TTR
Traduction, terminologie, re?daction

Censorship of Translated Fiction in Nazi Germany
La censure des traductions de fiction dans l'Allemagne nazie

Kate Sturge

Volume 15, Number 2, 2e semestre 2002

Censure et traduction dans le monde occidental
Censorship and Translation in the Western World

URI: https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/007482ar
DOI: https://doi.org/10.7202/007482ar

See table of contents

Publisher(s)

Association canadienne de traductologie

ISSN

0835-8443 (print)
1708-2188 (digital)

Explore this journal

Cite this article

Sturge, K. (2002). Censorship of Translated Fiction in Nazi Germany. *TTR*, *15*(2), 153–169. https://doi.org/10.7202/007482ar

Article abstract

This paper outlines the processes of censorship affecting translation under Nazi rule. Despite a markedly suspicious attitude towards translated fiction, the Nazi regime did not simply eliminate it. In fact, far from collapsing in 1933, the publication of translated fiction actually increased, both in absolute terms and as a proportion of all fiction, until the outbreak of war. However, if in purely quantitative terms translation flourished, the figures mask deep qualitative shifts: Jewish or anti-Nazi authors, translators and publishers disappeared; safe-selling genres came to dominate the market; and source-language preferences changed. These shifts were clearly the outcome of aggressive state measures, both classic "negative" censorship—the banning of literary producers and products or the imposition of "voluntary" self-regulation—and the energetic promotion of approved forms of translation. At the same time, more detailed study suggests that even for non-approved forms, the influence of state control was not always so clear-cut. In the case of the translated detective fiction of the time, censorship in translation was an amalgam of state intervention, pre-emptive filtering, selective readings of the source genre's ambivalences, and the "normal" pressures of the book market. Even in this totalitarian context of extreme literary control, it remains difficult to define the borders of "translation censorship" as such.

Censorship of Translated Fiction in Nazi Germany

Kate Sturge

In June 1939, a Nazi-controlled booksellers' journal voiced the following concern:

> In the years since the National Socialist revolution, German literature has been thoroughly cleansed, and all the elements alien to the German character have been eliminated. But today we are faced with a new development that in many cases tries, using the indirect route of foreign translated literature, to familiarize us with exactly the same negative values that we have just spent so much effort in removing from German literature (*Der Buchhändler im neuen Reich*, June 1939, p. 209).[1]

Such was the sense of failure expressed by Nazi bureaucrats after six years of energetically interventionist cultural policy: while home-grown literature had, they felt, been successfully brought into line with Nazi ideology, the public taste for "alien elements" regrettably remained undented. More than that, the writers seem to consider that those alien elements — the products of literary translators and their publishers— were being deliberately deployed as weapons to undermine the *Volk*, the racialized folk community invoked by Nazi discourse.

Official comments such as this are based on the assumption that translations were very numerous (or more precisely, *too* numerous) and that their content tended to be subversive to the Nazi regime. I would like in the following short overview to ask how this suspicious stance related to the actual practice of importing literature from abroad

[1] Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are my own.

in the period. I will first discuss the means by which translations were censored; secondly ask whether there was really a "flood" of translations onto the German market as the journals claimed; and thirdly raise some questions about the extent to which those translations really did import threatening, subversive content into the Nazi literary landscape.

1. Censorship of translations

The processes by which Nazi Party and state institutions tried to control literary production are very complex, and only the briefest of outlines can be offered here. State literary policy was to promote a supposedly pure "German" literature by destroying the "racially impure" in literature. This destruction (referred to as *Säuberung*, or cleansing) was not a singular, clear-cut mechanism. Instead, a whole range of institutions vied for control of literature, trying to wrest segments of power from the main body responsible, which was Goebbels' Propaganda Ministry. The Ministry could ban and confiscate existing books, carry out pre-publication censorship if it so desired, and decide on the expulsion or even death of particular writers and publishers. Ministry decisions were implemented mainly by the police, Gestapo and SS, following the secret indexes of banned books and the changing requirements of political events; all these organizations took their own initiatives as well.

