

Censorship, Print, and Nations in the Habsburg Monarchy (ca. 1789–1914)

Panel proposal

9th Congress of ESCL/SELC (The European Society of Comparative Literature / Société Européenne de Littérature Comparée):

Imagining Inclusive Communities in European Culture

Rome, September 5–9, 2022

Panel chair: Marijan Dović

Summary

This two-part panel will examine the multiple roles of imperial censorship (which in the mid-eighteenth century was ultimately transferred from the Church to the state and its bureaucracy) in the various literary cultures of the Habsburg Empire. It will focus on censorship in the sense of institutionalized forms of control over the circulation of texts, the essential dimension of which is the capacity to sanction (implemented by the repressive apparatus of the state). The major temporal focus will be the “long nineteenth century”, the period between 1789–1914, which the revolutionary year of 1848 divides almost symmetrically into two phases: the phase dominated by preventive (or pre-publication) censorship, and the phase determined mostly by retroactive (or post-publication) censorship. Special attention will be given to the relations between censorship practices and growing nationalisms (and national movements) within the monarchy. As demonstrated by numerous censorship cases (often in the form of legal disputes, prohibitions, seizures, and imprisonments), nationalism became an increasingly burning issue especially after 1848. How did the official censorship cope with these growing tensions in its attempt not only to imagine but also to establish (or at least preserve) a model of an “inclusive community” in Habsburg Central Europe—a colorful community consisting of diverse languages and ethnicities? As shown by the recent research on the Empire (Judson) and its censorial apparatus (Bachleitner, Wögerbauer et al.), this dynamic was more complex than the prevailing post-World War I national(ist) narratives tended to acknowledge. This complex issue will be addressed by a group of experts from individual key areas of the Habsburg Empire.

Venue: Rome, Sapienza (Edificio Marco Polo, Viale dello scalo S. Lorenzo 82, *Aula Magna*)

PROGRAM (PART 1): Tuesday, September 6, 2022, **9.30–11.00**

Luka Vidmar (Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts): **From Rome to Vienna: Secularization of Censorship in the Habsburg Monarchy in the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century**

Michael Wögerbauer (Czech Academy of Sciences): **The “Holey” System: Habsburg Censorship, Its Centralization, and Its Gaps (1749–1848)**

Orsolya Rákai (Hungarian Academy of Sciences): **Cult, Criticism, Economy: Censorship as a Multilevel Tool and Language in the Emergence of Modern Social Subsystems around 1800**

Norbert Bachleitner (University of Vienna): **Censorship of Classics around 1800: Friedrich Schiller’s Plays in Print and on the Stage**

PROGRAM (PART 2): Tuesday, September 6, 2022, **11.30–13.00**

Marijan Dović (Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts): **Imperial Censorship and the Press in Carniola during the Pre-March Period**

Marko Juvan (Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts): **Censor’s Paradox: The Habsburg Empire and the Literary Field**

Daniel Syrový (University of Vienna): **Between Policing and Literary Criticism: Habsburg Censorship of Literature in Lombardy-Venetia**

Marina Protrka Štimec (University of Zagreb): **Censor’s Scissors in Croatian Literature: Shaping an (Inter)national Community**

ABSTRACTS

Censorship of Classics around 1800: Friedrich Schiller's Plays in Print and on the Stage

Norbert Bachleitner

Since the establishment of systematic censorship in Austria in 1751, not only popular literature but also classics were prohibited. It was only in 1810 that an instruction for censors postulated that classics be treated with greater leniency than before. Until then, authors such as Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, Lessing, Wieland, Goethe, and Schiller appeared regularly on the lists of banned books. For example, Schiller's *Maria Stuart* dealt with the legitimacy of the two queens Mary and Elizabeth, Mary's questionable execution, and the role of the Catholic Church and the pope in the dispute with the Anglican ruler. Each of these motifs by itself would have sufficed for prohibition of the text.

