

## Communicative Anthropology, Relativism in Literature and Modes of Censorship in Translation

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**ABSTRACT** The purpose of this study is to draw a comparative analysis between Eastern and Western cultures and ideologies during years of Cold War within the framework of cultural anthropology, descriptive moral relativism and sociological literary criticism conducting a case study on Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* and its two Lithuanian translations. For the aim to be achieved, the researchers set the following objectives to discuss reasons of censorship, to develop a theoretical framework for the analysis of censorship in translation and the meaning loss on the basis of Grice's conversational maxims, and to carry out a comparative and statistical study highlighting censorship as reflected in the two Lithuanian translations of the chosen work. The novelty of this study rests on the fact that both, older and newer translations of Kerouac's *On the Road* were translated by the same translator, who was influenced by the Soviet censorship in 1972 and felt free in 2009.

### INTRODUCTION

Translation of literary texts has always been a challenging task, thus, a number of reviews are available on the problem. Numerous publications and investigations witness the importance of the problem as censorship has been previously discussed in separate studies by Robert Looby (2015) in his *Censorship, Translation and English Language Fiction in People's Poland*, Marina Tymozcko's (2011) *Censorship Across Borders*, complex and paradoxical links between translation and censorship have been explored in a wide-ranging collection of essays *Translation and Censorship: Patterns of Communication and Interference* (2010), edited by Eilen Ni Chuilleanain et al. though scholarly articles that deal with censorship in translation focusing on particular regime do not abound in numbers, to mention a few, "Lost in Translation: Mystery of the Lost Text Solved" by Mario Livio (2011), "Foreign Literature in Fascist Italy: Circulation and Censorship" by Jane Dunnet (2002) and others. Studies on Soviet literary censorship investigate the regime itself and the way it modified literature and art. In the first comprehensive picture of So-

viet literary censorship, Herman Ermolaev (1997) highlighted the aims of censorship and its evolution during shifts in Communist Party policy. He drew on a great variety of primary and secondary sources, including over 200 literary works, the Soviet government's decrees on censorship and publishing, books and articles on censorship, political and historical writings, and personal correspondences with writers, editors, and a former high-ranking Glavlit official. Nonetheless, studies that deal with censorship and translation under Soviet regime are few, on the one hand, due to the fact that works that belong to different ideological and cultural backgrounds are rather challenging objects for a comparative analysis, particularly when they aim to discover and truly visualize the aspects of censorship in the target culture and on the other, few cases of retranslation can be found in post-Soviet countries.

Thus, this study is an original attempt to delve deeper into the problem of self-censorship. The analysis proves that the level of change due to censorship can be seen through an inevitable structural shift and meaning change when compared to the original work. This could reveal both, censorable language and ideological units alongside with the reasons that lie behind censorship.

### Problem Statement and Objectives of the Research

Censorship could be positive in that it protects people from being exposed to any material,

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which is deemed to be somehow immoral, offensive, heretical or blasphemous. On the other hand though, too much censorship does not allow for freedom of expression.

Moreover, cultural relativism says that “right” and “wrong” should only be considered within the context of the culture and environmental influences of a society. The question then arises whether American novels chronicling American history and way of life can be translated into another culture?

Thus, the aim of this study is to discuss translation in Soviet times when the meanings and explanations hiding behind implicature and irony were considered dangerous, and therefore, the concept of censorship was introduced when translating American literature of that period.

One of the objectives of this investigation is to draw a comparative analysis between Eastern and Western cultures and ideologies during years of Cold War within the framework of cultural anthropology, descriptive moral relativism and sociological literary criticism conducting a case study on Jack Kerouac’s *On the Road* and its two Lithuanian translations. Flaws in correlation between Kerouac’s *On the Road* and two Lithuanian translations are analyzed according to three categories of censorship, that is, public morality, religious and political motives for censorship within the framework of Gricean conversational maxims in order to determine how Soviet translation (1972) was influenced by censorial institutes and whether the new Lithuanian translation (2009) readjusted elements of censorship employed in the older translation. In addition, the novelty of this study rests on the fact that both older and newer translations of the subject matter were translated by the same translator who was influenced by the Soviet censorship and in 2009 had the opportunity to present American culture via translation of the same novel once again.

