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Article abstract

The present study examines the Portuguese right-wing and Hungarian communist regimes' attitudes towards homosexuality and sexual minorities through an analysis of English-language literary works translated and published in Hungary and Portugal between 1939 and 1974. One of its main objectives is to contribute to the scarce body of research on the history of non-normative sexualities by mapping literary works in English that might have been read by the queer community as possible self-help literature in the two countries. Besides the prevailing publishing practices, the *modi operandi* of the Hungarian and Portuguese censoring apparatuses are compared to see what kind of translated literature with homosexual content was or was not allowed to be published under the two opposing dictatorial regimes and why. The research draws heavily on the book censorship files stored at the National Archives of the *Torre do Tombo* in Lisbon along with the findings of the Hungarian project English-Language Literature and Censorship (1945-1989) and the project Intercultural Literature in Portugal 1930-2000: A Critical Bibliography.

Reading in Silence: Translations of Homosexual-Themed Fiction in State-Socialist Hungary and *Estado Novo* Portugal[1]

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In the storybook the little prince
always ended up with a little princess
or a seamstress sometimes,
just like Granddad and Granny,
Mum and Dad, Romeo and Juliet.

It was years before I discovered
that sometimes a little prince
fell in love with the coach boy,
or that one of my uncles had never
been seen with a woman.

András Gerevich (2010, p. 277)

Abstract
The present study examines the Portuguese right-wing and Hungarian communist regimes' attitudes towards homosexuality and sexual minorities through an analysis of English-language literary works translated and published in Hungary and Portugal between 1939 and 1974. One of its main objectives is to contribute to the scarce body of research on the history of non-normative sexualities by mapping literary works in English that might

1. This work has been funded by national funds through the Portuguese funding agency FCT – Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, I.P. within the framework of the projects UIDB/00114/2020 and UIDP/00114/2020. I am very grateful to Patricia Anne Odber de Baubeta as well as to the TTR editorial team and reviewers for their intelligent insights and useful suggestions for improvement.

have been read by the queer community as possible self-help literature in the two countries. Besides the prevailing publishing practices, the *modi operandi* of the Hungarian and Portuguese censoring apparatuses are compared to see what kind of translated literature with homosexual content was or was not allowed to be published under the two opposing dictatorial regimes and why. The research draws heavily on the book censorship files stored at the National Archives of the *Torre do Tombo* in Lisbon along with the findings of the Hungarian project English-Language Literature and Censorship (1945-1989) and the project Intercultural Literature in Portugal 1930-2000: A Critical Bibliography.
Keywords: Salazar's Portugal, Hungarian People's Republic, censorship, publishing practices, homosexual-themed literature

Résumé
La présente étude examine les attitudes du régime de droite portugais et du régime communiste hongrois envers l'homosexualité et les minorités sexuelles à travers une analyse des œuvres littéraires en anglais traduites et publiées en Hongrie et au Portugal entre 1939 et 1974. L'un de ses objectifs principaux est de contribuer aux recherches, encore rares, sur l'histoire des sexualités non normatives en répertoriant les œuvres en anglais qui auraient pu être lues par la communauté queer des deux pays comme faisant partie d'une littérature d'auto-assistance potentielle. Outre les pratiques d'édition dominantes, les *modi operandi* des appareils de censure hongrois et portugais sont comparés afin de déterminer quel type de littérature traduite à contenu homosexuel était ou n'était pas autorisé à être publié sous ces deux régimes dictatoriaux opposés et pourquoi. Cette recherche s'appuie sur les dossiers de censure des livres conservés aux Archives nationales de *Torre do Tombo* à Lisbonne, ainsi que sur les résultats du projet hongrois Littérature de langue anglaise et censure (1945-1989) et du projet Littérature interculturelle au Portugal 1930-2000 : une bibliographie critique.
Mots-clés : Portugal de Salazar, République populaire de Hongrie, censure, pratiques éditoriales, littérature à contenu homosexuel

Introduction

Hungary and continental Portugal share several similar characteristics in respect of size, population, religion, and economy that provide potential grounds for comparison across many social indicators, including translation production. They are also linked by the fact that both countries were governed by opposing dictatorial regimes for more than four decades during the twentieth century. The present study proposes a comparative approach to research on cultures of different historical and ideological backgrounds as opposed to research on a particular country of a particular period. Comparative analysis of the disparities and similarities between the two countries' political, social,

and cultural policies and practices can foster a deeper understanding of dictatorial societies' attitudes towards non-normative sexualities and their literary representations.

The Portuguese *Estado Novo* [New State] was the longest lasting right-wing dictatorial system in Europe in the twentieth century. Inspired by European fascist models, the corporatist and authoritarian regime was established in 1932 by António de Oliveira Salazar, after a military coup put an end to the democratic and unstable First Republic (that originated in 1910) in 1926. Salazar remained in power until 1968, when illness forced him out of office, and was replaced by Marcelo Caetano. The regime was overthrown on 25 April 1974 in a non-violent coup d'état known as the Carnation Revolution.

Hungary was occupied by the Soviet Army in 1945, and soon absorbed into the Soviet Bloc. The early communist years were marked by the rule of Mátyás Rákosi, a hard-line Stalinist, who seized power in 1948. After the crush of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, reform-minded communist János Kádár became Hungary's new leader, maintaining his position for 32 years. Communist rule formally came to an end only in 1989, when Hungary officially declared itself an independent republic.

As far as homosexuality is concerned, in contrast to Nazi Germany or Stalin's Soviet Union, both the Hungarian and Portuguese dictatorial regimes were comparatively tolerant towards their homosexual citizens. Mass deportation and murder of sexual minorities did not take place either in the most repressive Rákosi era or in Portugal's initial pro-fascist years. Unprecedentedly, Hungary decriminalized homosexuality as early as 1961, before almost all Eastern Bloc countries and other democratic states in the West. Moreover, although homosexuality was punishable by law throughout the *Estado Novo* era, non-normative sexual practices were also tolerated in Portugal, though kept behind closed doors and invisible to society at large.