Moreover, nearly all of Schiller's plays could only be performed in radically edited and truncated versions. In analogy to books, plays that had been authorized for performance in Vienna were generally automatically allowed in the Austrian lands as well. Approval for the Burgtheater in particular effectively meant an official seal of acceptance. On the other hand, plays approved for performance in a province had to be submitted to censorship once more in Vienna if they were to be staged there. In general, censorship in the provinces was considered more liberal; audiences in Graz, Prague, or Hungary could regularly enjoy plays forbidden in Vienna.

Imperial Censorship and the Press in Carniola during the Pre-March Period

Marijan Dović

When *Kmetijske in rokodelske novice* (*Agricultural and Handicraft News*, 1843–1902), the first successful journal in Slovenian, celebrated its twentieth anniversary in 1863, its longtime editor Janez Bleiweis summed up the period from the end of the eighteenth century to the present day: “Deadly silence reigned over the dear homeland until our Novice rose again from the grave.” In this paper, I analyze the reasons for this silence in the period leading up to the 1848 Revolution: it will turn out that it was largely due to the tightened censorship that, under Chancellor Metternich and Police Commissioner Sedlnitzky, imposed strict control of the printed word throughout the monarchy. As will turn out, the decisive factor contributing to such a “deadly silence” was the principled aversion to the (Slovenian) press in Vienna, which manifested itself in the administrative obstruction of newspapers—from the banning of *Slavinja* in the mid-1820s to the obstruction of *Slovenske novice/Zora* and *Ilirske novice/Ilirski Merkur* in the late 1830s. The ability to ban a newspaper was far more decisive in shaping the Slovenian literary and media system during this period than the efforts of the contemporary censorship bureaucracy, whether imperial or local. This great power of Sedlnitzky's office can be well demonstrated by the story of *Kmetijske in rokodelske novice*, which could not obtain permission to publish for several years.

Censor's Paradox: The Habsburg Empire and the Literary Field

Marko Juvan

During the Pre-March Era, the censor in the Habsburg Empire was paradoxically both an instrument of imperial thought control and an educated predecessor to the modern literary critic. At this time, the institution of the censor in the Empire underwent a significant change: it was individualized according to the subjective aesthetic judgment and symbolic capital of the censor in question, as well as the contingent power relations in the local literary field. It was not only the official political, religious, and moral concerns that guided the decisions of the censor: his assessment of texts also played a decisive role in the hidden agenda of national movements and the aesthetic or scholarly stratification of the public discourse. As such, it contributed to the institutionalization of the dominant aesthetic conventions. A case in point is Jernej Kopitar's censorship of the Carniolan poetry almanac *Krajnska čbelica* (Carniolan Bee) in the 1830s. Kopitar's judgment was influenced not only by his literary taste and philological knowledge but even more so by his Austro-Slavic and Herderian strategy of national revival, which assigned only a subordinate role to aesthetic and individualist high literature. Thus, Kopitar's culture planning contradicted the Romantic universalism of France Prešeren and Matija Čop and its elevation of the importance of poetry for the early national movement. As a result, Kopitar's censorship is a case of the individualization of the anti-Romantic censor as a counterbalance to the Romantic individualization of the writer.

Cult, Criticism, Economy: Censorship as a Multilevel Tool and Language in the Emergence of Modern Social Subsystems around 1800

Orsolya Rákai

According to Niklas Luhmann's systems theory, the secularization of society around 1800 can be interpreted as the gradual disappearance of the integrative center that characterized the societies before functional differentiation. Functional differentiation leads to the state where social systems have each their own limited role, and modernizing societies increasingly see it as an anomaly and premodern regression when, for example, religion or economy try to play the role of science or politics.

