

# Censorship across Borders



Censorship across Borders:  
The Reception of English Literature  
in Twentieth-Century Europe

Edited by

Catherine O'Leary and Alberto Lázaro

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P U B L I S H I N G

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This book first published 2011

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

12 Back Chapman Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2XX, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data  
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

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ISBN (10): 1-4438-3218-9, ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-3218-2

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## INTRODUCTION

### CATHERINE O'LEARY

Wander in dreams no more;  
What if the Church and the State  
Are the mob that howls at the door!

—W. B. Yeats, *Church and State*, 1934

Working under censorship is like being intimate with someone who does not love you, with whom you want no intimacy, but who presses himself in upon you. The censor is an intrusive reader, a reader who forces his way into the intimacy of the writing transaction, forces out the figure of the loved or courted reader, reads your words in a disapproving and *censorious* fashion.

—J. M. Coetzee, *Giving Offence*, 1996

### Censorship across Borders

Canonical writers, such as H. G. Wells, Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, T. S. Eliot, D. H. Lawrence, George Orwell, Doris Lessing and Salman Rushdie, have suffered censorship throughout the twentieth century, with lasting effects on the publication and reception of their work in many countries. Readers have been introduced to English literature in a bowdlerised form, unless they were members of an elite group with access to black market books, sealed departments in libraries, or foreign travel. The censorship of English literature in twentieth-century Europe was, in effect, censorship across borders: an attempt to control the information flow both in and out of a country in order to protect the status quo internally and with an eye to the state's reputation abroad. This volume brings together a collection of essays that explore the official reception and censorship of English literature in twentieth-century Europe, taking into account the various social, political and historical contexts, and analysing the extent to which censorship was determined by national and

international concerns. The essays are based on the papers given at a seminar on censorship at the ESSE (European Society for the Study of English) conference, held at the University of Aarhus, Denmark, in August 2008.

Some important works have been published on censorship in recent years, a fact that highlights the continued relevance of the issue, even in modern democratic states. These include the volume edited by Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin, Cormac Ó Cuilleánáin and David Parris, *Translation and Censorship: Patterns of Communication and Interference* (2008); a special edition of *TTR: traduction, terminologie, redaction*, “Censure et traduction dans le monde occidental/ Censorship and Translation in the Western World” (2002); and Derek Jones’s *Censorship: A World Encyclopedia* (2001).<sup>1</sup> The present volume aims to give an overview of literary censorship in Europe and, by focusing exclusively on English literature, it allows for a comparative consideration of this important global issue across political and geographical borders. The objective of the book is to demonstrate the complex and often ambiguous nature of the state’s relationship with culture. Under the unifying theme of the censorship of English literature in twentieth-century Europe, it analyses several states’ use of censorship in their attempts to silence the opposition while rationalising and justifying censorship legislation as the protection of a narrowly defined, or even undefined, common good. This volume considers why certain works and authors, many of them now regarded as canonical, were subjected to harsh censorship in various states and under opposing ideologies.

A unique feature of this volume is that it allows us to consider the reception of certain authors across a variety of ideological systems and to reflect on both the innovation and perceived danger of their work, as well as to serve as a useful point of comparison between the various systems operating in Europe in the twentieth century. Despite the different political and religious ideologies at play, some parallels can be drawn between the censorship that existed in places as diverse as Poland, Ireland, Spain, Portugal, Hungary, Great Britain and the Soviet Union. In all of these contexts, censorship was part of a network of social control. Social and political change could be resisted or restricted if the debates surrounding it were closely monitored and controlled; and an identity linked to the ruling group could be protected and sustained, often at the same time as it was defined against a named enemy or “other”, which was systematically silenced. By comparing the different systems of censorship and the ideologies that underlie them, we can speculate about why certain authors

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<sup>1</sup> See recommendations for further reading at the end of this introduction.

were acceptable to some authorities while others were unacceptable to all. In addition, we can draw some conclusions about the effects of censorship in general.

The essays presented in these pages reveal some previously unpublished and unknown material about the censorship of English literature in twentieth-century Europe and contain information from various state archives about the objectives and implementation of censorship. In recent years state archives, such as the Archivo General de la Administración (AGA) in Spain, the Archiwum Akt Nowyeh (AAN) and the archives of the Główny Urząd Kontroli Prasy, Publikacji i Widowisk (GUKP) in Poland, the Archives of The Leningrad (now St. Petersburg) Censorship Committee, the National Széchényi Library in Hungary, the National Archives of Torre do Tombo in Portugal, the Dublin Diocesan Archives (DDA) and the National Archives of Ireland, and the Lord Chamberlain's Plays and Correspondence Archive at the British Library, have been opened to researchers. Archival research has helped us to understand the systematic nature of censorship in countries such as Spain and Portugal, and to piece together from the files the possible reasons for censorship in contexts where censorship was less obviously regulated. These archives contain files showing the grounds for censorship of a work or an author, the legislation upon which it was based, and correspondence between the various parties concerned, all of which reveal several motivations for, and methods of, censorship and state control of the arts. Archival research also continues to uncover files on authors, military judgements, and church reports on cultural artefacts; the impact of social or political circumstances on censorship; the ambiguity of much of the censorship legislation and the difficulty many censors had interpreting it; as well as the lengths gone to by authors and publishers to protect and disseminate their work. While some work has been carried out in these archives, there is much still to be done to document and analyse the various processes and motivations involved, and to increase our understanding of the human compulsion to censor and control.

