

Presenting Norwegian Literature in Czechoslovakia: Norwegian Literature in Czech Translations 1945–1968

Adéla Ficová
Masaryk University

Abstract: Translations contribute to spreading but also shaping of cultural memory. While the choice of titles which get to be translated is contingent on many factors which the publishers take into consideration, decision-making in totalitarian countries is fettered. In communist Czechoslovakia, the final selection of books, and therefore memories, had to meet yet another criterion which deformed the natural literary development – censorship. The article focuses on Norwegian literature which was introduced into Czech between 1945 and 1968. Norwegian literature had already had a strong position on the Czechoslovak literary market since the end of the 19th century and in the first half of the 20th century thanks to several publishing houses, translators, and the introduction of the Nobel Prize in literature. This tradition was first interrupted by the WWII and shortly after again by the communist coup in 1948. Although the restrictions began loosening later, the Soviet intervention in 1968 installed the restrictions again.

The object is to present and examine the image of Norwegian literature in Czech literary memory as it was shaped by the cultural policies of totalitarian Czechoslovakia; and to show and explain which type of literature could enter Czech bookshops and libraries. The focus often shifted to a specific literary genre, republishing the earlier works of the Norwegian canon, or works by authors whose work was translated into Czech although they were marginalized in Norway and did not make it into the Norwegian national canon. An important part of such a perception is not only remembering but also forgetting. The article therefore also maps the active suppressing of memories by black-listing particular authors or works.

Memory and Remembrance in Scandinavian Cultures: Political Memory. Edited by Atėnė Mendelytė and Ieva Steponavičiūtė Aleksiejūnienė. (Scandinavistica Vilnensis 17:1). Vilnius University Press, 2023.

<https://doi.org/10.15388/ScandinavisticaVilnensis.2023.8>

Lastly, the article is also concerned with peritexts of translation, namely introductions and afterwords, as these often contributed to mediation of the transfer.

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to present and analyse the perception of Norwegian literature in Czech literary memory as it was shaped by the cultural policies of totalitarian Czechoslovakia. It will attempt to demonstrate which types of books were permitted to be published by the Czechoslovakian regime and to uncover the level of knowledge of Norwegian literature that a Czech reader could have gained in the given period.

Many factors affected what was authorized to be translated; in the Eastern bloc, this selection had to abide by yet another set of criteria – the criteria of censorship. This paper will present and explain which type of literature could enter Czech bookshops and libraries, the literary genres which were preferred, and which authors on the contrary were banned.

The text will build on the ideas of Claudia Jünke who deals with the role of translation in cultural memory studies and on the theoretical framework of Aleida Assmann who developed the concept of cultural memory together with Jan Assmann. The case study will use both qualitative and quantitative approaches of analysis.

Theoretical framework

This paper works with the concept of “literary memory” which is derived from the concept of “cultural memory.” The idea of cultural memory was developed by Jan Assmann (1995, original text in German, 1988) who later elaborated on it further with Aleida Assmann. Jünke understands literary memory as a sub-category of cultural memory: “literary texts use their specific modes, techniques and aesthetic devices in order to represent and remember past political, social, cultural, individual, and psychological realities” (Jünke 2001, 4).

The theoretical framework of this paper builds accordingly on the ideas of Claudia Jünke as presented in her paper “Transcultural Memory and Literary Translation: Mapping the Field” (2021), and it also refers to the concepts of canon and archive coined by Aleida Assmann in the chapter of the same name (2008).

Claudia Jünke:
memory and translation

Claudia Jünke outlines an overview of the current state of research regarding the intersection of literary memory studies and translation studies. As the subject has not been systematically explored, the author offers a theoretical, conceptual, and methodological framework for analysis. She establishes a two-dimension model: the “poetics of memory and translation” and the “cultures and politics of memory and translation” (Jünke 2021, 6–9).

The first dimension, the poetics of memory and translation, focuses on literary texts themselves, and is comprised of the analysis of the original work and its translation. When studying the interplay of translations and literary memory, this approach is often used. As an example, we can name “Translation and Transcultural Memory in *La voz dormida*” (Villanueva and Gutiérrez 2019). Although this approach is not applied in this paper, it poses a question relevant for studying publishing activities in non-democratic societies – the question of the importance of peritexts. The research shall examine, whether the translators add something to the source text, for example an introduction or translator’s word, and if so, their agenda shall be investigated. These types of texts were common in communist Czechoslovakia, explaining why the title had been chosen for the reader and how it should be understood, which will be touched upon in the analysis.