The censorship of the Habsburg Empire took part in this process in an exciting way in the late eighteenth century. First, it helped create the modern individualizing and totalizing state power in Foucauldian sense, which is a structural feature of all modern social subsystems. On the other hand, the main feature of the new, sensitive *belles lettres* is the unmarked fictionality and the aesthetic effect that can result in unpredictable social processes, the prevention of which will be the task of censorship. The censorship of the era attempts to regulate this process very meticulously: measures divide recipients into groups according to how much they are suspected to read in the so-called emotion-driven way.

The notion of the author and the demarcated work appears in contemporary censorship as well. The purpose of censorship of the era is twofold: it wants to rule out undesirable political effects, but it also wants to optimize the economic benefits of aesthetic effects. In doing so, it contributes greatly to the development of the critical discourse that surrounds works of art as a professional network, regulating the ways and spaces of the valid utterance.

Censor's Scissors in Croatian Literature: Shaping an (Inter)national Community

Marina Protrka Štimec

Considering some of the most well-known examples from Croatian literature, this paper will consider the influence of the censor's power in shaping the literary field in the second half of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century. Comparing dominant narratives produced mainly in Romantic literary periodicals with those produced by modernists at the turn of the century, it becomes obvious that transformations in the literary field are interrelated with the field's understanding of its own community. At the beginning of the twentieth century the walls of national imaginations began to have a broader sense of communal and wider understanding of politics in young literary movements. The usual aim of censorship as a political intervention in the literary field at the time was to determine the scope of literacy as well as what Rita Felski has called the uses of literacy. However, linearity of this intention was abolished with the transformative nature of the aesthetic and its ability to change the public or political space by allowing the invisible to be seen, giving, in Jacques Rancière's sense, the part to those who have no part. With their manifestos, movements, assaults, and revolutions, young literary movements in Central, East, and South Europe at the end of the nineteenth century were in the position of collective deterritorialization of language and the individual connection to a political immediacy, as well as the collective assemblage of enunciation. Their attempt to make themselves visible in a public domain could be compared to that of their forefathers from the age of Romanticism. Following some of their poetic and political choices, the Youth introduced a step further, the step towards generational difference. The most distinguishing in that line was their secession from their ancestors and their way of imagining, speaking, and writing toward an (inter)national community.

Between Policing and Literary Criticism: Habsburg Censorship of Literature in Lombardy-Venetia

Daniel Syrový

Literary censorship was a policy concern during the Habsburg domination that was as central in Lombardy-Venetia as it was throughout the Empire. Its organizational structures and legal contexts between 1815 and 1848 can be reconstructed fairly easily in a comparative approach, but the practical side of censorship is less well-known, despite a considerable amount of archival material at our disposal.

In particular, this paper asks about the role of censorship in shaping the literary field of Lombardy-Venetia beyond certain famous or infamous conflicts regarding freedom of expression and an increasing tension between nationalist tendencies and the conservative government, especially from the 1830s onward. High profile cases, such as banished "classic" books or magazines, the seizing of smuggled items (often with international diplomatic ramifications), and the punishment of writers and publishers, have been a focus of historical scholarship, and for good reasons.

However, given the way censorship was effected, all published texts had to be expressly admitted in order to be published and distributed, which made the daily work of the censors central to a functioning publishing industry. In practice, this meant that individual censors could influence for the selection of texts to be printed, and they not only sought transgressions in terms of politics, religion, and public decency, but also had an eye on the quality of the texts; in other words, they engaged in literary criticism. Many of the items

under scrutiny may be forgotten today and never became part of the canon, but the censorship documents still provide important contexts for a crucial period in Italian literary history, and help us better understand how power structures in the literary field were negotiated between market concerns, literary aesthetics, and a government institution increasingly focused on conservative policies.