It should be stressed, though, that decriminalization of homosexuality did not further LGBTQ emancipation or societal acceptance in state-socialist Hungary. Since homosexuality still carried a heavy social stigma, communist authorities used this to blackmail homosexual individuals and coerce them into becoming informants for the state (Kurimay, 2020, pp. 230). Likewise, though evidence suggests that Portugal's Salazar kept political and private

spheres strictly separate and—as a "gentleman"—never used his political opponents' sexual orientation against them, homosexuals, particularly those of humbler origin, were routinely arrested, humiliated, and tortured by the police (Almeida, 2010, pp. 153-156).

The oppressive practices used by the Portuguese and Hungarian authorities against the homosexual community also had long-lasting consequences on the dominant cultures, which even today retain many of their homophobic traits. Portugal and Hungary joined the European Union (EU) in 1986 and 2004, respectively, which was a vital step in the fight for LGBTQ rights and equality in both countries. Hungary recognized registered partnerships for homosexual couples in 2009, while, in Portugal, same-sex marriage was legalized in 2012 and adoption in 2016. Nevertheless, the growing political and social visibility of LGBTQ citizens does not always meet with general public approval and is often seen as a foreign import that is alien to the countries' traditional values (Santos, 2016; Béres-Deák, 2020, p. 274).

Recent research on the history of homosexuality, however, attests to the existence of an active clandestine lesbian and gay cultural life in the two countries under dictatorship. For instance, Anita Kurimay's book on queer life in Budapest clearly shows how certain forms of homosexuality were regulated, but also permitted and protected under successive illiberal regimes (Hungarian Soviet Republic of 1919, the Horthy era [1920-1944], Hungarian People's Republic [1949-1989])—thereby challenging the official discourse of current prime minister Viktor Orbán's far-right government on the visibility of queer subcultures in Hungary being an unwelcome Western influence and negative consequence of EU integration (see Kurimay, 2020).

In 2021, Hungary seriously infringed the core values of the EU with the introduction of a manifestly anti-LGBTQ law—inspired by Vladimir Putin's anti-gay propaganda legislation of 2012—prohibiting the depiction of non-heteronormative sexuality for minors in school educational materials, books, films, and TV shows. The current Hungarian administration's strong anti-LGBTQ stance seems to be somewhat anachronistic, especially considering that the first so-called LGBTQ young adult novel *I'll Get There. It Better Be Worth the Trip*, published in 1969 by John Donovan, was translated in communist-ruled Hungary as early as 1987.

Until recently, non-normative sexualities were written out of Hungarian and Portuguese history. One of the main objectives of the present article, therefore, is to contribute to this understudied area by focusing on homosexual-themed literary translations from English published in the two countries during their dictatorships, that is, between 1949 and 1974. The mapping of literary works that might have served as a sort of self-help literature for queer communities in the two countries can contribute relevant details and knowledge to the scarce body of pertinent research, thereby debunking a long-established popular misbelief that homosexual and queer culture are merely the product of the post-*Estado Novo* and post-socialist eras.

Another, more ambitious, aim of this study is to propose possible new research methods for charting literary translations with homosexual content under dictatorial regimes, and to encourage further research in this field. Due to constraints of time, space, and available bibliographic resources, the corpus under study is confined to prose fiction translated from English. The research focus on English-language literature is justified not only by the worldwide dominance of English as a source language since the mid-twentieth century, but also by the high number of pioneering lesbian and gay-themed works published in English before 1974. Nonetheless, further studies are certainly welcome and needed, particularly those incorporating central languages, such as French and German (see Heilbron, 2010), to provide more insights with respect to this hidden part of Hungarian and Portuguese history.

A final, but no less relevant purpose of the article is to explore and compare the Hungarian and Portuguese censoring apparatuses' *modus operandi* with regard to homosexual-themed literature. This is crucial to understanding what kind of literature, more precisely, translated literature with homosexual content, was or was not allowed under the two opposing dictatorial regimes and why. The scope of research here covers a longer period to provide a broader context for the censorship practices of the two countries. This part of the analysis is primarily based on the Portuguese censorship files dated from 1934 until 1974 and the Hungarian reader's reports issued between 1949 and 1989.

The Portuguese censorship files are physically stored at the National Archives *Torre do Tombo* in Lisbon. The files are currently available online. These archival records were catalogued and digitalized

within the framework of the project *Tradução e Censura* [Translation and Censorship] housed at the *Universidade Católica Portuguesa* and coordinated by Teresa Seruya. Another relevant research initiative is the Hungarian project English-Language Literature and Censorship (1945-1989), which was launched in 2009 under my coordination, involving seven teaching and research institutions and twelve researchers. In the absence of Hungarian censorship documents, reader's reports commissioned by the *Európa Könyvkiadó* [Európa Publishing House], a Hungarian publisher specialized in world literature, were meticulously examined. A large portion of the reports was digitalized, and data were inserted into a restricted access online database for further analysis. A significant part of the findings of the project is published for the first time in the present article.[2]

Researching LGBT History under Communism and the *Estado Novo* Regime

Given the deliberately clandestine nature and lifestyle of same-sex love under dictatorial regimes in the twentieth century, it is exceedingly difficult to pursue any kind of research on the history of homosexuality in the two countries and elsewhere (see Kurimay, 2020). In the face of the great paucity of historical sources, several significant research works and projects have been undertaken in both countries. *Eltitkolt évek* [*Secret Years*], a documentary film on lesbian life in Kádár-regime Hungary was released in 2009, which was followed by the fund-raised male version *Meleg férfiak, hideg diktatúrák* [*Hot Men, Cold Dictatorship*] in 2015, both directed by Mária Takács. The full-length interviews of the documentary films were also published in two subsequent volumes (Borgos, 2011; Hanzli *et al*., 2015). Other relevant contributions on the subject include works by sociologist Judit Takács (2015; with P. Tóth, 2021; with Kuhar and P. Tóth, 2017), psychologist and gender researcher Anna Borgos (2015, 2019), and the previously mentioned historian Kurimay (2020; with Takács, 2016).

In Portugal, two monographs, journalist São José Almeida's *Homossexuais no Estado Novo* (2010) and cultural anthropologist

2. The reader's reports were originally stored in the archives of the *Petőfi Irodalmi Múzeum* [Petőfi Literary Musem]. In 2018, at the time of the political scandal surrounding the Museum and the forced replacement of its director general, the reports were relocated to a remote provincial storehouse of the *Európa* Publishing House at the request of the publisher.