Although the machinery of literary control was extensive, there was no state monopoly on literary production, and direct intervention by the state was less important than the system of self-regulation by the agents of book publishing and distribution themselves. This was achieved through the *Gleichschaltung* ("bringing into line," in other words Nazification) of the publishing, distribution, educational and library sectors. Their previously autonomous professional bodies were now policed from within by newly appointed Party functionaries and the long-standing or recently converted Nazi sympathizers among their existing staff. The organizations were centralized through compulsory affiliation to sections of the Reich chamber of culture, the RKK, in turn part of the Propaganda Ministry. RKK committees made policy decisions and rulings on individual books, but they did not have sole competence: a whole range of other government and Party institutions scrambled for power to pronounce on

the suitability of literary production.[2]

Censorship in Nazi Germany was thus implemented or attempted by a whole range of actors and was neither fully formalized nor very coherent. In particular, there was a long-running conflict between the ideologues, who wanted huge swathes to be cut through commercial book production, and the more pragmatic politicians who feared the consequences for the economy and public morale. So it came about that some Jewish-owned publishers were able to survive longer than the Propaganda Ministry had hoped—the Economics Ministry temporarily blocked their dissolution on economic grounds (Dahm, 1993, p. 48). In a longer-running conflict, Goebbels insisted that mass-produced popular fiction be provided to the troops, despite Alfred Rosenberg's protests that only the "best" was good enough for the German soldier (Barbian, 1995, p. 559).

In this confused setting, the position of translations was not greatly different from that of other writing, except that they seem to have been somewhat more strictly regulated than publishing as a whole. Translation was almost the only category of publishing officially subject to blanket pre-publication censorship as early as 1935 (the other such category was "political writing"), and in principle every potential translation of fiction was supposed to be submitted for approval by the authorities, with a summary, sample translation, and details of the author's racial background and the translation's contribution to German understanding of the foreign nation (Hall, 1994, p. 205). In Volker Dahm's analysis, this procedure was used chiefly to filter out Jewish authors from the translation market (Dahm, 1993, p. 186). For other translation proposals, it may have been more of a formality until the outbreak of war, with translated fiction actually going through the same informal, post-publication censorship as other fiction.

One special hardship did apply for publishers of translated fiction: they had to specially request foreign currency to pay royalties

[2] In the first few years of Nazi rule, censorship was carried out piecemeal by more than a dozen different bodies. Even after the consolidation of literary controls in 1936, the Ministry had to share responsibility for censorship with the Party literature section, the SS and Hitler himself (Barbian, 1995, p. 852 f.). The confusing "chaos of competences" was not restricted to cultural management, but characterized the Nazi state as a whole (see, e.g., Bollmus, 1970).

abroad. If this was refused or only intermittently granted, relations with foreign authors soon became strained, and the more successful an author was, the faster royalty debts could build up. The Vienna-based Paul Zsolnay house lost at least two high-selling translated authors this way when Theodore Dreiser and Nobel prize-winner Pearl S. Buck withdrew from Zsolnay, owed thousands of dollars in royalties (Hall, 1994, pp. 249, 279). It is typical of the system of control that decisions on currency allocation were secretive and unpredictable, facing publishers with a constant guessing game.

The outbreak of war in September 1939 marked the start of a new consistency in state policy towards translation. The position of translated literature became far simpler and far harsher: all literary imports from enemy countries were banned, with a small number of special exceptions. These were made for translations considered either useful (because they defamed the enemy country, such as A. J. Cronin's anti-capitalist novels) or else harmless—mainly because they were out of copyright, and thus did not involve the payment of copyright fees to enemy nations. In the war economy, and especially after 1942, publishing could be controlled almost completely, through the rationing of paper. Each publishing proposal was vetted for its usefulness to the war effort before being granted a paper allocation (Barbian, 1995, p. 557), and all but the most highly praised translations fell by the wayside.

Before the wartime ban on all "enemy literature" no widely available, binding index of banned translations existed. Translations were not indexed separately, and the central Propaganda Ministry index, the *Liste des schädlichen und unerwünschten Schrifttums* ("index of harmful and undesirable writing"), which included many translated works by anti-Nazi and "degenerate" authors, was kept strictly confidential. Access was limited mainly to the police. Again and again notices in the specialized press reminded booksellers and commercial librarians that they needed no index, since their "healthy instinct" should be enough to tell them which books might damage the *Volk* (Aigner, 1971, p. 946). An incorrect calculation could mean commercial disaster, with a book becoming unsaleable or even being confiscated; it could also lead to political reprisals for the publisher whose instinct had proved unreliable. Thus for both political and commercial reasons, anyone selecting translations for publication,

bookshops or commercial libraries[3] had to exercise a pre-emptive filtering largely on their own initiative. The official line remained that the new Germany had no need of such mechanical measures as actual "censorship."