The other dimension of the model, the cultures and politics of translation, suggests that researchers should pay attention to other contextual aspects such as the connection and interplay of the translated memories and the target memory culture. Jünke invites us to study the publishing industry and literary markets as they play an essential role in the transcultural transfer of memories via translations. According to the author, academics could examine publishers’ policies and market strategies as well as other agents of translation such as book literary awards. This can be achieved by studying books’ peritexts as well as epitexts. Although this model is vital for this article, its goal is quite different. While in democratic societies it is up to publishers which memories (texts) get to be translated, there are many other factors involved in such decisions in totalitarian countries. However, the purpose of this article is not to investigate the factors affecting the choice of titles, but to depict the picture of Norwegian literature in the Czech translations in the given period. The political aspect of translations is also examined by Francis R. Jones

(2018) who asks various questions, for example, which texts have been chosen for translations and how they are presented to readers.

***Aleida Assmann:
Canon and Archive***

This paper also works with two other concepts developed by Aleida Assmann which she proposed in her text of the same name, “Canon and Archive” (2008, 97–108). The chapter builds on the earlier work *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization: Functions, Media, Archives* (2012, published in German in 1998).

When dealing with memory, we need to take into consideration that things can also be forgotten. The author distinguishes between two forms of forgetting: active and passive. While active forgetting is represented by deliberate acts such as destruction (often performed by the instrument of censorship), passive forgetting, on the other hand, is associated with losing, neglecting, and other unintentional acts. Objects which fall into passive memory are lost; however, they are not destroyed. These objects can therefore be found, either by accident or through systematic research (Assmann 2008, 97–98).

Remembering, like forgetting, also has its active and passive parts. The active part which preserves the past present is called the canon, whereas the passive part which keeps the past in the past is the archive. The canon is independent of historical change; it lasts for generations. Subsequently, the archive is somewhere between remembering and forgetting, and Assmann defines it as “the basis of what can be said in the future about the present when it will have become the past” (2008, 102). Archives appertain to institutions of power; however, they become obsolete with time. They lose their political function, and later reenter into a new context where they are considered to be of scholarly interest. We can therefore distinguish between political and historical archives. The latter are studied, examined, and put into new perspectives by academic researchers. The historical archives represent meta-memory, preserving what has been forgotten and enabling a retrospective reflection on past events (Assmann 2008, 103–106; Assmann 2012, 327–333). In line with these concepts, the goal of this paper is to examine both the passive and active dimension of literary memory; to uncover the historical archive of Norwegian literature in Czech translations in the given period; to look for patterns, and to present the overall picture. Finally, the position of the canon will be discussed.

Historical background

Norwegian literature had a strong position on the Czech literary market since the end of the nineteenth century and especially in the first half of the twentieth century thanks to several publishing houses (notably František Topič's publishing house or Ladislav Kuncíř) and translators (Hugo Kosterka, Milada Lesná-Krausová). The production of translations from Norwegian grew gradually. Despite a short interruption by the Second World War, the less restrictive post-war period from May 1945 to February 1948 offered a relatively high number of translations (Vimr 2014, 25).

This long tradition was disrupted by the communist coup on 25 February 1948, known as "Victorious February." The coup started the deformation of natural literary development as literature had to conform to cultural politics and ideology. Private publishing houses were nationalized, and editorial plans had to be approved by the state, which meant not only official censorship, but also self-censorship. Consequently, the number of published titles quickly decreased.

The period from the communist coup to 1956 is referred to as Stalinism and was characteristic of social realism; while domestic and Soviet production was preferred, Norwegian titles along with other Western literatures were side-lined. The situation changed after Stalin's death in 1953 and especially after the twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union where the First Secretary Nikita Khrushchev condemned the personality cult and dictatorship of Joseph Stalin. Afterwards, the restrictions were loosening, and the thaw period culminated in January 1968 with the Prague Spring. Nevertheless, on 21 August 1968, this development was aborted by the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Warsaw Pact troops, followed by the Normalization period, that is the re-installment of proper communism. The communist period was not over until 1989 (see Vimr 2014, 122–162, or Šámal 2015, 1099–1101).¹

It is important to note that the regime was interested in having enough foreign translations in order to demonstrate pluralism and deny censorship. In 1964, the thirty-second Congress of the PEN International, a worldwide association of writers, was held in Oslo. On that occasion, the Czechoslovak PEN prepared a booklet about Scandinavian literature