Raquel Afonso's *Homossexualidade e resistência no Estado Novo* (2019) are of the utmost importance in the field. Both works give illuminating insights into the hidden (and not so hidden) gay and lesbian life in Portugal under Salazar and Caetano. Although Almeida's book also contains a great number of interviews with prominent LGBTQ figures, Afonso's work is primarily based on a critical analysis of interviews carried out with male and female homosexuals living under the *Estado Novo* dictatorship. The special issue of the *International Journal of Iberian Studies* edited by Richard Cleminson also contains several important articles, notably Cascais (2016), Brandão (2016), and Santos (2016).

As far as translations are concerned, the first interdisciplinary encounter between LGBTQ studies and translation studies was relatively slow to come, which might be surprising, given the fact—as Brian James Baer remarks—that James S. Holmes, considered the founder of the field of translations studies, was a gay activist and liberation poet himself, as well as translator of queer literary texts (2021, p. 1). In addition, despite the cultural turn in translation studies in the 1980s, research related to LGBTQ issues and queer studies remained very sporadic and piecemeal. The past few years, however, have seen worldwide social change with respect to the representation of heteronormativity and fixed gender roles, leaving translation studies no other option than to broaden its horizons and address non-binary issues, such as transgender translation, LGBTQ activism and queer translation (Epstein, 2010; Gramling and Dutta, 2016; Baer and Kaindl, 2017; Baer, 2021; Baldo *et al.*, 2021).

With reference to homosexual-themed literary translations in Hungary and Portugal, no comprehensive historical study has been published to date, which is also due, in part, to the absence of official LGBTQ-themed bibliographies and indices published in these countries. Researchers investigating homosexual-themed translation production in the past will have to compile their own individual lists of works and authors. The methodology used in this study can thus provide a model for other scholars encountering similar research barriers and challenges.

Censorship under Communism and the *Estado Novo* Regime

Before presenting the research methodology and elaborating on findings of the study, I would like to outline the different censorship practices and policies of the two countries in order to better

contextualize the period under study and enrich our understanding of repressive mechanisms with regard to translation. In fact, research on translation production under authoritarian regimes is seldom separable from censorship studies. Importance is placed not only on what was translated, but also on what was not translated and why (see Rundle and Sturge, 2010; Rundle *et al.*, 2022), though exact answers to the latter might not always be found. This may be due to the absence of censorship records, as was the case in state-socialist Hungary, or to self-censorship on the part of publishers and translators, as was the case during the *Estado Novo*.

Indeed, censorship officially did not exist in communist Hungary. According to article 55 of the newly formulated Constitution of 1949, "[…] the Hungarian People's Republic guarantees freedom of the press, freedom of speech and freedom of assembly" (Constitution, 1949), which was of course a far cry from the truth. Consequently, Hungarian authorities persistently tried to maintain the illusion of democracy to the outside world. Despite the ubiquitous presence of state censorship, they rarely issued written directives containing explicit censoring instructions, preferring verbal communication instead, such as semi-informal conversations and telephone calls so as to leave as little documented evidence on the existence of censorship as possible (Bart, 2000, pp. 35-37).

Moreover, as the entire publishing sector was nationalized by 1949, translation production was also brought under strict ideological control. Henceforth, the communist government was in a position to decide what to publish or not. Meanwhile, publishing houses were also under centralized financial control, so funding was completely separated from market considerations. Astronomical amounts of money were spent on unprofitable cultural production that the authorities deemed to be politically useful. Conversely, translations from Western European languages decreased dramatically, giving way to Soviet and Russian literature. As regards foreign works written by authors from so-called capitalist countries, the number of translations published was next to zero (see Gombár, 2013).

After the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, newly installed Prime Minister János Kádár urgently sought to legitimize his ascendancy at home and abroad. Learning from his predecessor Mátyás Rákosi's mistakes, Kádár introduced reform policies aimed at reducing popular hostility towards the communist system. The political relaxation that

ensued also brought legal changes with respect to homosexuality, and consensual same-sex activity between adult men was decriminalized in 1961. Homosexuality and literary representations of it thereafter belonged to the category of the tolerated, instead of being prohibited. The proportion of translations from English also considerably increased during the Kádár regime from that point on (Gombár, 2022a).

If self-censorship had been a fundamental element of the Rákosi regime, it became the prevailing practice under the Kádár administration. Hungary—unique among other Eastern Bloc countries—did not have an official censorship board after 1956. No direct state intervention was necessary, as artists, writers, and publishers alike had internalized the norms dictated by the previous regime and routinely censored themselves (and others) in order to keep their jobs. Editors-in-chief, managing editors, and publishers were expected to select the writings that they considered aligned with communist ideology and would not pose any moral threat to the socialist readership. The so-called reader's reports played a vital role, therefore, in the filtering process, as they informed the publishers about the content of the book they intended to publish and warned them of all possible contentious issues it might contain.

There were, however, several strict taboos in state-socialist Hungary whose violation was expressly prohibited throughout the communist era, such as criticizing the Soviet Union, its relations, and the one-party system. Other forbidden topics included the 1956 Revolution, Hungary's territorial loss after the 1920 Treaty of Trianon, crimes committed during the 1919 Hungarian Soviet Republic and 1945 Soviet occupation, and anti-Jewish and Nazi propaganda. As far as non-political censorship categories are concerned, pornography was the only type of literature that was banned in Hungary until the very end of the regime (Gombár, 2011, p. 114).

In Salazar's Portugal, the illiteracy rate was one of the highest in Europe (Neves, 1996, pp. 351-352). Portuguese authorities thus paid considerably less attention to book and translation production than they did to other domains, such as print and audiovisual media, theatre, and cinema. That said, in contrast to Hungary, Portuguese book production was controlled almost exclusively via post-publication censorship. Publishers rarely submitted copies of the literary works they wished to publish or translate, since, once published, confiscation

could easily bring the otherwise privately-owned publishing houses to the verge of bankruptcy (Seruya and Moniz, 2008, p. 8). Published books normally reached the censorship office via the Portuguese secret police *PIDE* and its agents, who had the right to issue search warrants for bookshops and publishing houses. The Post Office and, in some cases, the regular police PSP also played a role (Seruya, 2010, p. 129).