In Dietrich Aigner's view, the lack of transparency and predictability in the approval processes was a strategy decision, allowing the state maximum flexibility while keeping booksellers and publishers constantly on the defensive (Aigner, 1971, p. 947). Another interpretation might stress the chaotic contingency of Nazi measures, which actually left loopholes open in many areas (see, e.g., Geyer-Ryan, 1987; Bollmus, 1970). Certainly, the commercial lending libraries—strongholds of translated fiction—were not successfully brought into line before the war, as the Nazi authorities themselves complained (Thunecke, 1987, p. 142 f.). Other texts may have slipped through the net thanks to skillful manoeuvring by their publishers, who could manipulate the presentation of a translation by means, for example, of a 'suitable' German title or blurb.[4]

To summarize, publishing of translations during the Nazi period was certainly subject to strict controls, especially after 1939—but until the war began the mechanisms of that control were fragmented and unpredictable. Outspokenly anti-Nazi foreign authors had no chance of publication, but there were few such hard-and-fast rules as that. In general the system of literary censorship, based on intimidation rather than formal bureaucracy, put the onus on publishers to decide what was an "alien element" and thus unacceptable. As we will now see, the fiction published in the period suggests that they preferred to play safe and avoid overtly political themes, withdrawing into the apparently harmless area of solidly selling "apolitical" titles.

---

[3] The state-run libraries were far more highly, and more explicitly, regulated; see Stieg (1992).

[4] Karl-Rainer von der Ahé cites the careful decisions on dust-jackets and titles that Zsolnay of Vienna used to cast the politically rather ambivalent Vilhelm Moberg in a more clearly Nazi-consonant mode. For example, the novel *Raskens. En soldatfamiljs historia* receives further military and peasant tags in translation, as well as an explicit source-culture marker: *Kamerad Wacker. Roman eines schwedischen Bauernsoldaten* (Ahé, 1982, p. 93 f.; cf. Hall, 1994, p. 195 f.).

2. The bibliographical evidence

In such a climate, spaces certainly existed for translated fiction, especially as translation's special strength lay in middle-brow, "light" fiction, an area favoured by the avowedly anti-intellectual regime. But in a setting of attempted cultural autarky, how well did translation survive as a whole? I would like now to look at some results from a database that collects fiction translated from all languages into German and published in Nazi Germany. It is derived from the belles-lettres section of the German National Bibliography in the years 1933-1944.[5]

In view of the dense net of restrictions on publishing, and particularly on translation publishing, described above, the overall trend emerging from the database may be somewhat surprising: the number of fiction translations published in the period rose more or less steadily until the start of the war. Peaking at around 540 entries per year[6] in 1937 and 1938, translation publishing did not fall back to 1933 levels until the wartime blanket bans took effect. Thus, it is not the start of the Nazi regime in 1933, but the beginning of the war that provides the caesura in German translation history of the period. Only in 1944 did translation really collapse, reaching hardly more than a third of its 1933 level with just 130 entries.

During the pre-war period, the pattern of translation publishing largely followed the trends in publishing in general, with a dip in 1934 — possibly as publishers over-anxiously tried to come to terms with the new bureaucratic and ideological requirements—and a boom in the fiction-hungry late 1930s. By no means did translation lose out to home-grown fiction over the period, as the Nazi literary managers had hoped it would. In fact, the proportion of translated fiction to fiction in general rose in the years 1933-37, from around 9 percent to nearly 12 percent, subsequently sliding to a low point of under 4 percent in 1944. In other words, the state's generally anti-translation policy only made itself felt from the late 1930s, and even then as a gradual decline rather than an abrupt incision. Whatever

[5] For more detail on this data, see Sturge (2000). 1944 was the last year covered by the National Bibliography before the collapse of the regime.