While the essays collected in this volume are concerned with historical censorship, often in non-democratic states, it should be acknowledged (although a more detailed analysis is beyond the scope of this study), that censorship remains a live issue even in contemporary, democratic European states. Recent examples of censorship in Europe include the withdrawal of Gurpreet Kaur Bhatti's play, *Behzti (Dishonour)*, from a Birmingham theatre in 2004 in response to threats and violence from the local Sikh community; the Danish cartoon controversy in 2006; the fining of journalists from the Spanish satirical magazine, *El Jueves*, for a 2007

cover illustration deemed offensive to the Crown; and the introduction in 2009 of a blasphemy law in Ireland. The focus here, however, is on historical censorship, both that imposed by twentieth-century authoritarian regimes, such as the dictatorships of Spain and Portugal, the Communist leaders of the Eastern bloc, and that imposed by conservative leaders in democratic states, such as Ireland and Great Britain. As we shall see from the evidence in the essays, the threat from literature perceived by governing bodies is often that the writer will be more persuasive in his argument than the politician, and that the fictional system he describes will seem more attractive than the everyday reality of the reader. In short, the censors fear that an author's words will influence and move the reader to seek change in his personal circumstances. As Ilan Stavans argues in an interview with Verónica Albin, "fiction has always been understood to have a double edge – it allows for an escape from routine and it also showcases the possibilities of freedom" (Albin: 2005, n. pag.). The work of James Joyce, for example, which was censored in so many different societies under a variety of political regimes, was considered subversive because it was deemed anti-traditional and not rule-bound. Its very form suggested change, and change was what the censors and their political masters feared. In the Soviet Union, for example, once Trotsky's ideas about art had been denounced along with their author, there was no longer any tolerance of avant-garde or experimental and non-realist works.

The contributions to this volume show that, despite different and often opposing political ideologies, the practice and implementation of censorship is often the same across national borders. Censors tend to exhibit similar concerns about the threat posed by literature, a fact that allows us to draw some tentative conclusions about the relationship between culture and the state, particularly, but not exclusively, in a repressive regime. As we shall see in this volume, a variety of factors influence both the decision to censor and the severity of the censorship applied. These include the political concerns of the authorities but also, less obviously perhaps, the genre, the notoriety or otherwise of the authors (which may be related to their actual or presumed political engagement, religious persuasion or even nationality), the political or moral intent or content of a text, and the intended readership. Change in political regime, internal censorship board personnel, and wider social transformation also have a direct impact on the practice of censorship, as can be seen in the essays that follow.

## **Society and Censorship**

Censorship exists in all societies. The imposition of limits is the norm and is often welcomed and ratified by the general populace or by their leaders, democratically-elected or otherwise. Censorship, therefore, is not a simple matter, a fact that can be seen in debates about the protection of the innocence of children, for example, and the tension between free speech on the one hand and people's rights to respect and tolerance on the other. An individual's "right" to articulate public statements that are deemed by others to be racist, blasphemous, misogynistic or homophobic is a clear example of where most reasonable people would consider some form of restriction necessary. As Janelle Reinelt highlights in her article, "The Limits of Censorship", the generally accepted democratic right to free expression "must be balanced among competing alternative rights (privacy, respect, civility, among others) and sometimes those competing rights have been difficult to assimilate or fold into a larger good recognised by society's members as necessary for its health and well-being" (2006: 6). Censorship is more complex and nuanced than a simple battle between the forces of oppression and the representatives of freedom of expression or the upholders of individual rights. It is a constant balancing act, even in democratic societies, that takes into consideration the avoidance of harm and the protection of both individual and collective rights. Yet one of the problems with debates about censorship is that they tend not only to focus on the moral and the political concerns of states or citizens, on individual and collective rights, on definitions of innocence and corruption, but are also coloured by emotion, the struggle for power, and blind faith.

State censorship, as it has been practised in twentieth-century Europe, has tended to be either preventive (prior, or voluntary) or repressive (punitive), or both, as in the case of the Soviet Union. Often initially introduced in extreme circumstances, such as in wartime, censorship often becomes normalised. As Piotr Kuhiwczak writes, the first introduction of censorship in Russia, as elsewhere, was presented as a "temporary and extraordinary" measure, justifiable in a revolutionary context (2008: 48). Later it becomes part of everyday, lived experience, justified by continued reference to a threat from an identified enemy of the people. Collusion of the populace, either passive or active, is necessary for such a justification of censorship to be sustained. As this justification is usually framed in terms of protection from a threat, rather than as an attack on freedoms, censorship very often is supported by many in society, who believe not only the threat that they are presented with, but also the argument that the

state has their best interests at heart. The protection argument has traditionally served the censors well. For example, Andrew F. Comyn, writing in 1969 on censorship in Ireland, made the point that “it is important to remember that the primary purpose of the Act was protective not punitive. It was not the intention of the legislature to punish people for writing indecent books but to prohibit indecent books from getting into the hands of people who were likely to be corrupted by them” (45). He went on to argue that “young people, whose minds have had no chance to mature and who, if they read at all, read periodicals and paperbacks, are the ones who need protection; and the books that they are likely to read are those on which the Censorship Board should concentrate” (47). Censorship, in certain circumstances, represents the infantilisation of whole nations.

