversation and European literature]
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Bžochove armatúry

V práci Adama Bžocha o Walterovi Benjaminovi, ktorú neskôr publikoval knižne pod názvom *Walter Benjamin a estetická moderna* (1999), šlo o všeličo, ale v základe o armatúry. Pravdupovediac, nebolo mi vtedy celkom jasné, prečo sa mu zdal pojem armatúra taký dôležitý, že mu venoval toľko pozornosti, ale kvalita samotnej práce bola taká nespochybniteľná, že som o tom priveľmi neuvažoval. Trochu podobný pocit som mal aj pri čítaní monografií *Psychoanalýza na periférii* (2007), *Človek v dejinách: Johan Huizinga a humanitné vedy* (2018), ako aj najnovšej monografie *Konverzácia a európska literatúra*; tu mi však pomohol pojem *scény kultúry*, ktorý patrí do novej poetiky. Sú to totiž práve scény kultúry ako poetika festivít alebo poetika liminality, prechodov a hraníc, ktoré sú kľúčovými pojmami výskumu novej poetiky.

Jednoducho povedané, až pri *Konverzácii a európskej literatúre* som si naplno uvedomil, že jadro Bžochovho kultúrnohistorického výskumu a jeho armatúru tvorí práve spomínaný pojem. V rámci novej poetiky pritom nie je u Bžocha ústredným pojem novej poetiky textu (tu si vystačí s vcelku štandardnými pojmami) a nezaoberá sa ani pojmom poetiky udalosti (čo je naozaj originálne nová oblasť poetiky), ale jej celkom špecifickej časti scén kultúry, hoci ju tak nikde nepomenúva. No o scény kultúry fakticky Adamovi Bžochovi ide v celom doterajšom výskume. Je to dôležité povedať, lebo ide o svorník jeho vedeckej práce, ktorý ju situuje do centra aktuálneho humanitného výskumu. Bžoch sa neorientuje na výskum jednej národnej kultúry či literatúry – aj jeho kniha o konverzácii sa týka európskych literatúr a kultúr a európskej literatúry a kultúry v jej rozličných obdobiach –, ale celého súboru kultúry v jej premenlivých formách a podobách. Netýka sa len výskumu literatúry, ale vždy literatúry zasadenej do kultúry. A nezaoberá sa len centrálnymi európskymi kultúrami, ale aj ich perifériami, ako je to pri monografii *Psychoanalýza na periférii*, ktorá sa dotýka dejín psychoanalýzy na Slovensku. Tá má, tak ako mnohé iné javy v slovenskej kultúre, periférnu podobu, čo u Bžocha neznamená principiálnu diskreditáciu, ale jednoduchý fakt, že aj na periférii (z hľadiska západnej civilizácie by sme povedali na kraji sveta) sa odohrávajú zaujímavé a dôležité procesy, ktoré sa najčastejšie usilujeme nacionalizovane povýšiť, namiesto toho, aby sme sa ich usilovali pochopiť a porozumieť im. Okrem toho sa netýka len umeleckej literatúry, ale kultúry v najširšom zmysle slova, vedenia, svedectva, všetkých foriem kultúrnych udalostí a ich multikultúrnych javov medzi písmom a telom, písmom a obrazom, písmom a zvukom, písmom a priestorom, performatívnych aktivít, ich manifestovaných a latentných foriem a kontroly (forklúzie, vytesňovania).

Vzápätí po tomto tvrdení sa však treba pristaviť pri pojme armatúry. Armatúra je štepný pojem. Hovoríme o armatúre strojov, potrubí, batérií, ako aj o armatúre ako výstuži, v počítačovej grafike, v architektúre, v reštaurátorstve či o nárožnej armatúre, drôtenej výstuži správky z umelého kameňa. U Adama Bžocha znamená armatúra scén kultúry aj výstuž jeho celoživotného pohybu v kultúre.

Adam Bžoch s nami konverzuje

Autor ponúka vo svojej najnovšej monografii *Konverzácia a európska literatúra* množstvo charakteristík konverzácie a stálo by za to urobiť ich zoznam. Pre potrebu tejto recenzie však musí postačiť jeho formulácia z kapitoly „Konverzácia ako predmet interdisciplinárneho výskumu": „Ciele konverzácie sú čisto ľudské v najvšeobecnejšom a najširšom (a možno aj v tom najevidentnejšom a najbanálnejšom) význame slova ‚ľudskosť', ktorý je spätý nielen so subjektivitou, ale aj s človekom ako osobou; popri zisťovaní prípadne overovaní evidentných faktov (opäť: konverzačné lexikóny a konverzačné príručky) vytvára konverzácia spontánne priestor pre širšie – nie však bezvýhradne hlbšie – spoznávanie a vzájomné rešpektovanie špecifiky hovoriacich; predpokladá a aktívne využíva zvnútornené poznatky etikety, najmä slušnosť, komunikačnú zbehlosť a interpersonálnu prispôsobivosť, no zároveň kladie nároky aj na štýl v zmysle vonkajšej formy prejavu hovoriacich subjektov" (12).