[6] All these figures must be considered approximate, if only because of gaps and inconsistencies in the collation of the German National Bibliography.

censorship was, before the war it did not remove or even dent translation activity in numerical terms. The effect is rather to be seen in the qualitative shifts below the surface of those figures.

For one thing, the proportion of reprints to first editions rose noticeably over the period. In the translation boom of 1937-38, the high reprint numbers may be partly explained by the necessity of getting books onto the market fast. More generally, publishers probably found the reissuing of approved or tolerated titles to be a safer, more cost-efficient option than going through permission procedures which were becoming more and more onerous—as before, the boundary between external and internal, or "self"-censorship would be a difficult one to draw. The increase in reprints suggests a loss of innovation and variety on the translation market, while also indicating the continued saleability of those translations still available.

More dramatically, the representation of source languages shifted over the lifetime of the Nazi regime. Around fifty source languages appear in the database, the nine most strongly represented being English (including American English), French, Norwegian, Danish, Swedish, Russian, Italian, Flemish and Dutch. In the middle range are Hungarian, Finnish, Greek, Spanish, Middle High German, Latin, Chinese, Romanian and Old Norse, with the other source languages less significant in terms of numbers. The predominance of English as a source language is very striking, with well over three times as many translations published from English as from the next largest source language, French. The only real rival to English would be the Scandinavian languages if taken as a group. Like Flemish and Dutch, the Scandinavian languages also increased their share of the market once the traditionally important source languages English and French fell out of favour from late 1939. This shift might, again, be read as an indication that a market for translation *per se* existed which was filled by "approved" sources as the disapproved ones became increasingly hard to find. Certainly the Scandinavian languages and Flemish (not Dutch) were those most favoured by the literary journals, who praised them as "Germanic," not truly "foreign" and thus acceptable—as long, of course, as the texts were not "cheap" or their authors critical of the German regime.

There are other cases where certain segments of a source language's literary exports could profit from the political climate in Germany. Making available literature of the "friendly" nations or those

under German occupation was a political priority for the regime, for a carefully chosen and presented translation could help produce useful cultural "knowledge" for the domestic population. As one literary journal typically puts it: "The point of translated literature is to show us the most profound and particular nature of the other nation" (*Die Weltliteratur*, April 1941, p. 109)—and that profound insight would demonstrate the naturalness of alliance or occupation. Accordingly, translations from Finnish, Bulgarian or Japanese received admiring reviews, and the reviewers' comments were closely bound up with practical measures. Romanian, for example, moved from almost no translations early in the period to a rush of promoted appearances after the start of the war. In the case of Italian, specific agreements were made by the Nazi authorities to promote translations in the cause of improved cultural understanding (Bauschinger, 1937, p. 497), and translations from Italian rose from only nine in 1933 to a peak of 38 in 1942.[7] Official approval of a translation meant almost automatic purchase by the state-run or *gleichgeschaltete* libraries throughout the Reich, since libraries were issued with lists of books to be stocked and recommended to borrowers (Barbian, 1995, p. 743). Clearly, state encouragement impacted on the numbers and distribution of particular types of translation. The lack of reprints, on the other hand, implies that their commercial success was less pronounced.

These examples suggest that many of the traditionally less-translated languages increased their profile largely through direct and indirect promotion by the regime. The Scandinavian languages are a somewhat different matter. They were already popular in their own right—many translated favourites, such as Selma Lagerlöf or Knut Hamsun, had arrived long before 1933, and the huge sellers like Trygve Gulbranssen's *Und ewig singen die Wälder* (*Og bakom synger skogene*)[8] were of the historical romance type long established in German translation from Scandinavian languages (Ahé, 1982). At the same time, these source languages benefited from a high level of tolerance and in several cases energetic promotion by the regime. Yet

[7] If similar arrangements were made for Spanish, they seem to have had little effect, translations from Spanish remaining rather rare throughout the period.