Compared to pre-publication censorship, post-publication censorship was a far less reliable method for filtering problematic non-periodical publications. As Seruya asserts, publishers were perfectly aware of the Portuguese censoring system's inherent constraints and fallacies. Although seizure of their book stocks definitely posed a serious risk to their financial stability, publishers still took chances in the hope that the book in question might pass unnoticed, and more often than not it did (*ibid.*, p. 138). The publication of works prior to 1974, such as those by Jean-Paul Sartre, Joseph Stalin, or Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, seems to confirm this (Odber de Baubeta, 2009 p. 53).

Contrary to Hungarian publishing professionals, the Portuguese censors were not leading intellectual dissidents, but loyal military officers of the regime, the majority of whom were captains, majors, colonels, and lieutenants, although non-military civilians joined the censorship brigade toward the end of the Second World War in 1944 (Cardoso Gomes, 2006, p. 12). While some of the army personnel appeared to be remarkably intelligent and widely-read men with a good command of foreign languages, which was very uncommon among the Portuguese population of the era (Seruya and Moniz, 2008, p. 10), judging from the reports, the vast majority were fairly ignorant.

Censorship was a very effective tool in keeping Portuguese society uninformed about alternative political systems and lifestyles, and Salazar was perfectly aware that obscurantism at home and abroad was the best guarantee of survival for his authoritarian government. Whereas in Hungary, carefully selected foreign literary works were deemed to be important vehicles for educating the masses, raising their cultural level, and enhancing their political consciousness, even if they might contain references to nonconformist lifestyles, in Portugal, translations were considered dangerous by the authorities insofar as they made texts available to the lower and less-educated classes, who, unable to read foreign languages, might thus be exposed to harmful

foreign influences (Seruya and Moniz, 2008, p. 18; Gombár, 2013, p. 271).

Portuguese censors also made a clear distinction between two terms: *homossexualidade* and *homossexualismo*, both expressing the same meaning in Portuguese [homosexuality]. *Homossexualidade* was used in the censorship reports if the reviewed work was of a scientific or medical nature. In the latter case, circulation of the book was limited to physicians and therapists. *Homossexualismo* was, as a rule, applied to popular and apologist literature, which was to be prohibited (Gombár, 2017, p. 152).[3] Furthermore, books that were written in languages other than Portuguese or publications sold at an elevated price were more likely to be approved by the censors, since they were accessible only to a restricted layer of Portuguese society who could afford to purchase these books or speak foreign languages (see Seruya and Lin Moniz, 2008).

Besides homosexuality, nudism, prostitution, abortion, mental illness, and infant mortality were strictly taboo, and mere reference to any of these topics could lead to the prohibition of the work in question (Barreto and Mónica, 1999, p. 275). Non-periodical publications were also censored if they contained harsh criticism of the Catholic Church, details of suicides, realistic descriptions of violent scenes, or obscene language (Seruya and Moniz, 2008, pp. 11-18).

Methodology of Corpus Collection

The methodology adopted to map homosexual-themed translations was strongly inspired by the method for data collection used by Hungarian literary scholar Zoltán Csehy in his research on Hungarian homoerotic and queer poetry (2014). Csehy's seminal work challenges traditional literary criticism by breaking down deep-rooted misconceptions, such as the assertion that classic Hungarian literature is exclusively heterosexual in nature or that homosexuality as a theme has no place in the Hungarian literary canon. The author presents and analyses canonical texts in Hungarian from the Middle Ages through the modern and contemporary periods, and although his more than eight-hundred-page-long work focuses only on poetry, his homotopical approach can easily be extended to other literary genres, in this case, translated fiction.

3. I am very thankful to Teresa Seruya for calling my attention to these two terms.

Accordingly, an extensive number of reference works and annotated bibliographies were consulted, including Zimmer Bradley's *A Complete Cumulative Checklist of Lesbian Variant and Homosexual Fiction* (2012 [1960]), Drake's *Gay Canon* (1998), Gunn's bibliographies (2013, 2014, 2016), Slide's *Lost Gay Novels* (2013), Hurley's *A Guide to Gay and Lesbian Writing in Australia* (1996), as well as a library catalogue on queer Canadian literature (Rayter *et al*., 2008).

Moreover, keeping in view the paramount importance of the interpretive community in the homosexual canon formation process (Baer, 2010, pp. 22-24), a great number of community and social media websites were studied, including Goodreads (2007), LGBT+ Literature & Film (1997), and the Hungarian reading blog *Egy meleg srác olvas* [*A Gay Guy Reading*] (Veszprémi, 2020 [2017]). Additionally, the archive and library of the LGBT+ organization *Háttér* Society has been of great help to my research.[4] Finally, special attention was given to short fiction anthologies. Apart from the above-referenced bibliographical sources, many gay and lesbian short story anthologies were surveyed, among others: *The Penguin Book of Gay Short Stories* (Leavitt and Mitchell, 1995), *In Another Part of the Forest* (Manguel, 1994), *Different* (Wright, 1974), *The Vintage Book of International Lesbian Fiction* (Holoch and Nestle, 1999), and the website LGF Lost Gay Fiction dedicated to queer short fiction (2011).

Each work of the compiled list was checked against the Hungarian and Portuguese National Library records along with the online database entries of the research project Intercultural Literature in Portugal, 1930-2000. A Critical Bibliography (CECC and CEAUL/ULICES, 2010)[5] and Hungarian bibliographical

4. The Library and Archive of the *Háttér* Society was founded and directed by Sándor Nagy (until 2021), to whom I would like to express my gratitude for his invaluable assistance and kind support. The literary section is partly based on his personal book collection and contains an almost complete list of gay-themed literary works published in Hungary until 1989. See https://en.hatter.hu/what-we-do/archive-and-library.

5. The project involves a collaboration by two research centres: the Research Centre for Communication and Culture (CECC) and the University of Lisbon Centre for English Studies (CEAUL/ULICES), currently coordinated by Teresa Seruya, Maria Lin Moniz, and myself. The primary objective of the project is to gather and process information concerning foreign literary production in Portugal between 1930 and 2000. The research database is available for free to researchers and, as of July 2022, contains 29,788 records covering the period 1930-1993.

catalogues (Anon., 1971, 1977; Bánhegyi, 1979, 1988) were also consulted in order to identify which source texts with explicit gay or lesbian content were translated and published in Hungary and Portugal between 1949 and 1974. The beginning of the period under scrutiny marks the communists' final takeover of the Hungarian book industry, while the closing year coincides with the end of the *Estado Novo* regime in Portugal. The period thus allows us to examine the published translations, when both countries were simultaneously under dictatorial rule.