As we shall see in the essays in this collection, censorship takes on many forms, including the cutting and banning of individual works; the blacklisting of an author; imprisonment; exile; and even death. There are other, less obvious forms of censorship also, including the humiliation, harassment and exclusion of authors, the imposition of fines, loss of employment, and public campaigns against certain writers, deemed enemies, not of the state, but of the people. The purpose of censorship is not only to prevent the dissemination of an unapproved message but also, in the longer term, to break the spirit and destroy the will or ability of the writer to defend himself.

In autocratic regimes, criticism of the leadership is proscribed and debates about alternative forms of governance are silenced. Censorship is often allied to propaganda and other attempts at cultural control in an effort to create and defend a “new” culture that fits with the values of the authorities. In order to allow a nascent culture to establish and sustain itself, alternatives may be systematically silenced or eliminated. As we can see, this pattern is repeated in the twentieth century in places such as Spain, Portugal, Hungary, Poland, the Soviet Union and, to some extent, in Ireland also.

Political censorship in authoritarian regimes is often linked to the creation and protection of a national identity, as can be seen across many European countries in the aftermath of civil and world wars.<sup>2</sup> This frequently includes the use of censorship to protect the official version of events, such as the history of a regime’s rise to power. Works that criticise a regime’s ideology, or praise another, are denounced as attacks on

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<sup>2</sup> For a discussion of censorship, translation and national identity in an Irish context, for example, see Maria Tymoczko, “Censorship and Self-censorship in Translation: Ethics and Ideology, Resistance and Collusion” (2008).

national identity and their authors dismissed as enemies of the people. This form of censorship also affects non-political texts, including works of literature. In various European states, we find echoes of what Kate Sturge, writing about Nazi Germany, describes: "State literary policy was to promote a supposedly pure "German" literature by destroying the "racially impure" in literature" (2002, n. pag.). Such censorship is essentially xenophobic, arguing against internationalisation and the mixing of influences (and often blood) and in favour of the retention of a racial and cultural purity that can only be described as mythical. Writing about Stalinist Russia, J. M. Coetzee notes that Marxist-Leninist theory of ideology dictated that "ideas serve and reflect class interests", and therefore it followed that "ideas that diverged from Party ideas could only serve interests 'alien to the proletariat' [...]. Ideas whose origin was 'alien' could therefore not serve the interests of the proletariat: by a trick of logic, foreign aesthetic movements like Modernism were discredited" (1996, 124).

One of the interesting differences to emerge from the study of censorship in various European states is the idea of censorship as an anti-intellectual exercise in countries such as Spain, Portugal and Ireland, and the argument that, conversely, it was an intellectual exercise in the Eastern bloc, where state control of publishing houses sought to educate the masses in accordance with its ideology. In Communist countries, cheap editions of approved canonical texts were produced and reading was encouraged; in conservative, Catholic states, there seems to have been a more paternalistic attitude towards the populace, who are generally deemed to be ignorant.

In countries such as Spain, Portugal and Italy, political censorship was allied to a repressive moral censorship that fit with the respective regimes' definitions of themselves as morally pure. In Ireland too, the influence of the Roman Catholic Church was great, and its work was supplemented by the endeavours of lay Catholic groups concerned with the sexual morality of the nation. As Donal Ó Drisceoil and Julia Carlson point out, these voluntary groups with links to the Roman Catholic Church were also concerned to define Irish identity as Catholic, in opposition to British (non-Catholic) identity. Yet religious censorship in Europe was not only employed to protect the dogma and leadership of a particular church, as in Spain and Ireland, but was also anti-Semitic in many countries (not only in Germany and France) in the early part of the twentieth century.

In Britain, moral censorship was motivated by Victorian and conservative values, rather than Catholic ones, but the net result was often the same, with traditional ideas of decency and propriety imposed by

authority figures in the face of social change and growing international influence. In all forms of moral censorship, attempts were made to rid literature, and by extension society, of bawdiness, indecorous behaviour and language, obscenity, immorality, indecency and crudeness, yet recognising and agreeing a definition of these terms could be problematic. Nonetheless, it is clear that in societies coming to terms with social upheaval in the form of liberalisation, the certainties offered by historical mores or by Church rules were embraced by large sections of the populace. Censorship in much of Europe also reflected paternalism and ingrained misogyny, which manifested itself in concerns about the representation of the family in literature and the depiction of ideologically approved gender roles. One of the most scandalous aspects of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, and one of the reasons for its trial for obscenity, for example, was Lawrence's depiction of the woman's enjoyment of sexual intercourse.<sup>3</sup> Taboos about gender, as well as class, were shattered with that novel, which was banned not only in Great Britain, but in many other states.

As that trial showed, censorship is not a static force, and the essays in this collection demonstrate how it changed over time in various countries, according to the political and social transformations taking place, such as *the Thaw* in Poland, *apertura* in Spain and changes in leadership in Portugal, the Soviet Union and Hungary. A standardised Soviet (Stalinist) style of censorship was initially imposed across the Eastern bloc countries, but over time there was a divergence from the centralised model across the various states. Some of the essays in this collection point to changes in censorship regimes linked to modernisation, improvements in education, increased travel, urbanisation and, of course, the ebb and flow of foreign influence. What emerges from these studies is a picture of a gradual easing of restrictions over time with occasional clampdowns. The introduction of a Censorship Law in Poland in July 1981, for example, was an attempt at the behest of Solidarity to limit the power of the censors. Alexander Remmer, in his article "A Note on Post-Publication Censorship in Poland 1980-1987", writes of the introduction of a process to end sealed departments or restricted holdings in libraries, but notes that when political circumstances changed, so too did the easing of restrictions (1989, 417). According to Remmer, even in the more liberal period of 1986-87, books such as Orwell's *1984* and publications such as the *Times Literary Supplement* and *The New York Review of Books* were being confiscated by customs officials in Poland (422).