[8] With nearly half a million copies sold by 1944, this novel, translated from Norwegian in 1935, was one of the period's biggest literary successes, translated or not.

the biggest source language group by a very large margin was the one least promoted by the authorities, most decried by the journals, and most heavily featured in the indexes of banned or restricted works: English and American English.[9]

As regards the range of genres represented in the database, a similar contradiction emerges. Officially promoted genres like the historical novel are well represented, as are those which practically flaunt their apolitical tone, such as the animal story. And, with some exceptions, the "decadent" or "dangerously modernist" novel soon fades from view. However, despite the regime's apparent hopes for complete streamlining, the bibliography includes much that is explicitly denigrated in the Nazi-controlled literary and librarians' journals. Among translations from English it is popular, often mass-produced fiction that makes up by far the largest single group of titles. Detective stories alone account for between one quarter and one half of all the translations from English and American English in the years up to 1940 —a genre that the official reviewers found wholly trivial and pernicious.

In the extensive 1943 index of popular fiction to be kept out of the hands of young people, one third of the approximately 950 full-length books listed are translated detective or adventure stories, while another third are non-translations with obviously British or American settings — imitations of the Anglo-American imported genre. The existence of this index shows the official opprobrium attached to translated popular fiction; however, the need for it after ten years of regulation underlines the unbroken success of such translation in the face of official policy.

Did this success, however, constitute a "flood" with subversive potential? That is the claim pervading Nazi translation criticism, even when approval is given to individual translation products (Sturge, 1999). While the paranoid language of "flooding" casts more light on the racist discourse of the era than on translation publishing itself, there is no doubt that at least in numerical terms,

[9] This is not to say that translations from English were always negatively received. Many were promoted by the regime (Sturge, 2000, p. 45 f. and ch. 4 on the promotion of Hugh Walpole's Lake District novels). However, a wary or hostile stance was the norm in literary reviews.

translations did retain a strong presence right up to the outbreak of war, and even rose for much of that time. If Nazi commentators considered this fact a dangerous failure of control, possibly they were right: translations could potentially offer readers a chance to reject the sealed borders of the totalitarian world, a glimpse of other imaginable realities.

Perhaps as importantly, the survival of translation suggests a need for a sense of cultural normality, of business as usual. It could most certainly be argued (e.g., Schäfer, 1981) that for those Germans not immediately threatened by Nazism, the feeling of cultural normality —and for twentieth-century German-language readers that included access to imported fiction—was one of the most important pillars of the system's success. However, this is another, and much wider, historical debate. For now, I'd like to return to the opening quotation and address the question of how alien those "alien products," translations, really were.

3. Translated detective fiction

As a case in point, I will take detective fiction translated from English. As noted above, this was one of the largest segments of the translation market and also among those most venomously attacked in the Nazi press. A showcase of despicable western rationalism, it was declared utterly foreign to the true German soul and a "threat to the moral and ethical backbone of the nation" (*Großdeutsches Leihbüchereiblatt*, 1937/18, p. 10). Yet far from being stamped out, the segment grew, from around 100 book-length translations published during 1933 to a peak of around 230 in 1938. Even after that, its descent was only gradual, finally falling to around 50 in 1944. For most of the period the great majority of the translations were from English, with a small contingent of French, Scandinavian and Italian sources, the latter two gaining ground after 1939. Translations from English made up around 40 percent of all full-length detective novels published in 1933-35, and retained 25 percent of the market even in the subsequent years when domestic production was rocketing.[10] As one of the many factors in the translated genre's continued success, I would like to argue that the detail of translation choices could lessen a text's dissonance with the

[10] Non-translated detective fiction was heavily dominated by the Anglo-American model until stricter wartime regulation finally carved a space for the ideologically assimilated, fascist detective novel described by Rix (1978).

official ideology and thus improve its chances of being tolerated by the regime.

The following comments are based on a study of ten source texts and their translations (Sturge, 2000, ch. 5). They were all first published between 1933 and 1939 in a single series by the formerly renowned liberal Berlin publisher Ullstein. Jewish-owned, the Ullstein house was expropriated in 1934 and from then on controlled by the Nazi Party publisher Eher, though the famous Ullstein name was retained until 1937 (Barbian, 1995, p. 695). Despite a standardized series format in the binding and number of pages, the ten texts do not follow a consistent line in their translation strategies. For example, some condense the source text to barely half its length, while others retain almost the whole of the original. Some make generous use of anglicisms and transfer titles like "Miss" and "Sir," while others assimilate them to German wordings. Inconsistency like this indicates the lack of strict or formulaic rules for adaptation within the series, and indeed the overall flavour of the translations in the series differs greatly.