Findings: English-Language Fiction with Homosexual Content Translated and Published in State-Socialist Hungary and *Estado Novo* Portugal

The number of short and long fiction works with homosexual content published before 1974 in democratic English-speaking countries, like Great Britain, the USA, or Canada, far exceeds 900, which indicates that, despite homosexuality being a criminal offence and serious social taboo in these states before the 1960s, non-normative sexuality was far more visibly present in democratic cultures than in countries under dictatorship. The number of novels and short stories published in state-socialist Hungary (26) and *Estado Novo* Portugal (34) is significantly lower, which suggests that the circulation of works with homosexual content was repressed in both countries (see Tables 1 and 2).

Table 1. English-language novels with homosexual content translated and published in Portugal and Hungary between 1949 and 1974

Published only in Hungary	Published in both countries	Published only in Portugal
Mary Renault: *The King Must Die* (1961), *The Mask of Apollo* (1970)[6] Jane Bowles: *Two Serious Ladies* (1969) Carson McCullers: *Clock without Hands* (1972)	Dashiell Hammett: *The Maltese Falcon* (1950 in Portugal; 1967 in Hungary) Raymond Chandler: *The Big Sleep* (1951 in Portugal; 1967 in Hungary)	Graham Greene: *Stamboul Train* (1955) Oscar Wilde: *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1958) Edward Ronns: *The State Department Murders* (1957)

6. The dates indicated in Tables 1 and 2 refer to the publication years of the translations in the given country.

Christopher Isherwood: *Goodbye to Berlin* (1972) James Jones: *From Here to Eternity* (1972) Evelyn Waugh: *Brideshead Revisited* (1973) William Styron: *The Confessions of Nat Turner* (1969) Gertrude Stein: *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* (1974) Mary McCarthy: *The Group* (1974)	Howard Fast: *Spartacus* (1961 in Portugal; 1953 in Hungary) Truman Capote: *Other Voices, Other Rooms* (1956 in Portugal; 1964 in Hungary) Norman Mailer: *The Naked and the Dead* (1958 in Portugal; 1967 in Hungary) Lawrence Durrell: *Justine* (1960 in Portugal; 1970 in Hungary), *Balthazar* (1961 in Portugal; 1970 in Hungary), *Clea* (in 1961 in Portugal; 1970 in Hungary) Herman Melville: *Moby Dick* (1962 in Portugal; 1963 in Hungary) Virginia Woolf: *Orlando* (1962 in Portugal; 1966 in Hungary)	Monica Baldwin: *The Called and the Chosen* (1960) David Garnett: *A Shot in the Dark* (1958) Vance Bourjaily: *The Hound of Earth* (1959) Richard Hull: *The Murder of My Aunt* (1961) Angus Wilson: *Hemlock and After* (1961) Calder Willingham: *End as a Man* (1961) William Goyen: *The House of Breath* (1962) Nancy Mitford: *Love in a Cold Climate* (1964) Iris Murdoch: *The Bell* (1965) John Dos Passos: *The 42nd Parallel* (1963), *1919* (1967), *The Big Money* (1967) Ian Fleming: *Goldfinger* (1968) Louis Bromfield: *The Rains Came* (1955) Grace Metalious: *Return to Peyton Place* (1973)
TOTAL: 10	**TOTAL: 10**	**TOTAL: 18**

Table 2. English-language short stories with homosexual content translated and published in Portugal and Hungary between 1949 and 1974

Published only in Hungary	Published in both countries	Published only in Portugal
Truman Capote: "Diamond Guitar" (1966)	Sherwood Anderson: "Hands" (1951 in Portugal; 1962 in Hungary) Ernest Hemingway: "A Simple Enquiry" (1966 in Portugal; 1960 in Hungary)[7] Ernest Hemingway: "The Sea Change" (in Portugal 1966; 1970 in Hungary) Ernest Hemingway: "The Mother of a Queen" (1966 in Portugal; 1970 in Hungary) D. H. Lawrence: "The Prussian Officer" (1967 in Portugal; 1965 in Hungary)	Graham Greene: "May We Borrow Your Husband?" (1968)
TOTAL: 1	**TOTAL: 5**	**TOTAL: 1**

That said, the fact that homosexual-themed literary works were allowed to be published at all reveals a certain degree of tolerance on the part of the Hungarian and Portuguese authorities. The majority of the Portuguese translations probably passed censorship due to the above-mentioned limitations and shortcomings inherent in the Portuguese censoring system. The lack of prior censorship in Salazar's Portugal as compared to the strongly controlled publishing model in state-socialist Hungary confirms that the Portuguese regime's cultural

7. The short story was first published in Portugal in 1947.

administration did not devote considerable attention to the book publishing industry, particularly in a country where the illiteracy rate continued to be significantly high throughout the era, as mentioned above (see Gombár, 2018).

On the other hand, the Portuguese censors' apparent negligence might also be interpreted as a calculated indulgence towards the cultural elite, who, in fact, had the educational as well as financial means to access contentious foreign literature in translation, if not in the original. Seruya and Moniz point out that Portuguese censorship bodies drew a sharp distinction between the "illiterate masses," who were supposedly more prone to subversive influences, and the so-called "educated," who were considered to be more "strong-willed and not easily influenced" (2008, p. 14).

Previous research on literature in English censored in the Hungarian People's Republic found no evidence of a literary work being banned for homosexual content, revealing that, compared to Portuguese censorship practices, Hungarian authorities showed far more tolerance towards non-political topics and literature deemed pernicious by the Portuguese censorship administration on moral grounds. It seems that homosexual content did not occupy a primary place in the Hungarian censorship system either (Gombár, 2011).[8] Rather, the publication of translations of homosexual-themed literary works was by and large a conscious and deliberate choice on the part of the Hungarian publishers and cultural administration. It is important to stress, though, that this illusory indulgence served only as a kind of "safety valve," whose main aim was to alleviate the tension arising from the communist regimes' otherwise highly repressive nature, and hence to ensure political stability rather than to encourage a more democratic culture in the country.