Hádam najvoľnejšiu formuláciu však podal Adam Bžoch v rozhovore s Tinou Čornou pre *Knižnú revue*: „Možnosti civilizovania konverzačného styku písaným slovom, ale aj obrazom či hudbou nepoznajú nijaké žánrové hranice. Veď si len spomeňme na umelecké vernisáže, na ktorých sa neformálne diskutuje, alebo na tanečnú hudbu, ktorej úlohou bolo aspoň kedysi viesť k ušľachtilému medziľudskému správaniu. Samotný tanec, podobne ako záhrada alebo hra sú historickými vyjadreniami, ale na druhej strane aj peknými metaforami konverzácie ako spoločensky oblažujúceho styku" (č. 6, 2024, 6).

Ja by som pridal ešte jednu formuláciu kultúrneho historika Jana Assmanna, ktorý vychádza z pojmu *hypolepsa*. Odvoláva sa naňho aj Adam Bžoch (33), aj keď v trochu inej súvislosti. Assmann pokladá hypolepsu za figúru približovania sa pravde a túto definíciu najlepšie spĺňa práve konverzácia ako forma styku, pri ktorej nekomunikujeme intuitívnymi zážehmi ani hotovými pojmovými tvarmi, ale obkružujeme náš dialogický alebo polylogický styk v nejakej predmetnej situácii a vo vymedzenom prostredí, až kým neprídeme k nejakej, často len veľmi približnej a nehotovej formulácii.

Zaujímavý je tu samotný Bachtinov pojem dialógu (14), ktorý autor monografie spomína povedľa Mukařovského pojmu dialógu (295), no netreba zabudnúť na to, na čo poukazuje aj Bžoch, že Bachtinove karnevaly sú travestijné, nevytvárajú spoločenskú kohéziu, sú scénami kultúry nevoľných ľudí, ktorý si raz za rok prevrátia svet a stávajú sa na ten deň slobodnými, aby potom boli celý rok znovu neslobodní.

Formy konverzácie

Adam Bžoch bol vždy dôkladným autorom. Aj v tejto monografii nás sprevádza všetkými možnými formami a zákutiami európskej konverzácie, pričom konverzáciu pokladá za kultúrnu formu aj preto, že je záležitosťou styku medzi mužmi a ženami. Spomína okrajovo príbehy z *Tisíc a jednej noci*, nespomína Goetheho *Výberové príbuzenstvá*, kde ženy a muži čítajú, píšu a konverzujú, až sa ukonverzujú k smrti. Konverzačný vzťah medzi mužmi a ženami nie je však len emocionálny a erotický, ale aj poznávací a pomenúvací. A nie je len kognitívny alebo halucinačný, nielen bdelý alebo limbický, ale aj snový a, samozrejme, aj vedomý a nevedomý. Má rozmanité podoby: príbehov z talianskeho *Dekameronu*, nizozemskej, francúzskej a anglickej dvorskej a nemeckej meštianskej konverzácie. Z tohto hľadiska je zaujímavá kapitola o ruskej nemožnosti konverzácie, ktorú prečítal ako jednu zo základných ruských vlastnosti z hľadiska európskej inakosti.

Práve z tohto hľadiska možno potom konverzáciu prekvapujúco opísať ako jednu z kľúčových vlastností západnej civilizácie, ako list z Poeovej poviedky *Ukradnutý list*, ktorý nikto nevidí práve preto, že je uložený na najnápadnejšom mieste, kde ho nikto neočakáva.

Vladimír Macura a Božena Němcová

Adam Bžoch vzdal hold nielen Božene Němcovej a jej otvorenej forme konverzácie, ale pre nás najmä Vladimírovi Macurovi, ktorý položil v podstate celý základ českej novo-

dobej kultúry na konverzácii ako ludickom princípe, a to nielen v kľúčovej monografii *V znamení zrodu* (1983), ale aj v súbore fejtónov *Masarykovy boty a jiné semi(o)fejetony* (1993). Jeho česko-slovenský variant je tu veľmi pôvabný, lebo sa zakladá na mužsko/českej-žensky/slovenskej konverzácii, takže knihu Adama Bžocha môžeme chápať nielen ako príspevok k česko-slovenskej kultúrnej, ale aj erotickej konverzácii.

Slovenské spoločenstvo družnosti

Spoločenstvo družnosti slovenských romantikov pestovalo kultúru konverzácie špecifickým spôsobom. Pod egidou Ľudovíta Štúra spájalo v sebe dve konverzačné stratégie. Hore, na hrade Devín adorovalo v roku 1836 vysokú kultúru národnej konverzácie a disciplinácie; dole, v hostinci pod hradom Devín pestovalo meštiansku formu konverzácie pri jedle a pití, a to všetko sprevádzalo robenie dlhov ako zvláštny prvok uhorskej konverzačnej kultúry.