On the other hand, certain features regularly recur. Unsurprisingly, all the translations avoid overtly political comments—one source novel contains a direct reference to the Nazis, which is unceremoniously cut—but in general the sources offer very few allusions to the world outside the arena of detection, and in this respect, at least, there is little for the self-censoring translator to do.

Perhaps more interesting are the aspects we may view as political in a much wider sense. In particular, it has often been argued (for example by Stephen Knight, 1980) that the classic or "golden-age" detective novel as a genre tends towards authoritarianism. The genre model relies on tropes like the invasion of chaos in the form of a dangerous, often racialized outsider and the welcome return of order ushered in by an omnipotent detective hero. These bare generic bones are often softened—and arguably somewhat undermined—in the source texts by a proliferation of "background noise" including irony, epistemological doubt, social comment and humorous characterization. In the ten translations examined, such "extraneous" elements are drastically slimmed down or even entirely eliminated, allowing the authoritarian skeleton to shine through more strongly. This is not necessarily a matter of political expediency; after all, the "rules" of the source genre as laid down by an American writer of the day insist that

extraneous matter muddies the pure puzzle by distracting from the central plot (Van Dine, 1928). To this extent, the translated genre simply follows the imported formula more strictly than its source.

However, not all areas of extraneous detail are treated equally harshly. All the translators take a particularly heavy hand to the source texts' use of love interest. Normally this entails minor details simply being shaved away, for example the source texts' surprisingly frequent references to ladies' underwear, which are always deleted. In some cases the love story is severely condensed to take a far smaller role; in others it is retained but the relationship between the lovers is minutely altered—so that the man becomes more masterful, the woman more passive. In two of the translations, the contribution of a female co-detective is almost entirely excised, but such drastic action is unusual. More typical are the kinds of strategy found in *Mystery in Kensington Gore*/*Hilf mir, Peter!* The choice of a German title (Help me, Peter!, Peter being the novel's hero) is underpinned by small but cumulative details, like the switch of gender in the description of the heroine's hair, when tousled "like a boy's," becomes "*wie bei einem kleinen Mädchen*" (like a little girl's, Porlock, 1932, p. 165/1935, p. 158), or the insertion of "*sie knickte zusammen*" (she collapsed, 1932, p. 154/1935, p. 150), introducing a note of female frailty.

In a related trend, all the translations nudge the characterization of the male detectives towards a manlier version, reducing their weaknesses, blunders or camp excesses (the latter in the case of the intellectual and detective Ellery Queen). Most striking in this respect is the treatment of the male police characters. In all the ten translations investigated, the policemen become tougher and their fallibility is downplayed. Again, the means are not spectacular. An adjective may be cut, a connotation shifted, so that a police inspector in the source text feels "a sort of desperation" while in translation he is "*bärbeißig*" (gruff; Queen, 1971, p. 69/1935, p. 47); the man who "scuttled off" in the source text "*stürmte*" (stormed off) in translation (Queen, 1937, p. 232/1938, p. 190). Here, the new novels' image of sexuality, of gender hierarchy and of the forces of law and order is even more drastically drawn than it was in the originals — where, to be sure, it was anything but subtle in the first place. The ideology of the source genre itself proposes the interpretation the translations make. It would thus perhaps be unfair to accuse the translators of somehow "falsifying" their sources; what they do is make the political potential more explicit by largely removing dissonant and distracting elements.

Of course, the comparison of the source and target texts is far more complicated than can be detailed here, and other aspects of that comparison are less easy to interpret as assimilation to a totalitarian ideological climate. This applies especially to the translations' treatment of the British or American settings, so familiar to their readers from the films and novels of the Weimar era. The chief focus of the literary critics' complaints against the genre, these foreign settings are by no means played down in the translations. On the contrary, several translators even elaborate on the source locations in some detail, and the cultural otherness of the source genre is clearly, if not always demonstratively, upheld in all the texts investigated. In this respect the translations preserve and cultivate a surviving corner of pre-Nazi popular culture, though whether to subversive or merely anaesthetic effect is a matter for debate.