A comparison between English-language fiction with homosexual content and non-homosexual-themed literary works translated from English in state-socialist Hungary and *Estado Novo* Portugal reveals no significant quantitative difference. The proportion of literary works with non-heteronormative content translated from

8. In view of the insufficient written evidence on censorship in communist Hungary, the 2011 research was based on different sources than those used in the present study, including index-card catalogues of ex-sealed library departments and library discard lists.

English between 1949 and 1974 is similarly very low in both Portugal (0.8%) and Hungary (1.3%).[9]

The number of works with homosexual content published in both countries also points to similarities in their publishing policies. Ten novels and five short stories were translated and published in both countries, which means that 50% of the Hungarian and 36% of the Portuguese long fiction corpus is shared (see Table 1). As far as short fiction is concerned, except for Truman Capote's "Diamond Guitar," published only in Hungary, and Graham Greene's "May We Borrow Your Husband?," published only in Portugal, the same short stories were translated in the two countries (see Table 2).

Notably, all of the authors in the shared corpora were canonical or highly-esteemed writers, such as Herman Melville, Virginia Woolf, Ernest Hemingway, D. H. Lawrence, Sherwood Anderson, and Lawrence Durrell. The worldwide fame of these authors may have shielded their contentious literary texts from censorship. However, a distinction still needs to be made regarding the permissiveness shown by the two opposing regimes. While the Portuguese conservative appreciation of literary masterpieces predominantly stemmed from the *Estado Novo* regime's characteristically authoritarian nature, the communist stance owed more to the idealistic belief in the educational potential of time-honoured literature. For instance, although *Orlando* by Virginia Woolf was deemed problematic by the Hungarian cultural establishment, the novel's publication was authorized because the regime sought to keep the Hungarian reading public well-informed about the main modern Western literary tendencies (Tóth, 1992, p. 346).

The differences in publication dates of the shared corpora are also revealing. With the exception of Howard Fast's *Spartacus* and D. H. Lawrence's "Prussian Officer," the Hungarian translations were

9. While English is the second most frequently translated language in regard to literary translations in both countries, preceded by Spanish in Portugal and Russian in Hungary, the percentage of literary works translated from English in relation to the total volume of literary translations in Hungary (17%) and in Portugal (27%) clearly shows that English—the official language of adversary capitalist source cultures, such as the USA and the UK—was less welcomed by the communist publishing administration. Further research may be beneficial to see the proportional rates in the case of French homosexual-themed literary works as well, since French was the third major source language in both countries, sharing more or less the same popularity in Hungary (14%) and Portugal (17%) (cf. CECC and CEAUL/ULICES, 2010; Varga, 1975).

published after the Portuguese translations, with an average delay of 9.5 years (see Tables 1 and 2). The reason for this conspicuous time-lag no doubt lies in the socialist publishing industry's standard "delaying" technique. Hungarian publishers habitually put problematic works aside for years to see whether the author or work in question would stand the test of time and receive critical acclaim or not. Meanwhile, they could bide their time and wait for a politically more favorable atmosphere for the book's publication (Gombár, 2017, p. 151).

The number of Hungarian translations of popular genre novels (2 out of 20) is somewhat lower than its Portuguese counterpart (9 out of 28), the latter of which includes works such as Grace Metalious's *Return to Peyton Place*, Ian Fleming's *Goldfinger*, and Edward Ronns's *The State Department Murders*. This can be put down to the fact that commercial bestsellers were not warmly welcomed by the communist cultural leaders, as they were deemed inadequate to the task of educating the masses (see Gombár, 2022a). Given that the socialist Hungarian book publishing industry was heavily subsidized by the government, political and ideological imperatives took precedence over market and economic considerations. It thus comes as no surprise that almost every author translated into Hungarian in this study (17 out of 20) was a leftist sympathizer or belonged to left-wing circles at one stage of their career or another. These include authors such as Carson McCullers, Christopher Isherwood, Mary Renault, Jane Bowles, Dashiell Hammett, and Howard Fast.

As might be expected, none of the above-mentioned novels can be interpreted as explicit homosexual manifestos. Considering the limited historical period under scrutiny, all of the literary works investigated in this study are products of the pre-Stonewall era and hence the vast majority of them are closeted literary texts.[10] The inclusion of homosexual characters and scenes in these works generally only serves a decorative purpose or adds a layer of complexity to the novel (cf. Slide, 2013).

Another common characteristic of the Hungarian and Portuguese translations is the near absence of lesbian-themed novels and short stories, which of course should be regarded as a worldwide

10. The Stonewall Riots, also called the Stonewall Uprising, began on June 28, 1969, when police raided the Stonewall Inn, a bar located in New York City's Greenwich Village that served as a haven for the city's gay, lesbian, and transgender community. Members of the city's LGBTQ community decided to fight back. As the riots progressed, an international gay rights movement was born.

rather than a national phenomenon. The ghost-like status of lesbians in *Estado Novo* Portugal, as Anna Klobucka terms it (2009, following Castle, 1993), is clearly reflected in the literary translation production of the era in both countries. Moreover, this status is revealing of the marginalized position of women and the social invisibility of lesbians not only in the dominant culture, but in homosexual subcultures as well (see Takács, 2015). Portuguese poet and literary translator Ana Luísa Amaral argues that the lesbian community's degraded status also had to do with the societal norms of the time, according to which women should not have sexual desires and expressions. Female homosexuality was thus completely ignored, even by artistic communities, since it was likewise deemed to be non-existent (cited in Almeida, 2010, pp. 104 et seq.).

A closer investigation of the short stories reveals that, with the exception of Anderson's compassionate description of the protagonist Wing Biddlebaum, a former schoolteacher forced to live in hiding after being accused of pedophilia, they all portray homosexual characters in an offensively negative light. Examples of note include the sadistic captain in "The Prussian Officer," the tyrannical major in "A Simple Enquiry," the immoral and despicable Paco in "The Mother of a Queen," whose dead mother's mortal remains were dumped into the common bone heap because he failed to pay the funeral expenses, the prisoner Tico Feo in Capote's "Diamond Guitar," who betrays his best friend and lover and escapes from prison alone, and the unpleasant gay couple, who leave no stone unturned to seduce the male partner of a honeymoon couple in Greene's short story.

It is equally very difficult to find positive same-sex representations in the novels. The controlling and calculating Major General Cummings in *The Naked and the Dead*, the merciless Crassus responsible for the protagonist's death in *Spartacus*, and the irritatingly selfish gay nephew in Richard Hull's *The Murder of My Aunt* can all be considered the products of their societies' widespread homophobia and stereotypical thinking about homosexuals.