¹ The topic of censorship (not only) in communist Czechoslovakia is covered in depth in Wögerbauer et al. (2015); however, as the title is available only in Czech, I would like to refer English-speaking readers to Šmejkalová (2001).

published in Czechoslovakia with bibliography from 1945 to May 1964. The booklet explains the restrictions, that is censorship, as a result of the inter-war period when Scandinavian literature became fashionable:

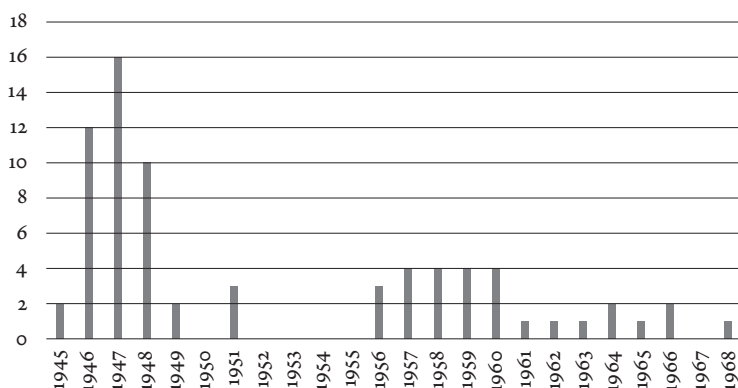
Fashionable interest thrust upon us, uncritically, all that was translated, so that not only the best and most valuable works reached our reader's hands, but also books of less than average quality and even literary trash [...] The translation work dating from 1945 [...] limits its choice to literary work fully deserving our attention. (1964, 8)

Norwegian literature in Czech translations in 1945–1968

Firstly, looking into the given period from a quantitative point of view uncovers how choice was limited and how many Norwegian titles deserved Czech attention. The booklet's introduction by Radko Kejzlar states: "I cannot resist mentioning the figure fifteen hundred, for that is just about the number of titles of Scandinavian literature that have been published in the hundred years since the first edition of Andresen's Fairy-Tales. That is, an average of fifteen translations every year" (Broukalová and Mouchová 1964, 6).

The period of study between 1945 and 1968 has been chosen for several reasons. Following up on previous research – Ondřej Vimr has covered translations from Scandinavian literatures into the Czech language between 1890 and 1950; the later years have not yet been explored. In my PhD thesis² I focus on the subsequent period to the turn of the millennium. I begin my analysis with the year 1945, the end of the second world war, and not with the beginning of the new regime, 1948, to demonstrate how fast the change in the publishing industry took place in compliance with political changes. Then I will focus on the rest of the Communist period, as well as on the changes which took place after the Velvet revolution. Overall, the aim is to analyse Norwegian literature translated into Czech language during Communism, however, I would like to depict the changes and compare the given period (1948 to 1989) to prior and subsequent political developments.

2 *Scandinavian Literature in the Czech Context in 1945–2000. A Reception Study*. It is planned to be completed in 2025.



Graph 1: The number of translated books from Norwegian to Czech between 1945–1968

The following graph shows the number of published translations from Norwegian to Czech language between 1945 and 1968, including reprints. This graph is based on the bibliography compiled by Helena Kadečková and Jarka Vrbová (1993). Even though the PEN booklet speaks of not only Norwegian but Scandinavian literature as whole, the description does not match the reality.

A total of 73 translations were introduced to Czech readers; however, the majority of them, 40 titles, were published in the post-war period between 1945 and 1948, i.e. before the coup. In the graph, there is a rather steep rise after the Second World War which was terminated by the installment of communism. In 1950, there was not a single Norwegian book translated, with the exception of 1951, Norwegian literature is omitted until the beginning of the so-called de-Stalinization period in 1956. One explanation for this gap could be the fact that 116 Norwegian writers, including, for example Johan Bojer, Sigurd Hoel, Helge Ingstad, Cora Sandel, Sigrid Undset, or Tarjei Vesaas, joined a protest against the communist coup in Czechoslovakia in April 1948 (Vimr 2014, 145). Although some of the works by these authors were also removed from libraries (as discussed below), many of them were published later.

From 1957 to 1960, a modest number of four titles a year were published: after that, however, the number declines. As mentioned earlier, the sixties are usually seen as the “thaw period” in Czechoslovak literary history. Nevertheless, the translations from Norwegian do not fit this

narrative. On the contrary, in the sixties only one or two titles a year were published. Benedikt Jager who explores Norwegian literature in East Germany believes that one reason for the small number of translations published in Eastern Europe is that Norwegian literature lacked canonical proletarian literary tradition (2019, 547). Indeed, there was only one Norwegian book which absolutely complied with the communist ideology; however, the title was not even published in Norway and this will be discussed further, in the qualitative section of this paper.