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<sup>3</sup> For information about the trial see C. H. Rolph's *The Trial of Lady Chatterley* (1961).

## The Censorship Process: Silence and Secrecy

It is a revealing feature of censorship that it is not proud of itself, never parades itself (Coetzee 1996, 35).

As many of the essays in this collection show, silence usually surrounds the practice of censorship. The fact that the workings of the censorship system tend not to be public has clear implications for writers and publishers who fear breaching rules that are never openly discussed. In places like the USSR and the Republic of South Africa, the word “censorship” was not part of official discourse, a fact that made challenging it all the more difficult. Indeed the bodies charged with implementing censorship tended to be given euphemistic names, such as *Glavnit* – the Soviet central administration for literary affairs and publishing – and in Spain, the Ministry for Tourism and Information. Readers and ordinary censors too, were often anonymous, though recent archival research has revealed their identities in certain places.

Essays by Jacqueline Hurtley and Julia Carlson consider the censors themselves and reveal significant information about their selection, their roles and their motivation. In some cases, the censor had legislation to interpret and implement; in others there was a more hazy system of control. The religious influence on censorship boards in Spain and Ireland is discussed in some of the essays contained in this volume, as is the influence of non-official bodies, such as the League of Decency, the Knights of Columbanus and the Catholic Truth Society. Military and secret service on occasion wrote reports for censorship boards too. The censors themselves were, in all of the states analysed, a combination of civil servants, writers, journalists, academics and, in some cases, clerics also. The practice of censorship, even in states where the legislation was comprehensive, was at times arbitrary because the legislation and the duties of the censors were open to interpretation. Raquel Merino and Rosa Rabadán, who have examined the censorship of English (and other foreign) literature in Spain, note that, for most fiction, the censorship guidelines were vague: “There was no explicit formulation of what to ban and what to tolerate, so decisions would often depend on the composition of the boards of censors and their degree of ideological conviction” (2002, 143). Given the number of texts that the censors were required to consider, they were inevitably constrained by time also, as for example, Connor Maguire, Chief Justice of Ireland and Chairman of the Censorship Board, admitted to Mervyn Wall: “Not that the Board read all the books it banned [...]. Of course we didn’t. If we had done that, we wouldn’t have been able to ban anything” (qtd. in Atkinson 2001, 129).

Aside from systematic state censorship, more hidden and insidious forms of censorship exist in all cultures and these too are explored in some of the essays contained in this collection. Regulation of literature and culture was not limited to those classed specifically as censors. A social network of different bodies and apparatuses ensured that censorship was pervasive, normalised and, therefore, unchallenged. Some of these alternative forms of censorship are discussed in the essays by Julia Carlson, John Bates, Zsófia Gombár and Marina Kulinich. They range from economic controls, including the restriction of paper supplies, to the role played by editors and publishing companies in the preparation of a text for submission to the censors. In some cases, this amounted to another layer of direct censorship where the intervention of publishers led to an initial round of textual cuts. This too is understandable, though sometimes overlooked in discussions of censorship, as it was not only the author who would be punished should the work displease the censors, but also the publishers. Where the publishing companies were state-controlled and censorship systematic, it was almost impossible to disseminate anything but approved works. In some countries, printing presses were state controlled and even typewriters had to be registered with the authorities (Kukiwczak 2008, 51). Restrictions in paper supply could be used as both threat and punishment, as was the control of the print run, and works could also be confiscated from printer, publisher or bookseller. All of this led to the growth of a black market in literature in countries such as Hungary, Portugal and Poland and, in the latter, the emergence of an alternative, underground publishing industry.

In his essay, John Bates comments on the control of school curricula, and the control of libraries is mentioned by various contributors. In the USSR, Poland and Hungary, state libraries housed sealed departments (*spetskhran*) containing works that were not available to the general reader, although an elite minority of readers could obtain permission from the government or an academic body to access these materials. What is interesting in the context of this study is the fact that many of the works in sealed departments were foreign works of literature. According to Valeria Stelmakh, for example, “in the mid-1980s foreign publications made up 80 percent of the stocks of the *spetskhran* of the Lenin State Library of the USSR” (2001, 146).

Of course, when looking at English literature in a European context, one of the most significant, but often neglected, issues is the role of the translator in the censorship process. As someone who works at the border between two languages and cultures, the translator is a significant point of contact with the outside world. Stavans makes the point that like

the censors, translators “are gatekeepers who stand at key control points and rule over what gets in and what stays out of any given cultural or linguistic territory” (Albin, 2005, n. pag.). The fact that the essays in this volume look at English literature in Europe allows us to speculate and perhaps draw some conclusions about the role of the translator in censorship, considering that English literature was sometimes censored by a translator before it reached the offices of a state censor.