#### METHODOLOGY

The research was carried out within the framework of cultural communicative anthropology, descriptive moral relativism and sociological literary criticism. A comparative and statistical research highlights the elements of censorship alongside with different motivations and categorizations of censorship, not to mention the significant phenomenon of translator as censor. The

impact of Soviet censorship in translation is analyzed attempting to convey culturally and ideologically polemic message within the framework of Grice’s conversational maxims.

#### Cultural Anthropology, Ethical Relativism and Cultural Approach to Translation

The question of *culture* has been analyzed by a great number of philosophers, historians, linguists and other scientists concerning various forms and aspects of the notion. It is a complicated concept and may be approached from different sides, pointing out various aspects or forms. Peter Newmark defines culture as “the way of life and its manifestations that are peculiar to a community that uses a particular language as its means of expression,” thus acknowledging that each language group has its own culturally specific features (in Ulvydiene *Partial Answers* 2013a). All anthropologists are familiar with E. B. Tylor’s definition of culture. He discussed in his work *Primitive Culture* (1920), “Culture, or civilization, taken in its broad, ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (1). Nevertheless, the phrase “the translation of cultures”, which increasingly since the 1950s has become an almost banal description of the distinctive task of social anthropology, was not always so much in evidence (cf. by Clifford and Marcus 1986: viii).

Translation has always been related to multiple internal and external pressures such as norms, translatability and cultural approach to translation. The mentioned subjects may differ on the level of influence. However, the impact is still visible. As a Belgian translation theorist André Lefevere states, “Nobody ever speaks or writes in complete freedom, at least if they want to be listened to, read and understood” (Lefevere 1983: 25). Consequently, if the target culture is challenged in any kind of internal or external pressure, the translation faces the influence.

Since there is a significant relationship between norms and language, norms are one of the things that cause a gap between source language and target language texts.

Furthermore, two kinds of untranslatability are distinguished, that is, linguistic and cultural. Cases of linguistic untranslatability occur when there is no lexical or syntactical replacement in

the target language. Meanwhile, the cases of cultural untranslatability are related to the absence in target language of situational events from source language. To avoid both linguistic and cultural untranslatability, “translation activities should rather be regarded as having cultural significance” (Toury 1995: 53).

The study of the cultural approach was first recognized in the early nineties and is associated with the works of such scholars as Lefevere, Bassnett, and later, with Venuti. Lefevere and Bassnett claim that for them translation is contextual. Therefore, neither the source, nor the target cultures can be judged in accordance to universal standards (cf. Lefevere and Bassnett 1990: 3). What is more, they state that culture brings a significant contribution to translation, and thus, the translator does have a power to manipulate the target language text through his own ideology and his sense of the world (cf. Lefevere and Bassnett 1990: 88). Lefevere and Bassnett propose the idea that translation is not only a text accepted in a target language culture, rather, it is a new cultural construction. As a result, Lefevere and Bassnett highlight the importance of translation studies, “Now the questions have changed, the object of study has been redefined, what is studied is the text, embedded within its network of both source and target cultural signs and in this way Translation Studies has been able to utilize the linguistic approach and move out beyond it” (Lefevere and Bassnett 1990: 12).

Bassnett perceives translation as “navigating on a sea of words between languages and cultures” (Bassnett 2000: 106).

It is necessary to denote that the analyzed concepts are not only seen as an impact to translation, but they may also lead to the utilization of censorial mechanisms as an act of purifying the text. Furthermore, Toury discusses the phenomenon of ‘censorial mechanisms’ whose influence, however, can hardly ever be absolute, due to cognitive as well as behavioral factors. Toury adds that such censorship mechanisms may be applied during the translation process, since the translator is, in fact, part of the community with the shared values and experiences, as it was mentioned before (cf. Toury 1995: 277).

Furthermore, according to *conceptual relativism*, different cultures view the world through conceptual schemes that cannot be reconciled. At a more general level, Wong (1984) has argued

that at least two different approaches to morality may be found in the world, a virtue-centered morality that emphasizes the good of the community, and a rights-centered morality that stresses the value of individual freedom (in Gowans 2015). Ethical relativism affects the way many people approach public moral issues and it can be seen in the arguments concerning censorship. The level of change due to censorship can be seen through an inevitable structural shift and meaning change when compared to the original work. This could reveal both, censorable language and ideological units alongside with the reasons that lie behind censorship. In addition, writings on translation share a key insight, that is, different social worlds, including those of scholars, emerge through forms of communication in which practices, objects, genres, and texts are citable and recontextualized. This generative process mediates among the domains of knowledge and action that the communications themselves play a role in separating. The connections and differentiations, as framed by metadiscourses, construct relations of power and politics (cf. by Gal 2015).