On the other hand, the negative portrayals of homosexual characters were likewise very important. In the Hungarian interview collection *Meleg férfiak, hideg diktatúrák* [*Hot Men, Cold Dictatorship*], one of the interviewees speaks of the great impact that the sensational book *Vadnarancsok* [*Wild Oranges*] had on his life, despite its very negative portrayal of homosexuals (Hanzli *et al*., 2015, p. 181). The

young interviewer evidently does not share the elderly interviewee's passion about the book. Nonetheless, given the very limited number of homosexual-themed works, any encounter with such literature—independently of its positive or negative contents—could be revealing and relieving to the homosexual reader (Gombár, 2022b, p. 131). In fact, several private book collections and early gay and lesbian-themed bibliographical lists, such as Zimmer Bradley's *Cumulative List* or the *Háttér* Library and Archive, include literary works with vilified homosexual characters.

Another relevant finding of the research was that, although portrayal of homosexuality was prohibited under the Portuguese laws in force, the title of Hemingway's short story "The Mother of a Queen," for instance, was translated into Portuguese using the overt expression *maricas* [faggot], which would have been patently obvious to the Portuguese censors. It seems that it was not a cause for concern to the Portuguese translator either. Other Portuguese translations confirm this. For example, the blurb of the Portuguese translation of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* explicitly refers to Wilde's prison sentence for homosexuality (Wilde, 1971). It appears that the Portuguese publishers did not feel the need to hide this piece of information from the authorities.[11]

What the Portuguese Censorship Files (1934-1974) and Hungarian Reader's Reports (1949-1989) Say

In addition to the reference materials and bibliographical sources listed above, online digital images of the Portuguese censorship files of the National Archives of *Torre do Tombo* were systematically studied in search of censorial decisions regarding homosexual content (1934-1974). In the absence of Hungarian censorship documents, reader's reports commissioned by the *Európa* Publishing House were meticulously examined. Both archival sources provide invaluable information for scholars on the everyday censorship practices of the two countries, despite the fact that a considerable portion of the Portuguese censorship reports mysteriously disappeared from the National Archives in the 1990s and a limited number of Hungarian reader's reports may never be located.

As Munday reminds us, even the most trusted primary historical sources are open to manipulation, as the archive itself is a locus of

11. For a more detailed analysis of homosexual-themed literature in Hungary and Portugal, see Gombár (2017, 2018, 2022b).

power; as a result, written documents chosen to be preserved and stored at publicly accessible places receive a privileged status, while the others are normally discarded as debris (2014, p. 71). The missing archival records on the scandalous book weeding-out campaign during the Rákosi regime in Hungary are a case in point.[12] Nevertheless, even with the full range of archival evidence, it would be immensely difficult to disentangle publishing decisions from formal censorship, self-censorship choices, or other factors in the two countries and in general.

Certain tendencies emerge, nonetheless, quite clearly from the Hungarian reader's reports. Graphic description of either heterosexual or homosexual sex acts was strictly prohibited throughout the entire period in Hungary. For example, the reviewer of John Rechy's *Numbers* did not recommend the novel in his report, dated 1969, on the ground of its pornographic homosexual scenes, stating that the publication of the novel would ignite a nationwide scandal in Hungary. In contrast to Portugal, however, portrayals of or allusions to same-sex love or lifestyle alone did not justify censorship.

The Hungarian reader's reports issued in the 1960s most often call attention to homosexual scenes and characters, but these portrayals—unless they were pornographic descriptions—were never presented as grounds for banning the book. From the 1970s onwards, references to same-sex literary representations in the reports significantly decreased in number, indicating that depictions of homosexuality had ceased to be an obligatory referencing category for reviewers.

Indeed, as already mentioned, the Hungarian reviewers were under contractual obligation to the publishing houses to identify all of the politically or morally contentious passages in their reports in order to help the publishers choose the most suitable works to be translated and published. It would be wrong, however, to regard these reviewers merely as censors. Some of them were silenced non-

12. Between 1948 and 1953, thousands of books were removed from Hungarian libraries and bookstores on ideological grounds and subsequently destroyed. *The Times* published a page-long editorial on the Hungarian libricidal campaign in 1950. As a consequence of the international uproar, József Révai, the Minister of Education, distanced himself from the book destruction and publicly condemned the officials in charge, as if they had acted fully independently of his will (Gombár, 2011, pp. 108-110). All the documentation pertaining to the book destruction campaign was destroyed in order to conceal the identity of the persons ultimately responsible for the scandal (Kövér, 1998, p 106).

conformist intellectuals who had been prevented from pursuing their own profession under the communist regime and had become readers and/or translators out of necessity (see Gombár, 2022a). The reviewers included university professors, distinguished literary critics, and well-known writers and poets, who might have had more access to foreign homosexual-themed literature and more homosexual acquaintances in their artistic or academic circles than the rest of society, and thus were far more familiar with same-sex lifestyles and behavior.

A close investigation of the Hungarian reader's reports on homosexual-themed literature in English reveals that extreme homophobic attitudes among the Hungarian reviewers were rare, but a positive and supportive stance was similarly unusual.[13] That said, most of the reviewers justify their negative decision by shifting the responsibility entirely to the general public's homophobic attitude, stating that the publication of the book would cause a major public scandal. In the 1980s, this argument would change, as reviewers began calling publishers' attention to the potential popularity of the scandalous novels among Hungarian readers.

From the 1980s on, when the HIV/AIDS epidemic had also reached Hungary, Hungarian publishing houses became more open towards homosexual-themed literature. Several related literary works were translated and published in the mid-1980s, including *Pornografia* [*Pornography*] by Witold Gombrowicz, *Ciemności kryją ziemię* [*Darkness Covers the Earth*] by Jerzy Andrzejewski, *Los Sonetos del amor oscuro* [*Sonnets of Dark Love*] by Frederico Garcia Lorca, and *Total Eclipse* by Hampton Christopher. The number of reader's reports on English-language lesbian and gay authors, such as Alice Walker, Patricia Highsmith, E. M. Forster, and James Purdy, also multiplied at the request of the *Európa* Publishing House by 1989.