Statistics has its limits when it comes to explanation potential. Therefore, Graph 1 does not explain much about the accessibility of the books to the general public: it does not tell us how many copies of the titles were published or whether the titles were or were not banned thereafter. For this reason, qualitative analysis must be undertaken and observed.

What kind of books were published?

As the translation history of Scandinavian literature to languages of the Eastern Bloc is not explored well, Benedikt Jager's book on Norwegian literature in East Germany is a valuable source of information. Nevertheless, it seems that translations of foreign literature in the communist satellite states must be viewed as individual case studies. Jager concludes that Norwegian authors who attracted East German attention included "De fire store" (The Four Greats). He explains that the four writers of the Norwegian Golden Age of Literature were proto-Socialists and humanists who wrote in a realistic manner. It must be noted that Jager does not examine non-fiction and children's literature as these genres were almost completely absent in East Germany (Jager 2014, 76–78).

When it comes to Czech translations, we cannot get rid of these categories. Especially non-fiction literature, namely travel literature, represent a large share of translations from Norwegian (see the Graph 2). These include first and foremost books by Thor Heyerdahl – *Kon-Tiki ekspedisjonen* (1948; *Ve znamení Kon-Tiki*, 1957, 1958, 1960, 1964; *The Kon-Tiki Expedition*) and *Aku-Aku: Páskeøyas hemmelighet* (1957; *Aku-Aku. Tajemství velikonočního ostrova*, 1959, 1960; *Aku-Aku: The Secret of Easter Island*). Furthermore, Fridtjof Nansen's *Eskimoliv* (1891; *Život eskymáků*, 1956; *Eskimo Life*), and a book by Helge Ingstad, *Pelsjegerliv – blant Nord-Canadas indianere* (1931; *Lovci kožišin*, 1965, 1971; *The Land of Feast and Famine*) fall into this category. These travel books cannot be omitted for two reasons: they were re-published several times and a very large number of copies were published. The title which was published the most

was Thor Heyerdahl's *Kon-Tiki* (published in 1957, 1958, 1960, 1964); moreover, the number of copies was growing. While most titles in the examined period were printed in a run of about 10–20 thousand copies, the fourth edition of *Kon-Tiki* had 195 000 copies printed in 1964. The interest in Heyerdahl continued also later in the seventies and eighties.³

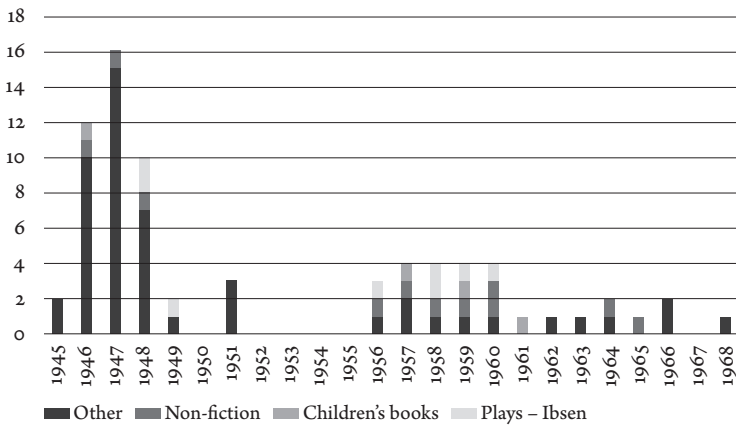
It would be a mistake to exclude children's literature, including fairy tales, as well. Canonical works by Peter Christen Asbjørnsen and Jørgen Moe were published in rather large-scale print runs of 20 and 70 thousand copies. Moreover, children's readers could come across Zinken Hopp's book *Trollkrittet* (1948; *Kouzelná křídla*, 1961; *The Magic Chalk*) or the lesser known Olai Aslagsson (1946 in Czech). In summation, the main categories of the Czechoslovak political archive were not political at all, and there is no doubt that non-fiction and children's literature could be translated precisely because the titles were apolitical.⁴

That is not to say that the Four Greats were in comparison to East Germany side-lined in Czechoslovakia. Canon and censorship as correlative terms were outlined by Aleida and Jan Assmann who identified that there are horizons of tradition which remain unchanged, as if the otherwise universal law of cultural evolution suddenly became invalid (2010, 21–22). The Norwegian canon in Czech translations was preserved; however, it was narrowed down.