### *Discourse Analysis*

The term ‘discourse’ is undoubtedly one of the ambiguous terms when used in the sense of linguistics. Some language scholars refer to discourse as one single conversation while others take the term even as a philosophical or political movement. However, since discourse is a form of language use and especially in this particular situation, of written language use, the term will be used as a set of written events, which take place in one particular field and are compared in a certain cultural background, that is, the translations of Jack Kerouac’s *On the Road* will be analyzed in the context of Soviet Union’s censorship.

The modern discourse analysis, on the other hand, is more of an interdisciplinary approach, which connects both linguistic analysis (on the internal level) and social analysis (on the external level). Considering the modern theory of discourse analysis, both linguistic and social analysis have a significant effect on translation. Discourse analysis seems to be the only way to ensure that source language text has been correctly understood as well as it produces an opportunity to analyze the cultural differences. Moreover, a German translation scholar Christian Nord

(1991: 1), states that discourse analysis is essential in translating a text:

*Translation-oriented text analysis should not only ensure full comprehension textual structures and their relationship with the system and norms of the source and correct interpretation of the text or explain its linguistic and language. It should also provide a reliable foundation for each and every decision, which the translator has to make in a particular translation process.*

In addition, Nord claims that discourse analysis provides a “criteria for the classification of texts for translation classes, and some guidelines for assessing the quality of the translation” (Nord 1991: 2).

Furthermore, the matters of social, cultural differences, repressions and censorship in translation become visible since discourse analysis does not have a strict framework and it is closely related to social constructionism or social power (cf. Fitch 2005: 254). In that way, the translation is being put in different cultural and social backgrounds, which allow analyzing the differences more precisely.

However, the translation process involves the matters of certain complications, which go far beyond the lexical problems. Not to mention that it includes translating ideas not presented in the text, which cover the context of the interpreted discourse, and thus, the line between what is said and what is implied disappears.

### ***Text and Context***

In his book, *Threatening Anthropology: McCarthyism and the FBI's Surveillance of Activist*, David H. Price examines how the Cold War shaped the development of American Anthropology. Moreover, objectivity in anthropological investigations is attained by entering the context of communicative interaction through the one medium, which represents and constitutes such a context— language (Fabian 2014: xv). It is generally agreed that context in translating is essential. An individual word standing by itself cannot be translated in isolation from context. What is more, a person reading a certain word only assumes the connotation he is referring to, not what is meant by the author, thus, ambiguity between source and target languages appears.

However, as there is no consensus in describing the relation between text and context, the

term of context itself lacks a definition that can be applied in any kind of translation work. Still, Paul Samuel Di Virgilio in his article “The Sense of a Beginning: The Dynamics of Context in Translation” claims that context is essential in a sense-for-sense translation as opposed to a word-for-word translation (cf. Di Virgilio 1984: 115; Ulvydiene 2013b). Thus, the author suggests that the true translation begins before the actual translation process, as it starts with context.

In translation studies, translation is usually seen as having aspects of communication. Professor at Aston University, Kristina Schäffner (2003: 88) states that both source language and target language texts are seen as used by people “in specific communicative settings for particular purposes.” Further on, she claims that there is a strong correlation between text and context in accordance to both source language and target language texts:

*Source text and target text function in different communicative contexts [...]. Texts fulfill communicative functions for their addressees [...] The new context in which a target text is used may mean that it fulfills a different function than the source text did in its own context (Schäffner 2003: 88).*

The definition reveals that there are even two kinds of contexts, the context existing in the world of the source language text creator and the target language context created by the translator, which appears from the conveyed source language meaning.

In addition, the translator is influenced by context as well. According to Toury, translation is directly related to the socio-historical contexts in which the translator operates. In these contexts, translator’s behavior is a subject to specific socio-ideological conditions and constraints. In short, it is governed by norms (cf. Toury 1995: 61-62). Also, context is understood as “internalized behavioral constraints, which embody the values shared by a community” (Schäffner 2003: 85). However, Baker thinks, “Translation scholars have so far largely ignored the obvious centrality of the notion of context to their own discipline” (Baker 2006: 321). According to her, context should not be treated as an obscurity or “a set of restrictions on what we can or cannot achieve in translation and other communicative events” but the translator rather should “recognize context as a resource” (Baker 2006: 321).