Therefore, what Ní Chuilleánáin termed “the ambiguities of the translator’s position” (2008, 10) must be considered in any discussion of the censorship of English literature in Europe. The question of the translator’s collusion with the official state system of censorship arises, as does the more general question of the role of translator as censor. We must ask if the choices made by the translator reflect the political demands of the day and what role is played by the publishing company that contracts the translator. Maria Tymoczko writes that “it is the tendency to conform to dominant discourses and standards that lies at the root of self-censorship in translation and self-limitation in general” (2008, 31). While it may not be the main objective of his task, it is undeniable that the translator can function as censor, be it through deliberate mistranslation (for ideological reasons, or because of fear of the consequences of failing to do so); excisions; insertions; adaptation of text to suit the home audience or the political leaders. In this volume, the essays by Keith Gregor and Elena Bandín, Mónica Olivares, and Marta Ortega all consider the impact of decisions made by the translator on the reception of a work. An interesting point to emerge from these contributions is that the translator did not always work from the original text and therefore might have taken as a starting point a work that had already been censored elsewhere. In Spain, for example, the availability of cheap imports of translations from Latin America meant that the translations were already done by people working in a different political context in advance of their submission to the censors in Spain.

Another point to be considered is that the translators may, in any given social or political context, have internalised the cultural norms of the day. Indeed, one could argue that the more repressive the regime, the more likely it is that the approved translators will have done so. As Tymoczko points out, however, “translators – like other human beings – are rarely totally submissive to dominant thinking or totally resistant to it. In most circumstances translators accept and buy into some cultural norms and restrictions, but oppose and challenge others” (2008, 36). The idea here, as in any discussion of the many modes of censorship, is to acknowledge its complexity and to recognise that censorship so often was a process of

negotiation. How the content is framed or represented to a particular readership may influence how a work is read; one relevant example of this process is the reception of Eliot's writing in Eastern bloc countries, which was shaped by his presentation as an enemy of the people. Of course, the role of the translator can also be a positive one, and there are several examples of this. Editorial commentary in the introduction or preface can sometimes be used to give the appearance of conformity to political demands, while the content of the text itself challenges them. According to Tymoczko, "translators have reframed translations and supplied an alternate place of enunciation, so as to package subversive texts and ideas in ways that are difficult for the censor to object to" (2008, 26).<sup>4</sup> Translating *against* censorship, or even ignoring it, could be a dangerous game, however, as Olga M. Ushakova shows in her essay, citing the example of a Russian translator of Joyce's *Ulysses* who ended his days in a concentration camp. Finally, it must be acknowledged that in certain states the translating profession, like creative writing itself, was distorted by censorship and suffered long-term damage.

While it was sometimes the case that the censors had no access to an original English-language text and were judging the work entirely on the translated version, it was more often the case that the official decision to censor an English work had little or nothing to do with the work of the translator, but instead was almost exclusively based on the reputation or notoriety of the original author. While writers often argued that the political works of foreign authors were less harshly censored than domestic political works, it is clear from the essays in this volume that, although some foreign writers were tolerated because of their international reputation, others were damned for exactly the same reason, highlighting once again the arbitrary nature of censorship. As Ushakova and Kulinich show in their contributions, the foreign works or authors who were tolerated or even promoted were those whose work was seen to support the ideological line of the regime, or to attack its enemies. Thus denunciations of western capitalism or the bourgeoisie by foreign authors were welcomed, as were works that fit the approved genre of social realism. Authors such as Orwell, however, who was condemned for criticising Communism in *Animal Farm* (1945) and *1984* (1949), or Joyce, who was seen as representing western decadence with his modernist writings, were both heavily censored in the USSR. Yet the reception of such authors was always tied to ideological shifts and to political reconciliations or the rise of new opponents.

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<sup>4</sup> Lawrence Venuti too, has much to say about the translator as social activist. See *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (1995).

## **Evasion and the Effects of Censorship**

One of the more interesting points to emerge from this collection of essays is the evidence of constant attempts to counter, or at least to evade, censorship; heartening too is the evidence of the survival of English literature in Europe. Wherever there is censorship, it seems, there is also a creative attempt to subvert it. Writers sometimes imitate the oppressors' language and produce texts that parody or mock the authorities. They may employ Aesopian strategies, disguising or veiling their message in order to secure the safe passage of the work through the offices of the censors. For some critics, such strategies amount to collusion with the censors; for others it is a necessary means of survival, indeed it is judged admirable for its determination to disseminate the author's message in some form, rather than to accept censorship and silence.

Black markets in prohibited literature emerged in various countries also. In an essay on censorship in Poland between 1976 and 1989, John Bates describes "the creation of an underground publishing network, the 'second circulation', which constituted an increasingly serious challenge to the party-state monopoly on information" (2004: 141). According to Stelmakh too, writing about the Soviet case, "*samizdat* was a form of opposition to the regime and an assertion of the right of the individual for 'one's own' reading" and such was its growth from a tiny minority practice in the 1960s that by the 1980s "its distribution could not be stopped by any punitive sanctions of the authorities" (2001, 147). It must be acknowledged, however, that it was still a practice limited to a relatively small, educated elite.