The Norwegian Four Greats were almost entirely represented by Henrik Ibsen. While Jonas Lie was not published at all, both Alexander Kielland and Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson were published only once: Kielland's *Jacob* (1891; *Jakub*) came out in 1951, while Bjørnson's *Samlede digterverker* (1860) were published as *Veselý hoch a jiné povídky* (*A Happy Boy and Other Stories*) in 1957. The playwright Henrik Ibsen, on the other hand, was published in Czech eight times, out of which only one of the publications was a reprint: *Peer Gynt* (1867) was published in Czech in 1948 and 1949). Furthermore,

3 In the post-war period, non-fiction literature was represented also by Sigmund Ruud's books about skiing (1946 and 1947) and the travel book *Öya i Ingenmannsland* by Ole Friele Backer, Per E. Danielsen, and Per Waage (1948).

4 These literary genres, non-fiction and children's literature, are popular in the Czech Republic even these days, long after the Velvet revolution. Non-fiction is no longer represented by books of travel but other sub-categories such as for example sociological studies (Thomas Hylland Eriksen). Books for children have even grown in importance (Jostein Gaarder and Maja Lunde among others). It is possible that the popularity of the genres due to the literary memory of a Czech reader.



Graph 2: types of Norwegian literature published in Czech between 1945–1968

this means that Henrik Ibsen was the most published Norwegian author between 1945 and 1968. The fact that Ibsen's work was published both in the post-war period (1945–1948) and after the instalment of communism shows the strength and stability of the canon. The paper focuses only on book publications; however, it is important to note that Ibsen was also often performed on the stage and has remained one of the greatest Norwegian writers in the Czech literary memory to this day. In general, the Four Greats were also published in rather large numbers of copies, about five to ten thousand copies per publication; although that is far less than some of the books about travel, it is more than average.

The emphasis, both in the number of publications and printed copies, was laid on travel literature and Ibsen's work. The question is what rests in the category "other" in the graph. There is one more writer, besides those mentioned above, whose work was published several times – Sigrid Undset. Undset's titles account for eight publications, just as Henrik Ibsen's. Her trilogy *Kristin Lavransdatter* (1920–1922; *Kristina Vavřincová*) was published in 1948 and 1963. The Czech public could also read *Jenny* (1911; in Czech 1972), *Ida Elisabeth* (1932; *Ida Alžběta*, 1947), *Vären* (1914; *Jaro*, 1946; *Spring*), and more. However, it is important to note that besides the second edition of *Kristin Lavransdatter* (1963), all of the titles were published in the post-war years of 1945–1948; the pause in the following decades could be caused by the fact that Sigrid Undset joined

the protest against the communist coup in 1948. Nevertheless, the author came into the forefront especially in the seventies and eighties, steadily shifting her position from the archive to the canon.

It is interesting that authors who were inclined to communism such as Torborg Nedreaas and Nordahl Grieg, who were published in East Germany (Jager 2019, 552), were not published in the Czech language. Even though both were mentioned in the *Světová literatura* (World Literature) periodical, which was a major source of information about foreign literature, no book by these authors was published (shorter texts by Nordahl Grieg and Torborg Nedreaas were included into *Světová literatura* in, respectively, 1957 and 1983). Once again, we see that Czech and East German policies were not identical.

To see the change brought on by the new regime and what type of Norwegian literature was published in communist Czechoslovakia compared to the post-war period, this paper will investigate the period between 1945 and 1968. Firstly, it could be argued that the year 1948 shall be classified as part of the post-war period, even though the communist coup took place in February 1948. The reason is that it takes some time before any changes of this kind become effective. In the year of 1948, ten Norwegian titles were published. These included the following: two titles by Henrik Ibsen, showing the stability of the canon; two titles by Sigrid Undset whose publications were put on hold after 1948 and not come back to by the regime before the seventies; one piece of travel literature and five novels. Two of these novels were written by authors who were later banned from public libraries – Ronald Fangen and Tarjei Vesaas. This implies that the titles published in 1948 continued in the previous tradition and that the political shift could not find its expression yet.

In the post-war period, the focus of the publishers was mainly on novels. Out of forty books, more than four fifths were novels, a lot of them historical novels, namely books by Sigrid Undset, Olav Gullvaag or Johan Falkberget. There were only three non-fictional titles, two theatre plays (by Henrik Ibsen), and one book for children. As seen previously, the ratio changed significantly in the following decades. After the Second World War, Czech readers could get to know writers such as Olav Duun, Trygve Gulbrandsen, or Gabriel Scott, as well as many titles written by Sigrid Undset as mentioned above.