Therefore, context can provide a noticeable contribution to translation by helping solve translation problems caused by the loss of meaning from cultural differences as in the case of the translation of Kerouac's *On the Road*. What is more, the analysis of context can help understand the cases of implicature and allow solving them. At the same time, in the event of clash between the censorship and implicature, the latter may allow to break the boundaries of censorship by communicating the SL message and its context to the restricted TL audience.

### RESULTS

Grice's most influential contribution to the field of linguistics is his cooperative principle, however, the very term 'cooperation' can be ambiguous since in the case study of Kerouac's *On the Road* it was employed from a different perspective. In other words, translation and censorship in the sense that the Soviet translator was not aiming to cooperate in conveying the message from the source language text. Opting out maxims can be rather relevant to censorial translation as certain parts of a source language text are not appropriate to a target language culture. Thus, the unwanted parts of a text can be willingly eliminated in order to avoid confrontation.

If untranslatability, the conceptual relativist reasons, attests to the inaccessibility of other cultures, censorship has the consequence of damaging culture, not only at the moment when it is exercised, but in the longer term as its legacy is felt on society. Censorship can lead to the growth of anti-intellectualism in society, where writers are seen as problematic, or as enemies of the people. The official censors, whose qualifications for their role may be no more than their political allegiances or religious beliefs, distort the literary landscape, restricting normal discourse and development. The absence of information (or of correct information) also damages the collective memory and shared cultural heritage of a society (O'Leary and Lazaro 2011: 14).

In case of the necessity to censor, translation can be influenced either by external or internal censorial forces. Respectively, in the case of J. Kerouac's *On the Road* and its translations into Lithuanian, these were either Soviet authorities with the need to protect the community or the translator herself who acted as a censor. However, the analysis of the more recent trans-

lation demonstrated that certain cases of non-equivalence were not adjusted according to the source language text. This might have happened due to the lack of need to correct the translation because of its insignificance, or the equivalence between the source and target texts was restricted due to lexical differences.

Taking into consideration taboo aspects formed by the Soviet regime, some elements of the text may have been mistranslated, as they might have seemed too provocative or misunderstood. Since the first translation was released in 1972 during the Soviet regime, in addition to language that might have sounded inappropriate to target language readers of that time, there were references to political and religious topics that were forbidden as well.

Censorial aspects found in the first translation were analyzed and distinguished in this study according to the field they were censored and then discussed within the framework of Gricean maxims of quantity, quality, relation and manner. 105 examples of Soviet censorship as reflected in the translations of Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* were analyzed and commented upon. In addition, the examples were chosen according to their relevance to the topic since they most accurately represent the influence of censorship on translation. However, the number was highly influenced by the fact that Kerouac's *On the Road* is a novel about travelling, thus, religious or political topics are rarely seen throughout the whole book.

In regard to Gricean maxims, the violation of censored units were analyzed in the older translation and then compared to the newer translation in order to discuss the meaning shift between the translations and trace the ways the translator conveys the message provided in the source language text under the influence of censorship. The research has proved that the most frequently violated maxim is that of quantity, which resulted in the information loss, since most frequently used strategies for translating censorial aspects were omission, replacement or domestication.

If considering particular fields divided according to the sense of translation, most of the censored cases related to public morality were replaced by concepts that sounded natural and appropriate to the target language reader, and only a few of them were omitted. Regarding the translation of religious references, almost none of the maxims had been affected since religion

was not significant in the novel. However, almost all of the cases related to politics were eliminated that resulted in the major information loss provided in the source language text due to the importance of the political references.

Ultimately, it is obvious that when dealing with censorship it is impossible to avoid violations of maxims distinguished by Grice. According to his Cooperative Principle, participants of a conversation cooperate in order to maintain the quality of a conversation. However, if translators are censored or act as censors by themselves, they may intentionally violate the maxims by using implicature, flouting or opting out.

## DISCUSSION

### Ideology of Censorship in Translation

Translators are subjected to a variety of pressures that are linked to quality or even ideology. In this case, the ideology chosen is of censorship.