Despite such attempts at subversion and evasion, the negative effects of censorship were many. Official state censorship, of the type explored in this study, has a wide impact, not only on the author and publisher, but on society in general. In addition to the more obvious effects on individuals who are fined, banned, imprisoned, exiled, or killed, there are many other effects, not all of them immediately obvious. Censorship, after all, can function as a warning and a deterrent and therefore its long-term impact is impossible to measure. One of the most obvious effects of censorship is self-censorship, both conscious and unconscious. We can never know how many books were never written because of censorship. Strategic self-censorship in the interactions between writer and state is also a factor wherever censorship exists. This is a conscious and deliberate form of self-censorship, a negotiation with the censors, accepting certain restrictions with the goal of sidestepping others; getting a message across, albeit in a veiled manner; and avoiding punishment. With self-censorship the writer

is producing his work, not for his ideal reader, but rather for the censor. Ushakova notes in her contribution that people, when they are afraid, are not willing to step out of line. Thus the constant threat of repression (in some places also the lack of clear guidelines for censorship) has a purpose and an effect: self-regulation on the part of those involved in cultural production. In political contexts where the threat of punishment is real and ever-present – albeit unspoken – publishers, librarians, educators, translators, postal workers, customs officials and the official censors themselves often choose to err on the side of caution in their interpretation of a text and its possible threat to the status quo. Hence, self-censorship, or self-regulation, becomes normalised, unconscious, and part of everyday, lived experience. Through coercion and eventually through self-regulation, the objective is to give rise to a literature that reflects only the official values of the regime; in a distortion of the normal creative process, writers, translators and publishers begin to make their work compatible with the official rules.

Censorship has the consequence of damaging culture, not only at the moment when it is exercised, but in the longer term as its legacy is felt on society. The reasons for this are myriad. The population does not have access to certain works or foreign influence and is thus deprived of a range of ideas and exposure to other cultures; instead it has access only to state-sanctioned local fare or to bowdlerised versions of foreign literature. Non-contentious, non-political works become the mainstay of literary production in some places, while politically “correct” literature dominates elsewhere. Censorship can lead to the growth of anti-intellectualism in society, where writers are seen as problematic, or as enemies of the people. The official censors, whose qualifications for their role may be no more than their political allegiances or religious beliefs, distort the literary landscape, restricting normal discourse and development. The absence of information (or of correct information) also damages the collective memory and shared cultural heritage of a society.

Censorship stymies international cultural dialogue and exchange, and prevents opportunities for growth and development. The result for the writer is often silence or even exile. Some then write for export, or for posterity, and resign themselves to the idea that the work will not be published under the prevailing rule; others simply give up. Censorship is difficult to criticise in the moment of its implementation, and it may give rise to new and evasive ways of writing, or indeed of reading, as people attempt to evade its intended effects. Coetzee argues, for example, that “Stalin and his apparatus castrated a generation of writers, robbing it not

only of its generative power but of its power of historical witness and therefore its political power” (1996, 113).

Some writers criticise censorship, usually from exile, as it is difficult to criticise from within. When the writer does remain in the state and writes, ever conscious of the censor at his shoulder, he might write a certain type of fiction with veiled messages. Readers learn to read between the lines – indeed sometimes to read into texts a political intention that is not there. In such circumstances, significant energy is funnelled into evasion rather than creation. Coetzee comments on the “bizarreries of the language that grew up under Stalin”, arguing that “in the case of Stalinist Newspeak there could be no view from the inside, since the language did not allow for critical self-reflection” (1996, 132). Kulinich’s essay shows how this operated in practice. Leslie Daiken too, writing in 1936, concluded that “as a result of veto, ban and boycott the whole social atmosphere tends not only to thwart, but atrophy, the creative impulse among poets, and reduce the rising generation to one of cultural frustrates” (qtd. in Witt, 1952, 257).

## The Essays

In the first of two essays dealing with censorship in Ireland, Donal Ó Drisceoil looks at the author, Frank O’Connor, and his battles with censorship in Ireland, arguing that it engendered “the cultural poverty of the nation” (30). The influence of the Roman Catholic Church is commented on, as is a censorship system that is portrayed as anti-intellectual, and obsessed with morality and with “sniffing out sex” (30). The class aspect to censorship in Ireland is also raised as it was the case that censorship could be evaded more easily by the well-travelled and well-connected middle classes (unlike in Eastern bloc countries, where party connections and obedience were rewarded). Ó Drisceoil discusses the impact of censorship on the Irish writer and on society. For writers, the choice was between silence and exile, and they often found themselves in the bizarre situation of writing for export; for society, the long-term damage to Irish cultural health is incalculable and affected some of the greatest writers that Ireland produced. The specific example of the treatment of Timothy Buckley and his wife (the Tailor and Ansty), one of the most shameful episodes in the history of Irish state censorship, is also considered. The personal nature of censorship – the consideration given to the notoriety of a writer – is clear from the prohibition of O’Connor’s translation of Merriman’s *The Midnight Court*, as translations by other,

less “problematic” writers had not only been approved, but extracts of this text were on the state school syllabus (38).