However, let us take note of this ambivalence—one that echoes the tangled situation of publishing as a whole in the period—and remain for now within that partial view which stresses the adaptation of the source texts to the Nazi context. From this perspective, at least, it appears that while the translated genre was not officially approved, it came bearing a high potential for assimilation to the target culture's official culture. Often only tiny shifts sufficed to create an end product that, despite the journals' lamentations, was surely not particularly "alien" at all.

Yet can we claim that all the changes occurring in translation were politically enforced "censorship"? Or did the market itself ask for satisfaction of a taste for moral simplicity, for formula? After all, many of the Nazi period's detective novels were reprints of translations made in the late Weimar years, and some of the translations I have examined here were reissued more or less unaltered in the 1950s. In other words, even at this very extreme end of the spectrum of literary control—a totalitarian state highly interested in cultural production—it is still harder than it seems to draw a strict distinguishing line between actual "censorship'" and the creation of a saleable product acceptable to the target readership's taste. And as the figures for translation publishing show, while often murderous state measures obliterated certain segments of translated literature, the commercial core survived. The Nazi regime cannot be said to have simply suppressed, but only to have partially and somewhat unpredictably restricted that channel for foreign ideas: translated fiction.

Aston University

References

I. Primary sources

PORLOCK, Martin (1932). *Mystery in Kensington Gore*. London, W. Collins & Sons.

PORLOCK, Martin (1935). *Hilf mir, Peter! Kriminalroman*. Trans. anon. Berlin, Ullstein.

QUEEN, Ellery (1935). *Besuch in der Nacht. Kriminalroman*. Trans. Werner Illing. Berlin, Ullstein.

— (1937). *The Door Between. A Problem in Deduction*. London, Gollanz.

— (1938). *Besuch am letzten Tag. Kriminalroman*. Trans. Werner Illing. Berlin, Deutscher Verlag.

— (1971) [1932]. *The Greek Coffin Mystery. A Problem in Deduction*. London, Gollancz.

II. Secondary sources

AHÉ, Karl-Rainer von der (1982). *Rezeption schwedischer Literatur in Deutschland, 1933-1945*. Hattingen, Verlag Dr. Bernd Kretschmer.

AIGNER, Dietrich (1971). *Die Indizierung "schädlichen und unerwünschten Schrifttums" im Dritten Reich*. Frankfurt, Buchhändler-Vereinigung.

BARBIAN, Jan-Pieter (1995). *Literaturpolitik im "Dritten Reich". Institutionen, Kompetenzen, Betätigungsfelder* (2nd, revised edition). Munich, Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag.

BAUSCHINGER, Charlotte (1937). "Das deutsche Buch in fremden Sprachen (Statistik der Übersetzungen für das Jahr 1936)", *Mitteilungen der Akademie zur wissenschaftlichen Erforschung und zur Pflege des Deutschtums/Deutsche Akademie*, 1937, no. 4, pp. 481-522.

BOLLMUS, Reinhard (1970). *Das Amt Rosenberg und seine Gegner.*

Studien zum Machtkampf im nationalsozialistischen Herrschaftssystem. Stuttgart, Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt.

DAHM, Volker (1993). *Das jüdische Buch im Dritten Reich* (2nd revised edition). Munich, Beck.

GEYER-RYAN, Helga (1987). "Wunschkontrolle – Kontrollwünsche. Die Gleichschaltung der Populärliteratur im Dritten Reich", in *Leid der Worte. Panorama des literarischen Nationalsozialismus*. Jörg Thunecke, ed. Bonn, Bouvier, pp. 177-206.

HALL, Murray G. (1994). *Der Paul Zsolnay Verlag. Von der Gründung bis zur Rückkehr aus dem Exil*. Tübingen, Niemeyer.

KNIGHT, Stephen (1980). *Form and Ideology in Crime Fiction*. London, Macmillan.

RIX, Walter T. (1978). "Wesen und Wandel des Detektivromans im totalitären Staat", *Der Detektivroman. Studien zur Geschichte und Form der englischen und amerikanischen Detektivliteratur* (2nd revised edition). in Paul G. Buchloh and Jens P. Becker, eds. Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, pp. 121-134.

SCHÄFER, Hans Dieter (1981). *Das gespaltene Bewußtsein. Deutsche Kultur und Lebenswirklichkeit 1933-1945*. Munich & Vienna, Carl Hanser.