Some ideological pressures appear from cultural alterity and the friction between source language culture and target language culture, especially when the source language culture lacks or overflows with the ideology that is not appropriate to a target language culture, rises. In the case of such appearance, some translators have censorship adapted to their works while other translators, who are not in agreement that source language and target language text should lose coherence, choose to censor translations on their own, however, in the most subtle way possible. Thus, the translator is being influenced either by an external force (that is, censorial government or its institutes) or internal force (personal beliefs).

Censorship appears from the suppression of information, especially the one arising from the collision between source and target languages ideologies. Maria Tymoczko (professor at University of Massachusetts) and Edwin Gentzler (an American Germanist, a scholar of comparative literature and translation) state that during such collision, a translation is rather influenced by such external forces that in certain circumstances appear as censorship:

*Translation [...] is not simply an act of faithful reproduction but, rather, a deliberate and conscious act of selection, assemblage, structuration, and fabrication, and even, in some cases, of falsification, refusal of information, coun-*

*terfeiting, and the creation of secret codes (2002: 21).*

Therefore, from the viewpoint of the censorial target language, translation can be viewed rather as a tool for manipulation. In the case of Soviet censorship, translation is also viewed as having two kinds of purposes, that is, to protect from the unwanted influence and ideology from the source language, and to support and promote Soviet ideology and beliefs. If internal or external forces of censorial ideology affect the translator before the actual translation process, it ends up breaking the coherence between source and target texts. If censorial ideology collides with the final translation, such kind of pressure leads to rewriting the text or conscious erasure of unwanted parts of discourse. In any way censorship is seen as an expression to consolidate one's power and dominate over source language culture and ideology. Professor Peter Fawcett from University of Leicester confirms:

*Censorship has aspects of translation since this activity [...] in all its forms is frequently the site of a variety of power plays between the actors involved. Some of these are quite deliberate manipulations of the original for a wide variety of reasons, ranging from the desire to save money to the desire to control behavior, from the desire to follow perceived norms to the desire for cultural hegemony (1995: 177).*

Taking this into consideration, translation can be viewed as a rather powerful tool of power and ideology control between source and target languages. However, translation all by itself can be understood only as a partial factor in source language message transfer to target language since the translator is the one who mediates between the two texts. Inevitably, the translator who is influenced by a target language ideology makes decisions whether some parts of the text should be translated, left out, emphasized or completely eliminated. As Tymoczko and Gentzler state (2002: 18). "Partiality [it] is what differentiates translations enabling them to participate in the dialectic of power, the ongoing process of political discourse, and strategies for social change."

In addition, according to a Lithuanian publicist, poet and translator Tomas Venclova<sup>8</sup>, it is impossible to avoid deformation and gaps during the translation process. There are various aspects for breach of coherence between source and target texts, for example, "insufficient com-

petence of the translator or insufficient maturity of the very culture” (Venclova 1979: 24). However, he claims that the strongest force for the deterioration of coherence between source and target texts “is the conscious and planned ideological deformation characteristic to totalitarian countries” (Venclova 1979: 25). Since censorial translation is subjected to totalitarian countries, printed material is controlled by censorial institutes more rigorously during wartime rather than peacetime for the fear that censorial target language culture will be violated by source language ideologies. Thus, distinction of desirable and undesirable literature appears, which does not destroy the target language culture, but rather, it creates completely unique culture that arises from native tradition.

### Reasons for Censorship in the Eastern Bloc Countries

Translation and its constructions have always been viewed as having motivation behind its process. From the very beginning when a text is chosen for interpretation, the act of translation becomes a conscious process that cannot resist both cultural or political beliefs and ideologies. Therefore, in the case of censorship, internal and external forces influencing translation process are considerably intensified, especially when the translator is holding ideologies contrary to the target language regime. Thus, even though ‘politics’ and ‘translation’ are two very different concepts, they are strongly interrelated, since translation is influenced greatly by political movements and translation itself becomes subjected to political agenda and gain as in the case of the Soviet regime.