Julia Carlson, in her contribution on Irish censorship, profiles Christopher O’Reilly, a censor during the years when the Censorship Board was dominated by members of the lay Catholic association, the Knights of Saint Columbanus. She analyses the workings of the Board in the 1950s and comments on “the degree of attention given to the female body and its bodily functions”, as well as homosexuality and incest, in a censorship system that seemed obsessed with sexual morality (54). Furthermore, she shows how the influence of a small group of like-minded and interconnected individuals influenced the censorship of publications in the state. Carlson documents their ambitious plans to legislate for increased censorship, to expand the role of the censor and to draw on the goodwill of other groups, such as librarians, to spread the net further and create a system of “nationwide vigilance” supported by an “active network of readers” working outside the official control system (47, 46). She marks how a decline in the influence of the Roman Catholic Church in civil society towards the end of the 1950s altered the workings of censorship.

John Bates explores the impact of Soviet and Stalinist hegemony in Poland- from 1946 to 1960-, which he describes as “the subordination of all literary activity to Party control” (62). He argues that although largely successful in its attempts to control production, the same could not be said about their control of reception. He comments on the promotion of Russian classics at the expense of contemporary works, both national and foreign, which, he argues, had a negative impact on the cultural health of the nation. He considers the cases of Woolf’s *The Years* and Greene’s *The Power and the Glory*, and looks in some detail at how they were censored. Bates notes the regime’s “special hostility for popular literature” (67) and its insistence on literature that was “representative” and demonstrated “truth”; in other words, literature that was social realist and anti-capitalist. The essay also contains an analysis of other forms of censorship, such as the control of school curricula and the control of libraries, and looks at the state publishing houses versus private publishers. He also discusses the impact of Church-state relations on censorship and how these practices changed over time. Bates’s analysis ends with the suggestion that “the relationship between the permissible and the prohibited was more dynamic than conventionally allowed” (70).

Marina Kulinich’s essay looks at the case of George Orwell in Soviet Russia. She comments on the often insidious way in which censorship operated in the Soviet state, and how much it relied on fear and the threat of punishment. She also refers to the fact that the word “censorship” itself

did not form part of the official lexicon, and she considers the impact of this on society. She also explores the creation of “un-persons”, and what this meant. Following an analysis of the official reception of Orwell’s work, Kulinich goes on to share her personal experiences of how, even in the *Perestroika* years, elements of the old system and old suspicions remained in place. She recounts her witnessing of censorship of English literature in the university system. In her commentary on Newspeak from *Nineteen Eighty-four* and its equivalent in Soviet reality, she points to an area worthy of further study.

Olga M. Ushakova explores the official reception of modernist works in the Soviet Union. Her contribution considers the impact of Trotskyist proletarian aesthetics, Stalinist systematic control, and cold war propaganda on the reception of and access to some of the great Western modernist writers of the twentieth century. She analyses the perceived threat to official, orthodox culture posed by such literature in the context of a battle for cultural identity, and she notes how the modernists were associated with the bourgeoisie, with capitalism and corruption, becoming the targets of anti-western propaganda and the focal point of state-sponsored anti-cosmopolitan campaigns. She assesses the official argument that “modernism was opposed to realism and bourgeois culture to socialist arts” (88). In an essay that captures the social impact of censorship and the fear and the threat of persecution, Ushakova makes the point that literary criticism in this context reflected official dogma and critics’ fears more than it reflected any objective analysis of the works in question. Finally, in common with other contributors, Ushakova draws some conclusions about the impact of such censorship on international cultural dialogue and exchange.

Sandra Josipović considers the reception of James Joyce’s work in twentieth-century Serbia. She analyses the censorship system in the former Yugoslavia, which was initially dominated by Soviet influence and was more concerned with politics than with morality. Josipović gives some examples of the type of censorship implemented under Communism before analysing why Joyce’s work escaped harsher censorship. The role of the translator in the censorship process is a key concern in this essay, which also highlights some of the differences in censorship within the Eastern Bloc.

Zsófia Gombár’s essay provides a comparative study of the official reception of English-language authors in Hungary and Portugal, which allows the reader to draw some parallels between two ideologically opposed systems of governance and to draw some conclusions about censorship in repressive regimes in general. As well as exposing the

similarities and differences between the two systems, Gombár considers the difficulties faced by translators in both jurisdictions. She also comments on the challenges faced by the censorship researcher in the search for records and information. Her detailed analysis of archival material from Portugal and Hungary supports a useful summary of censorship procedures in both countries, ranging from strict political censorship forbidding the mention of certain events to a prudish moral censorship. She considers the justifications put forward by censors for their work and the impact of the practice on writers, translators and on society in general. Gombár concludes that both systems treated foreign literature less harshly than national literature and both demonstrated a “deep respect for canonical literature” (123), albeit for different reasons.

In her contribution, Jacqueline Hurlley explores censorship in a Spanish context, highlighting the interesting case of a censor who was a writer and civil servant linked to a group of idealistic and intellectual Falangists, and who eventually became a victim of censorship himself. The case of Darió Fernández-Flórez shows up the complexity and arbitrariness of the censorship system, documents the changes in censorship personnel and outlook over time, and captures the systematic nature of censorship in Franco’s Spain, where not even a censor could evade the blue pencil. Fernández-Flórez’s gradual disenchantment with his role as censor, which Hurlley plots, echoes the eventual distancing of this group of intellectuals from the regime and its policies. Their vision of a Falangist new state was sidelined in the aftermath of the Axis defeat in the Second World War and a different, conservative Catholic regime with an anti-intellectual bent took hold. The gap between Fernández-Flórez’s public activities and championing of certain works and writers on national radio, and his more clandestine censorship activities could be interpreted negatively as hypocrisy, positively as an attempt to publicise works of censored authors or, as Hurlley convincingly argues, as evidence of his disillusionment with his role as a censor, which after all he had assumed for financial reasons in straitened times.