In 1989, the reviewer of E.M. Forster's novel *Maurice* responded to the author's dedication "To a Happier Year" with regret, noting that no similar work had until then been available to Hungarian readers, although a gay movement had already been launched in Hungary. Indeed, in 1988, the Ministry of Health finally authorized the first homosexual rights organization *Homeros-Lambda*. Kurimay and Takács argue, however, that it was predominantly the official concern

13. The case of Tibor Bartos, renowned Hungarian translator of American Beat Literature, is especially noteworthy. His verbal aggression towards Tennessee Williams in his report was reprimanded, and his negative review was ignored by the editors of the *Európa* Publishing House.

about the spread of AIDS that acted as a catalyst for these reforms, rather than merely the new-found political openness accompanying the Soviet *glasnost* and *perestroika* (2017, p. 594).

It is important to note that there is no reference on the part of the reviewers to a possible homosexual target audience in the reports examined in the present study. Nevertheless, the fact that the Hungarian translation of the LGBT young adult novel by John Donovan referred to above came out in 1987 suggests that Hungarian authorities did care about their juvenile homosexual citizens' psychological well-being. The book was published by *Móra Ferenc Ifjúsági Könyvkiadó* [Ferenc Móra Youth Publishing House], which was the sole publisher of juvenile and children's literature of the era. It appeared in the book series *Piknik könyvek* [*Picnic books*] targeting early teens and upwards.

In Portugal, none of the English-language literary works subjected to inspection between 1934 and 1974—at least according to the available archival records—were censored exclusively because of their homosexual content. For example, McCullers' *Clock without Hands*, *Couples* by John Updike, and *Chocolates for Breakfast* by Pamela Moore were prohibited only in part for same-sex representations and more so for their allegedly indecent character.

Unlike Hungarian reviewers and publishers, the Portuguese censors were predominantly military officers, who presumably had a less-nuanced knowledge of same-sex practices and desire. Indeed, since male homosexuality was criminalized in Portugal for almost 96 years between 1886 and 1982, and homosexual citizens were thus forced to live a clandestine and marginal life, homosexuality was invisible to the public. Baer argues in his article on queer literary translations in Soviet Russia that, paradoxically, it was indeed the invisible nature of homosexuality in the wider society that provided protection to these non-heteronormative texts. The censors were "often, quite simply, blind to certain types of sexual content and innuendo, especially when it occurred in translated works" (2010, p. 36). By way of illustration, out of the 28 Portuguese translations under study, only 8 were officially requested for inspection by the Portuguese censorship authorities: *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, *The 42nd Parallel*, *1919*, *The Big Money*, *The Rains Came*, *Return to Peyton Place*, *Spartacus*, and *Love in a Cold Climate*. Nonetheless, with the

exception of the censorship report on *Spartacus*, none of the reports made concrete reference to homosexual content.

The case of Fast's *Spartacus*, an account of the 73-71 BC slave revolt, is particularly interesting. The first censorship file on the novel, issued in 1954, banned the Brazilian translation as "demagogic revolutionary literary propaganda work" due to the fact that Fast was a devoted member of the American Communist Party and had served a three-month-long prison sentence—where the idea for *Spartacus* was born—for not disclosing the names of his fellow party members to Congress. However, by 1961, when the Portuguese publishing house *Europa-América* presented the manuscript of the novel's new Portuguese translation to the censorship office in Lisbon, not only had Fast quit the Communist Party and ceased to be regarded as a communist academic commissar in the literary world (Sorin, 2012, pp. 307-335), but the novel had been turned into a major motion film in 1960, widely screened in Portuguese cinemas.

As a result, the status of the book significantly changed as of 1957, and Fast's novel was no longer censored on ideological grounds, but on moral grounds. Nevertheless, if the work had not been singled out by the Portuguese censorship officials due to the author's previous dubious political reputation, the homosexual scenes might very likely have gone undetected (see Salvador, 2012). Paradoxically enough, in state-socialist Hungary, it was precisely Fast's communist involvement in the 1940s and early 1950s that led the reviewers to turn a blind eye to "the Romans' degenerated practices" depicted in the novel.

Conclusion

The small number of translations of English-language novels with homosexual content undoubtedly indicates that homosexual-themed literature was suppressed in both state-socialist Hungary and *Estado Novo* Portugal. Although further studies are needed before a comprehensive conclusion can be drawn, particularly on literary translations from other languages, it should be emphasized that the Hungarian translations were purposely chosen by the publishers and the cultural establishment of the time. These literary translations were knowingly tolerated by the Kádár administration, as they were used as a political safety valve whose main function was to keep the regime in power rather than to promote democracy.

According to the laws in force of the *Estado Novo*, homosexual representations in non-periodical publications were prohibited.

However, it was not always the case. The limited number of homosexual-themed novels and short stories in English published in Portugal reveals that oversights on the part of the censoring bodies did occur. Post-publication censorship was, in fact, an inconsistent system of control, and by focusing on the censors' blind spots, some Portuguese publishers easily managed to circumvent censorship.

On the other hand, the explicit Portuguese title of Hemingway's short story "The Mother of a Queen" and other overt references to homosexual content in the translations published show that publishers did not seem to greatly fear the authorities. This sort of leniency might have been a calculated decision on the part of the regime, designed to deliberately display favoritism towards the upper classes, who had educational and financial access to books, as opposed to the poor, many of whom were completely illiterate.

Unlike in Portugal, homosexuality was legalized in state-socialist Hungary relatively early. It is important to highlight, though, that the act of decriminalization *per se* did not further wider social acceptance or integration of homosexual individuals in society. Although the core ideology of communism should theoretically entail full inclusion, Hungarian communist leadership failed to treat their homosexual citizens as equals. Compared to other oppressive regimes, however, such as Stalin's USSR or Hitler's Germany, both the Hungarian and Portuguese regimes adopted a relatively permissive attitude towards homosexuals, in spite of the laws and censorship processes they imposed on them. The latter, in turn, tacitly accepted their inferior social status and forced invisibility.

As has been shown above, the historical silencing of homosexuals and public discussion of non-normative sexualities had far-reaching repercussions in many spheres of Hungarian and Portuguese post-dictatorial societies. By contributing knowledge to the still scarce body of historical research on sexual minorities, this article represents an attempt to break this silence and show that queer individuals, along with their particular histories and communities, are equal and legitimate members of their Hungarian and Portuguese nations' past.

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