Soviet censorship appeared soon after the October revolution in 1917. Since then, the Soviet ideological terror began to control all types of media, especially the one coming from the West, since the West was the root of all ideological contradictions to the Soviet regime. This included translation in a big extent since translation acted as a mediator between the two ideologically different cultures. Soviet censorship had two purposes in the Eastern Bloc countries, that is, to eliminate all texts that contradicted Soviet political ideology, including sex-related and religious texts as well as vocabulary related to them, and to suppress cultural development coming from Western countries that were considered

poisonous. As a professor specializing in censorship in translation, Antonia Keratsa pointed out that USSR was unique as in comparison to other totalitarian countries of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. According to her, other totalitarian countries provoked self-censorship since a banned edition resulted in financial loss. As in the case of USSR, financial factor had no power, the effective way to control translation and cause self-censorship was suppression (cf. Keratsa 2005). Thus, USSR and the rest of Eastern Bloc were presented “as a unique translation zone” (cf. Baer 2011: 10).

Nevertheless, despite political and ideological reasons imposed by the Soviet regime, censorship itself did not consist only of rules enforced by censorial institutes responsible for censorship in USSR. As a result of manipulation playing a huge role in mass media, self-censorship became even more reliable than any other censorial institute.

### Translator as Censor

Self-censorship, though a rather insidious concept, is a conscious act usually influenced by external pressures. Casing point is Irena Balciūnienė’s translation of Kerouac’s *On the Road* in 1972 and in 2009. Since the translator remained the same, the censorship applied in 1972’s translation was a conscious act that resulted from suppressions implied by USSR.

However, it is worth noticing that the original work of Kerouac’s *On the Road* is already a censored version if compared to the original typescript, which Kerouac proposed to his editor. Having this in mind, Balciūnienė translated the original typescript by Kerouac too. The translator emphasizes strong language, beliefs and ideologies expressed in the book. Despite that, Balciūnienė conveys surprise in the Lithuanian translation of Kerouac’s work (1957) and its reception in the Soviet Bloc in 1972, hence, confirming the power of self-censorship at that time:

*Now it is really difficult to understand how this kind of book slipped through tank’s censorship and its web. Looking through the perspective and relying on my experience, I can firmly state that the myth of iron Moscow fist, if not always, at least very often, was leaning on cowardice of local party nomenclature and strongly thriving self-censorship. In other words, Moscow censor thought that Vilnius censor*

would be vigilant. Vilnius censor hoped that the chief editor of a press would look through publishing plan, and so on until the smallest unit. Manageress of an editorial office and substitute of editor-in-chief for translated literature just tried nothing else but put the book on a publishing list. Further on, everyone relied on somebody else's coward precaution. Having pushed the book through the eyes of hellhounds, I was asked by the press management to write an explanatory article (2010: 14–15).

Thus, the translator acting as a censor by herself self creates a controversy. As the translator, she is obliged to act as a mediator between two cultures and remain impartial in order to convey a source language message to the target language culture. However, at the same time, if considering the Soviet regime case, she was also a Soviet citizen, open to manipulation and exposed to Soviet propaganda. Therefore, as a cultural mediator, the translator faced difficulties from opposing source and target cultures. Consequently, the translator acted not only as a mediator, but also as a censor applying the act of censorship even before the translation was submitted to the editor responsible for the actual censorship. Censorship occurred “prior to publication when the cultural agent censored his or her work voluntarily, in order to avoid public censorship, and/or in order to achieve approval from the dominating sector in society” (Brownlie 2014: 206).

Therefore, it was impossible to isolate the translator from the censorship process rather, translators shared the responsibility for the censored text as well and played their role as censorial agents.

### Categorization of Censorship

There are many ways in which texts can be altered due to censorship regardless of the motivation for such alterations. Gaby Thomson-Wohlgemuth, a translator and professor at University of London, claims that in order to deal with such alterations, the problematic expression or passage should be omitted (cf. Thomson-Wohlgemuth 2007: 112).

However, this method is effective only if the issue causing a problem consists of few taboo words that are not appropriate to a target language audience. In such a case, the correlation between source and target texts can remain unbroken. As in the case of Soviet censorship, the issues causing censorship was much more seri-

ous than elimination of a few insignificant phrases or words. Censorship in this case has been categorized according to three main causes for censorship, that is, public morality, religious and political issues.

### Public Morality

According to *conceptual relativism*, different cultures view the world through conceptual schemes that cannot be reconciled. Furthermore, ethical relativism affects the way many people approach public moral issues and it can be seen in the arguments concerning censorship. It goes back throughout the history when many of artworks have been censored due to consideration that they were harmful to public.