Also considering the Franco regime, Keith Gregor and Elena Bandín give an overview of theatrical censorship as the context for an exploration of the reception of Shakespeare’s works in Spain and, in particular, a detailed case study of *The Taming of the Shrew*. It is clear that Shakespeare’s canonical status led to less intervention from the censors, who often viewed themselves as literary critics in addition to their role as protectors of the people and sanitisers of the stage. The stress was often on the *mise-en-scène*, costume and setting, rather than on any possible political interpretation of the works in question. Yet, as the authors of this

essay argue, this did not entirely account for the positive reception of his work in Spain. Gregor and Bandín also highlight the role played by factors external to the censorship system: the director, the producer and critics. The essay also looks at the role of the translator in the censorship process, including the impact of self-censorship before the play was staged, and the ease with which translation can be employed to serve censorship. Finally, it highlights ways in which certain versions of Shakespeare's works reflected the conservative and *machista* views prevalent in Spanish society at the time. Thus, in their portrayal of the treatment of women, of manly men, and of religion, these plays could be interpreted as representing a way of living that was consistent with the value system of the regime.

Mónica Olivares's essay contains a detailed examination of the censors' reports on the Spanish translations of Graham Greene's early novels, those written before *Brighton Rock* (1938) and submitted to the Spanish censorship board in the 1940s. Olivares shows how six out of the seven novels that entered the censors' office at that time were banned. It is interesting to note the contradiction evident in the censoring of novels by an author so clearly associated with Catholicism. The regime's focus on sexual morality is revealed in this analysis, as the Spanish censors report on the "moral depravation", "pornographic" and "morbid" passages that they find in some of these stories, particularly in *Stamboul Train* (1932) and *It's a Battlefield* (1934) (166). Olivares also draws the reader's attention to the frustrating absence of certain files from the censorship archive, which means that at times she is forced to speculate on the possible reasons for the cuts to, or prohibitions of, a particular work.

Marta Ortega's essay explores the reception of Rosamond Lehmann in Spain under Franco. Unlike in the case of Graham Greene, Lehmann was never likely to be seen as sympathetic to the regime. In fact, she was vocal both in her opposition to Franco and the Nationalist forces, and in her support for the Republican cause during the Spanish Civil War. Her unconventional and bohemian lifestyle, which is reflected in her work, shows her to be a modern, liberated woman, of the type the regime frowned upon. Moreover, as Ortega suggests, the subject matter of her writing was likely to give offence to a regime concerned with sexual morality. The relative success of her work in Spain and its authorisation by the censors can probably be attributed, in some part at least, to her foreignness, and also to the fact, as Ortega points out, that the translators of her work into Spanish may have based their work on versions of the texts that had already been censored elsewhere.

Nuria Fernández Quesada's comparative analysis of the official reception of Beckett's work in Spain and in the United Kingdom highlights

some interesting similarities, as well as more obvious differences, in the relationship between culture and the state in a National-Catholic dictatorship and in a democratic state. Experimental theatre like Beckett's was relegated to theatre clubs and university theatres in both places. Also noteworthy is her analysis of the impact of censorship carried out by publishers, and their failure or inability to negotiate with the censors. Fernández Quesada also comments on the long term effects of censorship, particularly in Spain, where restrictions on staging and the censorship imposed have had a lasting negative effect on the dissemination and reception of Beckett's work.

## **The Importance of Studying Censorship**

At a time when much of Europe is taking stock, exploring political and social change and the impact of earlier regimes on both the present and on our understanding of the past, the study of censorship is a timely one. We describe ourselves, our hopes, desires and disappointments in literature and, therefore, an exploration of how literature was treated by political, social and religious leaders in Europe in the twentieth century reveals quite a lot about how we see ourselves or want ourselves to be represented. With foreign literature (as English literature was for much of Europe), questions of national identity and national pride come into play also, and are related to considerations not only of how we see ourselves, but also of how we want to be seen by others. This book offers an opportunity to consider the legacy of censorship on the understanding in various European contexts of some of English literature's great writers.<sup>5</sup>

One of the purposes of studying historical censorship is the correction of misinformation and untruths disseminated for years about certain authors and books. Another is to alert people to the fact that the version of an English text that they have read may not have been the complete, uncut version. For Romanian theatre academic, Liviu Malita, the study of the censorship archives has been a positive experience, but also "a form of revenge. [...] It has provided the comforting feeling that I have overcome the anguish of my personal past. It underlined my sentiment, acquired during the days of the Romanian revolution, that I have escaped a nightmare" (2009, 13). It can be argued, then, that the study of censorship can be a cathartic experience, part of a process of truth and reconciliation,

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<sup>5</sup> While not dealt with in this essay, work is also being carried out on the censorship of English (and other foreign) literature in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. See the essays by Jane Dunnett and Kate Sturge in the *TTR* Special Issue on translation and censorship.

related to our understanding of our history and ourselves. Although the repressive and conservative regimes discussed in this volume have been replaced by more liberal administrations, we still have much to learn about what led to them and sustained them for so long. Our hope is that this collection of essays will enhance our understanding, not only of literature and its interpretation, but of the interactions between culture and the state.

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