From Rome to Vienna: Secularization of Censorship in the Habsburg Monarchy in the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century

Luka Vidmar

Although censorship in the Habsburg Monarchy was an authority mechanism of the prince, it was primarily carried out by the Catholic Church, specifically, by the censorship office under the auspices of the Bishop of Vienna and the University of Vienna, which was led by the Jesuit order. Local bishops and Jesuit colleges were responsible for local censorship, while in the event of violations secular authorities could be called to account, and the Inquisition in Rome would be informed about the appearance of controversial printed material. The beginning of the eighteenth century saw the first attempts to separate the secular and ecclesiastical authorities: Emperors Joseph I and Charles VI deprived the university of the right to censor works with political content, reserving this right for their court council. But not until Maria Theresa did the Habsburg Monarchy follow the example of other European countries, especially France and Prussia, by institutionalizing, centralizing, and bureaucratizing censorship, meaning that the Church was gradually losing its direct and decisive influence. Maria Theresa initially set up a Book Censorship Commission in 1751 within her state apparatus, which took over the responsibilities of older institutions. In 1772, she even subjected works with theological content to state preventive censorship, which was a major symbolic blow to the Church. However, secularization did not automatically entail liberalization. Austrian censorship of books was restrictive, the volume of the state index, *Catalogus librorum a Commissione Aulica prohibitorum*, grew with each edition and at the end reached the volume of the Roman index, and basic tendency remained Catholic, in accordance with the views of Maria Theresa. Moreover, Austrian censors surpassed their Roman counterparts in the eagerness with which they collected titles of old and new morally controversial works, especially erotic ones.

The “Holey” System: Habsburg Censorship, Its Centralization, and Its Gaps (1749–1848)

Michael Wögerbauer

Based on cases from Bohemia, Austria, and elsewhere, this paper will sketch a typology of what Robert Darnton has called structural gaps, intervals that provided space for exceptions, negotiation, or circumvention of the firmly established rules of Habsburg Censorship from the reign of Maria Theresa until the Vormärz period. The paper thus aims to analyze the haphazard character of the imperial censorship in different historical and geographic situations. This includes e. g. the geographical distance of authors and publishers from the political centers and the ability of the authorities to enforce legislative rules in remote regions of the Habsburg Lands; incompatibilities between the given censorial rules and the economic necessities of the book market; frictions between changing political guidelines and the

personal continuity in the civil service; difficulties of the authorities to cope with language boundaries and region-specific discourses as well as with the poetic strategies like the use of aesopic language or historicizing settings of fiction. The aim of the paper is to propose a typology of gaps the censorial system offered to the participants of literary communication and, more precisely, to question the effects that this “holey” system had on the articulation of nationalisms as well as political and ethnic tensions.

CONTRIBUTORS

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Norbert Bachleitner was Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of Vienna/Austria. He was visiting professor at various universities including the Sorbonne nouvelle in Paris and is a member of the Academia Europaea. His fields of interest include the reception of English and French literature in the German speaking area; literary translation and transfer studies; social history of literature; censorship; literature in periodicals; intertextuality, and digital literature. His most recent book publications are (ed., together with Achim Hölder and John A. McCarthy) *Taking Stock – Twenty-Five Years of Comparative Literary Research* (Leiden, Boston: Brill 2020), (ed.) *Literary Translation, Reception, and Transfer* (Proceedings of the ICLA Conference in Vienna 2016, vol. 2, Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter 2020), and (ed., together with Juliane Werner) *Popular Music and the Poetics of Self in Fiction* (Leiden, Boston: Brill 2022).

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Marijan Dović is Associate Professor and Senior Research Fellow at the ZRC SAZU Institute of the Slovenian Literature and Literary Studies (Ljubljana). He also lectures at the University of Ljubljana and the University of Nova Gorica. In Slovenian, he is the author of books on systemic approaches to literature (*Sistemske in empirične obravnave literature*, 2004), the history of the literary producer (*Slovenski pisatelj*, 2007), the interwar avant-garde (*Mož z bombami*, 2009), and the Slovenian national poet (*Prešeren po Prešernu*, 2017). With J. K. Helgason, he co-wrote *National Poets, Cultural Saints: Canonization and Commemorative Cults of Writers in Europe* (Brill, 2017). He has co-edited collections of essays on literature and censorship, publishing, book history, the spatial turn in literary studies, and literature and music. Other publications in English address Romanticism, European cultural nationalism, national poets and “cultural saints,” the literary canon, systems theory, the Balkan interwar avant-garde, and the theory of authorship. He is Editor-in-Chief of the comparative literature journal *Primerjalna književnost* and a co-editor of the book series *Studia litteraria*.