Australian linguists Keith Allan and Kate Burridge claim that:

*The argument for censorship is that, although most readers will not be provoked to copy the violent sexual excesses [...], there may be some benighted souls who are with severe consequences for their victims and concomitant cost to the community (2006: 22).*

This covers taboo words and violent acts that hide behind ‘bad language’ in source text and are ought to be censored in target language text. However, another rather important motivation for safeguarding public morality is the description of sexual acts, which were quite a sensitive topic too. This included self-censorship as the translator attempted to escape suppressions if the translation of an unwanted book had been banned. Therefore, sexual references were removed during the process of translation. Furthermore, when considering public morality, it is worth noticing that such kind of motivation for censorship reflected cultural ideologies as well. In the case of Kerouac's *On the Road*, the final work (1957) published to the public eye was a censored version of the original typescript (1951). Nonetheless, the final work of 1957 was allowed to be printed freely without any alterations or restrictions as an opposition to the first Lithuanian translation of *On the Road* in 1972, which came, to quote Balėiūnienė, as a surprise. This can suggest that Western society was more open at the time and Soviet regime did not approve of the freedom of expression. The later translation of 2009 also highlights the difference in public morality and as to what was socially acceptable at different times. This suggests that translations between 1972 and 2009 became gradually closer in mediating a source language mes-



sage to a target language culture. As Brownlie suggests “a gradual progression of increasing explicitness with regard to sensuality can be traced through [...] the translations. This would support the notion of gradually changing social norms with respect to discursive explicitness” (Brownlie 2007: 228).

### **Religious Issues**

After the October revolution in 1917, the Bolsheviks found themselves as the ruling party, which resulted in USSR being the first state completely eliminating any kind of religion and propagating atheism. Actions towards religion were determined by the interest of censorial authorities and the main target of anti-religious campaign was the Russian Orthodox Church, which held the largest number of believers in Russia.

Despite this, the history of Russian Orthodox Church went back and forth since Joseph Stalin at one point did revive it after Nazi Germany's attack on the Soviet Union in 1941 in order to intensify the patriotic support for war against Nazi Germany. However, in 1959 Nikita Khrushchev initiated his own campaign against Russian Orthodox Church and suppressions were exercised.

It is worth noticing that the concept of translator as a censor can be applied in this case as well, since the external force of suppressions was one of the main factors to censor the translation even before the publication.

The difficulties were further enhanced when the task involved eliminating religious traces or rendering them into an atheistic viewpoint since the translation required a significant precision when considering the sensitivity of the topic rather than the linguistic structure.

### **Political Pitfalls**

Political causes, likewise the ones relating to public morality or religion, resulted in ban of translations, declining the right to translate, censoring self-censorship and suppressions. Anything that contradicted the official political views of the regime was the matter of censorship, especially in the case of foreign books that were to be translated. Before acquiring his power, Russian communism revolutionist Vladimir Ilyich Lenin stated the main motive for political censorship in USSR:

*Why should freedom of speech and freedom of the press be allowed? Why should a govern-*

*ment that is doing what it believes is right allowing itself to be criticized? Ideas are much more fatal things than guns (Lenin qtd. in Louis Edward Ingelhart 1998: 250).*

What is more, the practice of political censorship denationalized countries from Eastern Bloc and tied USSR as the unit. Thus, final translations ready for public eye were merely socialistically and politically correct interpretations of the original message produced in the source language environment. In addition, many controversial novels contradicting the Soviet ideology were censored and produced according to censorial rules, and thus, the correlation between source and target texts was in the majority of cases broken. Translation theories imposed by Russian theories were falsified as well since such concepts as ‘free translation’ were used in order to apply Soviet ideologies over the translations. Corrupted facts and political messages were transferred through censored and distorted translation.

The official reason for this, nonetheless, was to protect the Soviet society from negative influences of Western ideologies. However, as a professor at Newcastle University, Beate Müller claims, the real “intention of the authorities was to safeguard their own power over what went on in the public sphere, and that their motivation was ultimately of an ideological nature” (Müller 2004: 4). Thus, taking into consideration the censoring motives for public morality and religion, with the party's declared aim to preserve the wellbeing of society, politics-based motivation for censorship signaled nothing but the need to preserve political power.

### **NOTE**

\* *Tomas Venclova* (born 11 September 1937) is a Lithuanian poet, prose writer, scholar, philologist and translator of literature. He is one of the five founding members of the Lithuanian Helsinki Group. In 1977, following his dissident activities, he was forced to emigrate and was deprived of his Soviet citizenship.

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