Nie celkom odlišne prebiehala konverzácia družnosti v slovensko-českom spoločenstve v roku 1841 pri plavbe českých vlastencov a vlasteniek združených okolo Bohumily Rajskej. Spájala v sebe kulinárnu formu jedenia a pitia počas plavby na Dunaji z Viedne do Prešporku, spoločnú túru so spevom na Červený kríž a Kozí vrch, spojenú s hodovaním v miestnych hostincoch, hybridne prepojenú s písanou formou výmeny listov medzi Bohumilou Rajskou a Ľudovítom Štúrom s vysokou témou vlasteneckej romantiky u jedného aj u druhej. Tu sa na scéne kultúry najvhodnejšie skĺbil slovenský a český spôsob romantickej konviviality s uhorským životným štýlom. Nemal síce povahu dvorskej konverzácie (chýbal dvor) ani finančné zázemie meštianskej kultúry a študentskej bojovej gymnastiky, ktorú by rád pestoval Ľudovít Štúr, ba ani hry na krásny život podľa Heleny Lorencovej (chýbali finančné zdroje a krásny život), ale v každom prípade to bola meštianska forma scén kultúry a konverzácie, tak ako ňou boli všetky formy scény kultúry od konverzácie medzi Van Stiphoutom a Reném v Bajzovom románe *René mládenca príhody a skúsenosti* cez romantické formy konviviality po moderne ironické hry u Timravy v novele *Nemilí*, kde má ludickú podobu živých obrazov kartovej hry alebo v poviedke *Štvorylka* u Janka Jesenského, kde má konverzácia v zmysle scén kultúry formu tanečnej výmeny pozícií. Stopy modernej konverzácie by sme napokon našli v takmer každom diele slovenskej literatúry 20. a začiatku 21. storočia. Adam Bžoch ju vyznačuje, načrtáva jej obrysy, ale analýza čaká na kultúrnohistorické spracovanie slovakistov a slovakistiek.

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SILVIA RYBÁROVÁ: Dejiny, pamäť a osobný príbeh v súčasnej francúzskej próze. Bratislava: Ústav svetovej literatúry SAV, v. v. i. – VEDA, vydavateľstvo SAV, 2024. 467 s. ISBN 978-80-224-2064-8. DOI: 10.31577/2024/9788022420648

Vo francúzskej próze sa v posledných rokoch zintenzívnil záujem o stvárnenie dejín, predovšetkým druhej svetovej vojny a holokaustu, prostredníctvom subjektívneho prežívania postáv. Narativizácia sa upína na individuálnu i kolektívnu pamäť a nastoľuje otázky týkajúce sa traumy, medzigeneračnej pamäti, identity, zabúdania či manipulácie spomienok. Téma monografie korešponduje s aktuálnym svetovým výskumom literárnych textov, v ktorých sa uplatňuje vzťah dejín a ich zobrazenia prostredníctvom individuálnych osudov. Publikácia *Dejiny, pamäť a osobný príbeh v súčasnej francúzskej próze* skúma povahu fikčného a historického naratívu o dejinách, uvažuje o modalitách tematizácie dejín z hľadiska ich stvárnenia ako osobného zážitku v dielach povojnových autorov (J. Semprun, G. Perec, A. Camus), ako aj z hľadiska stopy, resp. sprostredkovanej skúsenosti v dielach súčasných autorov a autoriek (P. Modiano, L. Binet, N. Huston, S. Germain), pričom ťažiskovo upriamuje pozornosť na románovú tvorbu S. Germain. Zároveň poukazuje na čitateľskú perspektívu vo vzťahu k stvárneným dejinám.

In recent years, French authors have become more interested in the representation of history, especially World War II and the Holocaust, through the subjective experience of characters. The narrativization is related to individual and collective memory and raises questions about trauma, intergenerational memory, identity, forgetting and the manipulation of memories. The theme of the monograph corresponds to the current worldwide research on literary texts depicting the relationship between history and its representation through individual experience. The publication *History, Memory, and Personal Narrative in Contemporary French Prose* examines the nature of fictional and historical narratives of history, considers the modalities of its thematization in terms of its representation as a personal experience in the works of post-war authors (J. Semprun, G. Perec, A. Camus), as well as in terms of the trace or mediated experience in the works of contemporary authors (P. Modiano, L. Binet, N. Huston, S. Germain), focusing mainly on the fictional works of S. Germain. It also highlights the reader's perspective in relation to the representation of history.

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Toto translatologické číslo sa zameriava na postihnutie prienikov medzi prekladom a mocou, cenzúrou a marginalizovanými identitami. Jednotlivé štúdie si všímajú, ako preklad vzdoruje štruktúrnemu útlaku, respektíve ako ho upevňuje, a to najmä v kontexte strednej a východnej Európy. Tematicky sa venujú otázkam ako kurátorstvo kultúrneho exportu, cenzúra v literárnom preklade či politická ekonómia recepcie. Zviditeľňujú tiež rolu, ktorú prekladateľky a prekladatelia zohrávajú pri formovaní teórie, a obhajujú dekolonizáciu poznania a inkluzivitu v globálnej kultúrnej produkcii.

This issue with a focus on translation studies explores the intersection of translation with power, censorship, and marginalized identities. The articles investigate how translation can reinforce or resist oppressive structures, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe. Themes include the curation of cultural exports, censorship in literary translation, and the political economy of reception. The issue also highlights the role of translators in shaping theoretical works, and advocates for the decolonization of knowledge and greater inclusivity in global cultural production.