STIEG, Margaret F. (1992). *Public Libraries in Nazi Germany*. Tuscalosa, University of Alabama Press.

STURGE, Kate (1999). "'A Danger and a Veiled Attack': Translating into Nazi Germany", in *The Practices of Literary Translation. Constraints and Creativity*. Jean Boase-Beier and Michael Holman, eds. Manchester, St. Jerome, pp. 135-146.

— (2000). "'The Alien Within': Translation into German during the Nazi Regime". Ph.D. dissertation. University College, London, UK.

THUNECKE, Jörg (1987). "NS-Schrifttumspolitik am Beispiel der Vertraulichen Mitteilungen der Fachschaft Verlag (1935-1945)", in *Leid der Worte. Panorama des literarischen Nationalsozialismus*. Jörg Thunecke, ed. Bonn, Bouvier, pp. 133-152.

VAN DINE, S.S. (1946) [1928]. “Twenty Rules for Writing Detective Stories”, in *The Art of the Mystery Story*. Howard Haycraft, ed. New York, Grosset & Dunlap, pp. 189-193.

ABSTRACT: Censorship of Translated Fiction in Nazi Germany — This paper outlines the processes of censorship affecting translation under Nazi rule. Despite a markedly suspicious attitude towards translated fiction, the Nazi regime did not simply eliminate it. In fact, far from collapsing in 1933, the publication of translated fiction actually increased, both in absolute terms and as a proportion of all fiction, until the outbreak of war. However, if in purely quantitative terms translation flourished, the figures mask deep qualitative shifts: Jewish or anti-Nazi authors, translators and publishers disappeared; safe-selling genres came to dominate the market; and source-language preferences changed. These shifts were clearly the outcome of aggressive state measures, both classic “negative” censorship—the banning of literary producers and products or the imposition of “voluntary” self-regulation—and the energetic promotion of approved forms of translation. At the same time, more detailed study suggests that even for non-approved forms, the influence of state control was not always so clear-cut. In the case of the translated detective fiction of the time, censorship in translation was an amalgam of state intervention, pre-emptive filtering, selective readings of the source genre’s ambivalences, and the “normal” pressures of the book market. Even in this totalitarian context of extreme literary control, it remains difficult to define the borders of “translation censorship” as such.

RÉSUMÉ : La censure des traductions de fiction dans l’Allemagne nazie — Cette étude décrit les processus de censure qui touchaient la traduction sous la domination nazie. En dépit d’une attitude résolument soupçonneuse à l’égard des traductions de fiction, le régime nazi ne les a pas simplement éliminées. En fait, loin de chuter en 1933, la publication de traductions de fiction s’accrut même jusqu’à la guerre, à la fois en termes absolus et proportionnellement à la publication des œuvres de fiction en général. Toutefois, si en termes purement quantitatifs la traduction prospère, les chiffres masquent de profondes modifications qualitatives : les auteurs, traducteurs et éditeurs juifs et anti-nazis disparurent ; les genres sûrs à la vente en arrivèrent à dominer le marché et les préférences pour ce qui est des langues sources changèrent. Ces glissements provenaient indubitablement des

mesures radicales de l'État, à la fois la censure « négative » — l'interdiction de produits littéraires ou de producteurs, ou l'imposition d'une auto-régulation « volontaire » — et la promotion énergique de formes de traduction approuvées. En même temps, une étude plus détaillée suggère que, même pour les formes non approuvées, l'influence du contrôle de l'État n'était pas toujours très nette. À l'époque, dans le cas des traductions de romans policiers, la censure à la traduction était un amalgame d'intervention de l'État, de filtrage préventif, de lectures sélectives du genre d'origine et de pressions normales du marché éditorial. Même dans ce contexte totalitaire d'extrême contrôle littéraire, il reste difficile de définir les frontières de la censure sur la traduction en tant que telle.

Keywords: censorship, translation, Nazi Germany, Third Reich, detective fiction.

Mots-clés : censure, traduction, Allemagne nazie, Troisième Reich, roman policier.

Kate Sturge: School of Languages and European Studies, Aston University, Aston Triangle, Birmingham B4 7ET, United Kingdom
k.sturge@aston.ac.uk