On the contrary, in the period between 1949 and 1968, novels were no longer so strongly represented. Novels accounted for just slightly more than two fifths of publications. Norwegian authors translated into the

Czech language included, for example, Kristofer Uppdal, Johan Bojer, Kåre Holt, Arthur Omre or Aksel Sandemose, or Knut Hamsun (see below). The categories which grew the most were non-fiction literature and titles by the Four Greats, each of them representing nearly a quarter of publications. These categories were known to Czech readers; however, as many authors were black-listed and fiction had to be curbed, they grew in importance. Another characteristic of the publishing houses was their focus on rather unknown authors.

*Marginalized authors:
the case of Alf Bie Christiansen*

In communist countries, literature complying with the ideology was often supported and pushed through. As demonstrated, this is not the case with Norwegian literature. Nevertheless, there is one case which stands out from the rest. I would like to emphasise that it is a rare example which could be treated as a case study of its own. In 1951, the book *Den svarte internasjonale: Vatikanet i verdenspolitikken* (Černá internacionála, 1951; *The Black International: Vatican in World's Politics*) by Alf Bie Christiansen was published. It is unclear how the book appeared in the Czech translation as it was not even published in Norwegian. The book presents the Vatican City State as a dangerous international player assisting both fascism and Nazism, conspiring against world peace and crusading against the Soviet Union.

The book is introduced by a foreword written by a Czech comrade who explains that the Vatican:

tries to preserve and extend its political power, increase its wealth and do anything to avoid being threatened. From that follows its hostile attitude towards countries of people's democracy and especially towards socialist counties, the Soviet Union, and naturally, it follows loyal political connection between the Vatican and the most aggressive forms of capitalism. (1951, 10)

Such texts as forewords and afterwords are called peritexts. They shall be viewed critically, and what the writer's agenda is will be considered (see Jünke). Peritexts were especially important in the communist era because they often told the reader how to understand the book's content so that "the proper, socialist reading" was installed. When studying the history of translation in communist countries, these forms of expression

should certainly be taken into consideration. Nevertheless, the case of *The Black International* and its peritext could be considered as rather extreme, more an exception than a norm; other Norwegian translations do not contain such a strong explanation of the background. Moreover, it seems that even the communist elites in the sixties probably understood that this publication was a misstep as they excluded it from the PEN's list of publications at the international congress in Oslo.⁵

Besides *The Black International*, there were a number of other books published by writers who have now been forgotten or marginalized both in the Norwegian and Czech context in the given period between 1945 and 1968. Namely, for example, Solveig Haugan, Lise Lindbæk, Øivind Bolstad, Olai Aslagsson, or Sverre Sigurdsson.⁶ Benedikt Jager mentions Øivind Bolstad in his analysis as well:

Today, Bolstad is completely forgotten in Norway, and even in the 1950s and 1960s, he was bigger in the GDR and the Soviet Union than at home. [...] by the 1960s, his popularity had declined massively, mainly because political convictions no longer outweighed the lack of talent. (2019, 550)

Quantitatively speaking, the number of titles written by rather unknown authors was fairly high. It is therefore worth mentioning them because these publications played a role as well. They could have made the impression that Norwegian literature did not deal with any other problematic issues. There was a desire to continue publishing foreign literature and to advance Norwegian literature; however, the choice of titles resorted to politically safe themes and options (such as travelogues, books on sports, children's literature etc.) which fell into the historical archive.

***Censorship and banned authors:
the case of Hamsun***

Societies characterized by censorship practice cannot be presented as a monolithic category without any developments. As the political elites are changing, so are the policies, goals, and restrictions. In other words,

⁵ Only one more book was left out from the bibliography – a children's book by Olai Aslagsson; the title was probably just overlooked.

⁶ This is a pseudonym. The author's name seems to be untraceable so far.

books which were not approved for translations or authors who were banned from libraries could be published and could become accessible again. The concept of censorship is fluid, and the case of Norwegian literature in communist Czechoslovakia can demonstrate it quite well. It is not enough to ask which titles got to be translated or how large the print runs were (that is passive remembering in the form of archive). Restrictions on which titles were forbidden must be given attention and investigated. In this sense censorship represents active forgetting as conceptualized by Aleida Assmann.

In the years between 1949 and 1953 a major “cleansing” of public libraries took place. Several titles and authors were removed from public libraries and blacklisted. During the Prague Spring 1968 and later in the seventies and eighties, many of these authors were rehabilitated and a part of the eliminated books could return into libraries as well. Moreover, some of the previously banned titles were even reissued. Petr Šámal published the main lists of *libri prohibiti* based on the censorship of libraries which took place in the fifties as an appendix to his book *Soustružníci lidských duší* (2009; *Turners of Human Souls*). Moreover, the abolishment of censorship during the Prague Spring is covered by Jiří Hoppe in *Pražské jaro v médiích* (2004; *Prague Spring and the Media*).

In this paper, a few examples of the eliminated books and the stated reasons which demonstrate the changeability of censorship as a form of active forgetting will be presented. Of course, there were authors who were banned and were not published again, i.e., the position of political elites remained the same. These are for example Arne Johanssen whose work published in 1947 was marked as “politically unsound,” Ronald Fangen and his book *En lysets engel* (1945; *Anděl světla* 1947; *The Angel of Light*) which was blacklisted as “existentialist literature” or works by Sigurd Hoel which were labelled “literature expressing sharp-witted cheerless mentality.” On the other hand, there were writers banned in the fifties whose work could be published later again: Sigrid Boo’s book from 1948 which was banned as “escapist and bourgeois” but reissued in 1975 can be mentioned here; Arthur Omre’s work, even though marked as “literary trash,” (see Šámals lists of *libri prohibiti* 2015, 219–602) was published in 1966 and 1987. Other authors such as Tarjei Vesaas were not published again after being blacklisted; however, they could at least appear in the *Světová literatura* periodical (published in 1966 during the thaw period).

Finally, Knut Hamsun who is deemed as controversial by many to this day was blacklisted in the fifties as well. All of his 23 titles which were

translated to Czech were removed from libraries due to the author's shift towards fascism. Nevertheless, Hamsun's *Sult* (1890; *Hlad; Hunger*) was published in 1959 to mark the occasion of 100 years since the author's birth. It does not come as a surprise that it took some time before Knut Hamsun could be published in communist Czechoslovakia again. The strategy was to rehabilitate the author, but to provide a proper explanation via the book's peritext. Břetislav Mencák provided an in depth and factual foreword where the importance of the explanation is emphasised by the length of the peritext – 22 pages. Apparently, a similar strategy was applied in East Germany as well. Benedikt Jäger points out that the 34 pages long afterword to Hamsun's *August* is the longest afterword in any Norwegian book published in the German Democratic Republic (Jäger 2019, 564). After this breakthrough, Hamsun was published again in the thaw period (his *Victoria*, 1968, came out in 1898 as *Viktorie*) and then again later in the seventies and eighties. In summation, even active forgetting such as censorship is not irreversible as memory is dynamic.

Conclusion

In this article, a picture of Norwegian literature in Czech translations between the years of 1945 and 1968 has been painted, to demonstrate the shift in preferences after the communist coup in 1948 and to show that the regulations of censorship change over time. For the analysis, Claudia Jünke's approach was chosen, focusing on the intersection of translation studies and memory studies. Moreover, concepts of the canon and the archive by Aleida Assmann whose theoretical work is in the field of memory studies canonical itself, were worked with.

To conclude, even though presented otherwise to the outer world, like in the PEN booklet from 1964, the number of translated titles from Norwegian into Czech was very much limited. Henrik Ibsen remained in the centre as the main representative of the Norwegian canon. It can be said that the canon was preserved, independent of political changes, even though it was narrowed down. Otherwise, the focus shifted to specific genres – non-fiction, especially travel books, and fairy tales. The regime also presented several authors who were marginalized in Norway and did not make it into the national canon. However, it is also clear that communist censorship is not invariable. What was prohibited in one era could have been rehabilitated and reissued later; Knut Hamsun being the paramount example.

After the year of 1989, the political archive transformed into a new historical archive which allows us to study Czech translation history. The topic of Norwegian literature in Czech translations in communist Czechoslovakia is still unexplored, and many questions remain unanswered. These research questions are in line with my doctoral thesis. In the future, I would like to investigate the following period from the seventies onwards, compare the Norwegian literature to translations from other Scandinavian languages, as well as see to which degree the situation was different in other satellite states; so far, it has been observed that policies in neighbouring East Germany were quite different. Moreover, a deeper analysis of peritexts would be contributed.

Ultimately, it cannot be forgotten that Czechoslovakia was formed by two nations – Czech and Slovak; readers could therefore get hold of both Czech and Slovak translations of Norwegian literature. Further examination of Slovak translations is also needed. While there were significantly fewer translations into Slovak than into the Czech language (the PEN booklet lists 22 titles, although it is possible that some titles are missing in the bibliography), the restrictions were not as strict as in Czech publishing. For example, Tarjei Vesaas's *Fuglane* (1957; *The Birds*) was published in Slovak in 1967 (under the title of *Ftáci*), even though the author was blacklisted in the fifties and his books could not be translated into Czech thereafter. Finally, mapping translation history is also important for present and future translation activities. After the Velvet Revolution, more and more Norwegian books are translated every year; however, there are still gaps in the translation realm.

Bibliography

- Assmann, Aleida, and Jan Assmann. 2012. "Kánon a cenzura jako kulturně-sociologické kategorie." In *Nebezpečná literatura: antologie z myšlení o literární cenzuře*, translated by Petr Píša, edited by Tomáš Pavlíček, Petr Píša, and Michael Wögerbauer, 21–50. Brno: Host.
- Assmann, Aleida. 2008. "Canon and Archive." In *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, 97–108. Berlin: Deutsche Nationalbibliothek.
- . 2012. *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization: Functions, Media, Archives*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

- Assmann, Jan, and John Czaplicka. 1995. "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity." *New German Critique* 65: 125–133. <https://doi.org/10.2307/488538>.
- Broukalová, Zdeňka, and Saša Mouchová. 1964. *Scandinavian Literatures in Czechoslovakia from 1945 to May 1964*. Prague: Czechoslovak P.E.N.
- Castillo Villanueva, Alicia, and Lucía Pintado Gutiérrez. 2021. "Translation and transcultural memory in *La voz dormida*." *Perspectives* 29 (1): 156–170. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0907676X.2019.1690010>.
- Christiansen, Alf Bie. 1951. *Černá internacionála: Vatikán ve světové politice*. Prague: Melantrich.
- Hamsun, Knut. 1959. *Hlad*. Praha: SNKLHU – Státní nakladatelství krásné literatury, hudby a umění.
- Hoppe, Jiří. 2004. *Pražské jaro v médiích: výběr z dobové publicistiky. Prameny k dějinám československé krize 1967–1970*. Prague: Ústav pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR.
- Jager, Benedikt. 2014. *Norsk litteratur bak muren: publikasjons- og sensurhistorie fra DDR (1951–1990)*. Bergen: Vigmostad & Bjørke AS.
- . 2019. "Norwegian Literature behind the Berlin Wall." *Scandinavian Studies* 91 (4): 544–567. <https://doi.org/10.5406/scanstud.91.4.0544>.
- Jones, Francis R. 2018. "The politics of literary translation." In *The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Politics*, edited by Fruela Fernández and Jonathan Evans, 309–322. London and New York: Routledge.
- Jünke, Claudia. 2021. "Transcultural memory and literary translation: Mapping the Field (with a case study on Lydie Salvayre's *Pas pleurer* and its Spanish translation)." *Memory Studies* 0: 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1750698020988766>.
- Kadečková, Helena, and Jarka Vrbová. 1993. *Bibliografi over norsk litteratur oversatt til tsjekkisk: (1874–1992)*. Jinočany: H&H.
- Šámal, Petr. 2009. *Soustružníci lidských duší: lidové knihovny a jejich cenzura na počátku padesátých let 20. století (s edicí seznamů zakázaných knih)*. Šťastné zítřky (Academia). Prague: Academia.
- . 2015. "V zájmu pracujícího lidu. Literární cenzura v době centrálního plánování a paralelních oběhů." In *V obecném zájmu: cenzura a sociální regulace literatury v moderní české kultuře 1749–2014*, Vol. 2, edited by Pavel Janáček, Michael Wögerbauer, Petr Píša, and Petr Šámal, 1097–1223. Prague: Academia.

- Šmejkalová, Jiřina. 2001. "Censors and Their Readers: Selling, Silencing, and Reading Czech Books." *Libraries & Culture* 36 (1): 87–103. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25548893>.
- Vimr, Ondřej. 2014. *Historie překladatele: cesty skandinávských literatur do češtiny (1890–1950)*. Scholares. Příbram: Pistorius & Olšanská.
- Wögerbauer, Michael, Petr Piša, Petr Šámal, and Pavel Janáček. 2015. *V obecném zájmu: cenzura a sociální regulace literatury v moderní české kultuře 1749–2014*. Prague: Academia.