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Marina Protrka Štimec is Associate Professor at the Faculty of Philosophy and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb, where she teaches courses in Croatian Literature. Mainly interested in theories of authorship, literary canon formation, avant-gardes, and broad literary movements, she published two books in Croatian, titled *Stvaranje književne nacije* (Making a Literary Nation, Sveučilište u Zagrebu 2008) and *Politke autorstva* (Politics of Authorship, Hrvatska sveučilišna naklada 2019). She co-edited volumes on canonical Croatian writers Grigor Vitez and Tin Ujević, based on previous international conferences, and prepared a critical edition of Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić's articles. She is a co-editor of *Croatica: Magazine for Croatian Language, Literature and Culture*.

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Orsolya Rákai is Senior Research Fellow at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (MTA), Institute for Literary Studies (Department of Literary Theory). Formerly she was a lecturer at the Department of Classical Hungarian Literature and the Department of Communication and Media Studies of the University of Szeged, and was twice a visiting professor at the University of Vienna. Her books include *Utazások a Fekete Királynővel* (Journeys with the Red Queen, Kijarat 2006), *Az irodalomtudós tekintete* (The Point of View of the 'Literaturwissenschaftler', Universitas 2008), and *Schöpflin Aladár és az irodalom modernizálódásának leírásai* (Aladár Schöpflin, the Press, and the Descriptions of Modernization in Literature, EditioPrinceps 2013). She also contributed to several research projects, which included collecting a database of censorship records in eighteenth-century Hungary. Her research interests lie in the issues of the social integration of literature and the social use of narratives.

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Daniel Syrový studied Comparative Literature at the University of Vienna, where he has been working and teaching since 2008, and currently holds the position of Senior Lecturer. His research on early modern narrative in Spanish, French, German, and Italian has resulted in several papers on chivalric romances (especially the Castilian *libros de caballerías*) as well as the book *Tilting at Tradition: Problems of Genre in the Novels of Miguel de Cervantes and Charles Sorel* (Rodopi 2013). Syrový's second major research focus is book censorship,

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Luka Vidmar is Research Fellow at the ZRC SAZU Institute of Slovenian Literature and Literary Studies. He works on literature, art, and culture in Slovenia in the periods of Baroque and the Enlightenment, especially on forbidden books, libraries, academies, and cultural nationalism. His monographs include *A Slavic Republic of Letters: The Correspondence between Jernej Kopitar and Baron Žiga Zois* (Peter Lang 2016) and (with Sonja Svoljšak) *And Yet They Read Them: Banned Books in Slovenia in the Early Modern Age from the National and University Library Collection* (NUK 2018).

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Michael Wögerbauer is Head of the Department of the Sociology of Literature at the Institute of Czech Literature at the Czech Academy of Sciences. After defending his PhD thesis on the multilingual literary system in Prague (1760–1820) and its differentiation into national literatures, he co-wrote a two-volume history of censorship in the Bohemian lands titled *V obecném zájmu* (*In the Public Interest*, Academia 2015). Together with Claire Madl and Petr Píša, he published two works on book history in Bohemia from 1749–1848: the encyclopedia *Buchwesen in Böhmen 1749–1848* (Book Industry in Bohemia, Harrassowitz 2019) and the monograph *Na cestě “k výborně zřízenému knihkupectví”* (Toward a “Well Functioning Book Market,” Academia 2019). He is Editor-in-Chief of *Cornova*, the journal of the Czech Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies.