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ÚSTAV ANGLOFONNÍCH LITERATUR A KULTUR

**Literary Politics of the Radio Free Europe in Czechoslovakia in the Period of
“Normalization”**

Literární politika Rádia Svobodná Evropa v Československu v období „normalizace“

DIPLOMOVÁ PRÁCE

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V Praze dne 6. srpna 2022

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Prague, August 6, 2022

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Souhlasím se zapůjčením diplomové práce ke studijním účelům.

I have no objections to the MA thesis being borrowed and used for study purposes.

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Introduction

The American Radio Free Europe (the RFE) began its regular daily program on May 1, 1951 – broadcasting to Czechoslovakia. The country seemed most suitable as a target for Western propaganda because of its historical ties with the West and its significant liberal democratic tradition in the interwar period.¹ Founded by an anti-communist organization called The National Committee for a Free Europe, the CIA covert organization,² in the first two decades of its broadcasting, the RFE was funded secretly. After its ties with the CIA were exposed, from the middle of the 1970s, the radio was publicly financed by the US Congress.³ Following the outset of the Czechoslovak Broadcasting Department, the RFE launched multiple broadcasting departments in several languages. All of them were independent of one another, but they were all obliged to follow the general guidelines from the US headquarters. The internal dynamics of the RFE, from the US headquarters to each of the regional offices (departments), and the tensions within regional offices greatly influenced how its core values would be implemented. Yet, there was a direct institutional structure and hierarchy from “above” to each of the individual broadcasting departments.⁴ In that sense, there is no doubt that all of them had to act following the foreign policy interests of the United States.

What makes the RFE particularly suitable for analyzing the transnational dynamics of culture in the Cold War is that, unlike most of the other foreign radio stations that broadcast on the territory of Czechoslovakia, such as the Voice of America or BBC, it focused on the events

¹ Arch Puddington, *Broadcasting Freedom: The Cold War Triumph of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty* (Kentucky: The University of Kentucky Press, 2000), 1-3.

² John Prados, *Safe for Democracy: The Secret Wars of the CIA* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2006), 47.

³ Martin Manning, Herbert Roberstein, “Central Intelligence Agency (CIA),” in *Historical Dictionary of American Propaganda* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2004), 51.

⁴ Prokop Tomek, *Československá redakce Radio Free Europe: historie a vliv na československé dějiny* (Praha: Academia, 2015), 176-177.

inside the country.⁵ Therefore, the RFE was not only a station that promoted the “Western way of life” by showing the exercising of individual freedoms and enjoying the sweet pleasures of capitalism in the West. It instead “intervened” in the ideological and cultural realm of the ČSSR by introducing “Western values” and ideas for interpreting internal issues.

From its foundation, the pivotal figure of the Czechoslovak Broadcasting Department was the pre-war journalist Ferdinand Peroutka. So, it can easily be assumed what shaped the politics of the radio towards communist Czechoslovakia. The culture of the post-1948 era was conceived as a disruption of the “real” tradition of the Czechoslovak liberal democracy practiced in the interwar period.⁶ However, especially during the “normalization,” the period of consolidation of pro-Soviet powers in Czechoslovakia after the breakdown of the Prague Spring until the end of socialism in 1989, the Czechoslovak Broadcasting Department of the RFE was not a homogeneous whole without internal conflicts among members with different ideological views. Typical disagreement was between two generations of exiles - those who left Czechoslovakia in 1948 and those who emigrated in 1968. The gap became particularly discernible from the middle of the 1970s. Historian Prokop Tomek suggests that this was solely a generational conflict⁷ between people of different times, but it is clear that the tensions were not deprived of an ideological component. For the older generation, brought up in the Masaryk’s Republic, the coming to power of the communists in 1948 was unacceptable and a sufficient argument for leaving the country. Because of that, they looked at the post-1968 exiles as ex-communists (who actively participated in a dictatorship) or as still convinced, covert communists.⁸ Moreover, this may indicate the “red scare” within the RFE, which could influence how those “suspicious” of not being anti-communists would operate in the 1970s and

⁵ Tomek, *Československá redakce Radio Free Europe*, 13.

⁶ Oldřich Tůma, “Czechoslovakia,” in *Dissent and Opposition in Communist Eastern Europe: Origins of Civil Society and Democratic Transition*, ed. Detlef Pollack and Jan Wielgohs, (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2004), 42.

⁷ Tomek, *Československá redakce Radio Free Europe*, 152.

⁸ Tomek, *Československá redakce Radio Free Europe*, 163-164.

1980s. The RFE journalist Lída Rakušanová recalls the “red corner,” as it was called internally, where, among others, belonged figures such as Sláva Volný, Milan Schultz, Josef Jedlička, etc.⁹

Literature and culture, in general, were significant factors in exile opposition activities, as Jaroslav Dresler, the editor of the RFE’s cultural programs, remembered: “Culture and literature played a minor role in our [exiles’] efforts at first. It soon became clear, however, that domestic opposition and resistance could come mainly from literature.”¹⁰ At the same time, the Radio Free Europe played a significant role in how exile opposition culture was directed: “A number of writers centered around the cultural broadcasts of the Free Europe. Much of what they wrote there has not been printed and is probably lost.”¹¹ The significant share of cultural content in the overall program of the Radio Free Europe, with several shows a day, demonstrates how important the struggle for cultural and ideological hegemony was. The cultural content consisted mainly of the works censored within Czechoslovakia, works of dissidents published abroad, or those written by previously censored authors. In Chapter 2 of the thesis, I will discuss the issue of censorship and how it was treated in the RFE’s shows. I will attempt to answer whether the selection of works was conditioned by censorship at home or if it instead shows what the world would have looked like had it not been for censorship. The reconstruction of the literary canon of the RFE’s Czechoslovak Broadcasting Department is the first step in trying to define the values on which that canon was based. At the same time, it will open up a series of additional questions - how do these values correspond to the Czechoslovak society after the Prague Spring, and how to the value system of the Western bloc? Were there two parallel Czechoslovak cultures, one official in the country itself and the other in exile? Were they, and how, reconciled into one after the end of the Cold War?

⁹ Lída Rakušanová, *Svobodná v Evropě* (Praha: Book Dock, 2020), 97-101.

¹⁰ “Kultura a literatura hrály v našem usilování zprvu vedlejší úlohu. Brzy se však ukázalo, že domácí opozice a odboj mohou vycházet zejména z literatury.” Jaroslav Dresler, “Deset postřehů pamětníka,” in *Česká literatura v exilu 1948-1989: bibliografie*, ed. František Knopp (Praha: Makropulos, 1996), 14.

¹¹ “Řada spisovatelů se soustředila kolem kulturního vysílání Svobodné Evropy. Mnoho z toho, co tam psali, nevyšlo tiskem a je asi ztraceno.” Dresler, “Deset postřehů pamětníka,” 15.

Regarding culture, the two Cold War blocs were also seen as absolute opposites – on the one hand, modernism and abstract art, and on the other, socialist realism.¹² In literary terms, Western (primarily American) aestheticism and formalism as expressions autonomous from their political and social function were opposed to Eastern socialist realism burdened with politics in the service of social function. The basis of this simplified view goes back a long way to Clement Greenberg’s influential essay “Avant-garde and Kitsch” (1939), in which the promoter of Abstract Expressionism argues that avant-garde art (including literature) is the one in which “[t]he content is to be dissolved so completely into form.”¹³ In other words, while avant-garde artists imitate the *process* of art and literature, kitsch “imitates its effects,”¹⁴ focusing on the content. According to Greenberg, kitsch was the official art of the Soviet Union because of its inability to raise “the cultural level of the masses,” so it “flatter[ed] the masses by bringing all culture down to their level.”¹⁵ In the West, it was taken for granted that such kitsch had to be in the service of the regime and the ruling ideology. Nothing could be “non-political” in the East – the official kitsch served the doctrine, while the unofficial art was assumed to be critical. The Cold War background, at the same time, fortified this simplified polarization and complicated the understanding of what is political. In the balance of powers achieved by the mutually assured destruction, every message coming from the *other* side of the border was read as political. On similar grounds, the RFE’s position at the time was interpreted in two opposite ways. One group of contemporaries (whose explanation was later adopted by

¹² Boris Groys, “The Cold War between the Medium and the Message: Western Modernism vs. Socialist Realism,” *e-flux Journal*, accessed March 15, 2022, <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/104/297103/the-cold-war-between-the-medium-and-the-message-western-modernism-vs-socialist-realism/>.

¹³ Clement Greenberg, “Avant-garde and Kitsch,” in *Art and Culture: Critical Essays* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989), 6.

¹⁴ Greenberg, “Avant-garde and Kitsch,” 15.

¹⁵ Greenberg, “Avant-garde and Kitsch,” 19.

some researchers)¹⁶ referred to the RFE as “a beacon of truth.”¹⁷ In contrast, the group within the ČSSR’s political structures considered it merely an “annoying transmitter.”¹⁸

These two kinds of ideological and political polarization will be taken as reference points in relation to which I will show the transnational character of the cultural activities of the RFE and its role in the cross-border circulation of literature in the Cold War. The circulation of knowledge with synchronicities, contingencies, and parallels undermines the ingrained image of the Cold War cultures as two monolith blocs that have little in common. The contextualization of the literary activities of the RFE within the late Cold War transnational dynamic could show not only whether the RFE promoted the US soft power or built upon the liberal democratic tradition of interwar Czechoslovakia but also how cultural values changed more generally.

Foreseeing the future of comparative literature amid the Cold War, Erich Auerbach wrote that “standardization dominates everywhere” and that the whole world, let alone European, culture was entrenched in two cultural patterns – Anglophone-Western and Russian-Bolshevik.¹⁹ In the following chapters, I will try to show the process of displacing the work from one “pattern” to another and back to the first one, detecting the changes that occur to the work during the process. The way in which culture “communicates with itself,” creating continuities and ruptures, shows that canons do not look like “[t]he existing monuments [that] form an *ideal* order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art among them,”²⁰ as T.S. Eliot suggested. Canons are rather temporary (although that temporariness sometimes lasts for centuries) outcomes of conflicting ideological

¹⁶ Tomek, *Československá redakce Radio Free Europe*, 15.

¹⁷ Jim Bishop, “A Beacon of Truth in Ocean of Lies,” *New York Journal-American*, May 6, 1958, accessed June 10, 2022, <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP73-00475R000200330001-9.pdf>

¹⁸ “Štvavá vysílačka” was a general term used for referring to the RFE within the ČSSR.

¹⁹ Erich Auerbach, “Philology and *Weltliteratur*,” trans. Marie Said and Edward Said, *The Centennial Review* 13, no. 1 (1969): 2-3.

²⁰ Thomas Stearns Eliot, “Tradition and the Individual Talent,” in *Selected Essays* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1932), 15. Emphasis added.

and aesthetic values in a struggle for cultural hegemony. Aleida Assmann refers to the canon and the archive as two types of cultural memory, wherein the first one is “the actively circulated memory that keeps the past present,”²¹ while the second one is “the passively stored memory that preserves the past *past*.”²² The active cultural memory, among other things, includes literary works continually read, written about, and commented upon, which are part of the curriculum and thus are constantly being re-evaluated. A canon is a selection of messages from the past that the present perceives as valuable enough to be preserved, most often because they support the collective cultural identity in the broadest sense. In the following chapters, I will attempt to determine the values the canon affirmed, at the same time dealing with the main points of critique of the Czechoslovak socialist system by the works aired on the RFE, such as the critique of bureaucratic socialism and the suppression of individual liberties. Juxtaposing the official literary canon and that of the RFE and analyzing their relations could shed new light on how we see the period of the so-called “normalization.”

This period is characterized by purging reformist cadres from all crucial political and economic positions, strict control of information and organization, and a return to a centralized, planned economy.²³ The Czechoslovak society of the period of “normalization” is usually represented as a deeply lethargic society that, after the collapse of the Prague Spring and the establishment of the austere order, does not aspire to any, not even minimal, political participation. The atmosphere was famously embodied in the figure of the greengrocer from Václav Havel’s essay “Moc bezmocných” [The Power of the Powerless] (1978), who keeps the sign “Workers of the World, Unite!” in his shop for the reason of not showing disloyalty to the regime and not because of a sincere belief in the slogan and ideology of the government.²⁴ What

²¹ Aleida Assmann, “Canon and Archive,” in *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, ed. Astrid Erll, Ansgar Nünning, Sarah B. Young (Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 98.

²² Assmann, “Canon and Archive,” 98. Emphasis added.

²³ Bernard Wheaton and Zdeněk Kavan, *The Velvet Revolution: Czechoslovakia, 1988-1991* (New York, London: Routledge, 2018), 6-7.

²⁴ Václav Havel, *The Power of the Powerless* (London: Vintage Digital, 2018), Kindle.

Havel refers to as the “post-totalitarian” society is “a world of appearances, a mere ritual, a formalized language deprived of semantic contact with reality” where “the significance of phenomena no longer derives from the phenomena themselves, but from their locus as concepts in the ideological context.”²⁵ In short, the “normalization” regime was marked as a hyper-ideologized pseudo-reality. After the political change in 1989, in the period of liberal triumphalism, this formula was used for scapegoating the entire Czechoslovak political system, considered a historical aberration. The teleological vision of world history at the time when “actually existing socialisms” were crumbling all around Europe and the spirit of triumphalism are encapsulated in Francis Fukuyama’s book *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992):

“[I]f we are now at a point where we cannot imagine a world substantially different from our own, in which there is no apparent or obvious way in which the future will represent a fundamental improvement over our current order, then we must also take into consideration the possibility that History itself might be at an end.”²⁶

Although moving toward a world consisting of liberal democracies is an evolutionary process, it is not irreversible, as Fukuyama believed. Different countries become liberal democracies and then fall into crises that can last for decades, but this does not contest the fact that world history is *generally* moving towards liberal democracy as the final and ultimate form of government.²⁷ From the position of the post-1989 liberal consensus, the period of the socialist experiment was a mistake to be forgotten. Likewise, the “normalization” could be understood only as abnormal normality,²⁸ as a period in which the abnormal was referred to as normal and as yet another evidence of the communist psychological repression deprived of “common

²⁵ Havel, *The Power*, chap. 5, Kindle.

²⁶ Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: The Free Press, 1992), 51.

²⁷ Fukuyama, *The End of History*, 48.

²⁸ See: Edward Taborsky, “Czechoslovakia’s Abnormal “Normalization,” *Current History* 64, No. 381 (May 1973): 207-211.

sense.” Only today’s distance allows us to look at this period as a specific but still a *par excellence* project of modernity.²⁹

Another peculiarity about this whole battleground of ideas that says a lot about its modernity and seems particularly important in the circulation of cultural content is that a literary text was spoken on the radio. A different medium brought significant changes in how the literary text was received, consequently leading to a change in the form of the text itself. The task of the comparatist being “a reflection on the aesthetic phenomenon of literariness in a cross-national context”³⁰ means that the analysis of literary texts broadcast over the RFE is deficient without scrutinizing how the medium shapes literariness. I will discuss in Chapter 3 the influence of the radio as a medium on the reception and creation of broadcast literary works – how the medium shapes the devices employed in the construction of a literary work (the emphasis of sound and repetitions, for instance). Works printed and “fixed by the unchangeable text”³¹ had to be adapted and cut to be put out, which led to a paradoxical situation in which works censored (or not published) in Czechoslovakia reached the recipients for the first time in an altered form. In other words, Chapter 3 will aim to answer the question of the extent to which the medium through which literature was communicated shaped the aesthetics of literature. This matter was touched upon by George Orwell, who himself had the experience of editing and hosting a literary show on the radio in the 1940s. In the essay “Poetry and the Microphone” (1943), Orwell argues that “the broadcasting of a poem by the person who wrote it does not merely produce an effect upon the audience, if any, but also on the poet himself.”³² Not only did the radio affect the author’s relations to his/her own work, but it also changed the concept

²⁹ Pavel Kolář, “Čtyři „základní rozpory“ východoevropského komunismu,” in *Co byla normalizace?: Studie o pozdním socialismu*, ed. Pavel Kolář, Michal Pullmann (Praha: Nakladatelství Lidové Noviny, Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů, 2016), 135.

³⁰ Charles Bernheimer, “Introduction: The Anxieties of Comparison,” in *Comparative Literature in the Age of Multiculturalism*, ed. Charles Bernheimer (Baltimore & London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1995), 10.

³¹ Boris Viktorovich Tomashevsky, *Teoriya literatury: Poetika* (Moskva: Aspent Press, 1996), 23.

³² George Orwell, “Poetry and the Microphone,” in *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell: My Country Right or Left 1940-1943, Volume 2*, ed. Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus (New York: A Harvest Book, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1968), 331.

of poetry “as primarily something printed, and something intelligible only to a minority.”³³ Radio popularizes literature, makes it available to millions in a way close to them, and makes it seem “normal,” without pretentiousness and intellectual arrogance. Although a mass phenomenon, “radio literature” is an individual act on the part of the listener who can turn off the radio (or change the station at any time) and does not feel the presence of others – “millions may be listening, but each is listening alone,”³⁴ remarks Orwell.

Through this dynamic between the private and the public, between selected and mass, I will attempt to describe the process rendered by the political change in 1989 through which “underground” values became mainstream and the mainstream values of the official culture of “normalization” became marginal. The shift of dominant cultural values illustrates the relation of the literary canon to the “common sense” of a particular culture because the works of a canon, describing the world according to the laws of probability, impose the limits of *imagined* in a society.

³³ Orwell, “Poetry and the Microphone,” 331.

³⁴ Orwell, “Poetry and the Microphone,” 331.

(Un)Censored Literature

In a letter written after the breakdown of the Prague Spring by the four states of the Warsaw Pact, the French poet Louis Aragon expressed the fear that the Czechoslovak culture would be “the Biafra of spirit,” making a parallel with the great famine and the overall humanitarian catastrophe in the Nigerian secessionist state of Biafra which took place in the approximately same time as the Prague Spring.³⁵ In the following years, the period of “normalization” in the field of culture would be interpreted in this manner, especially from the perspective of the anti-communist consensus established after 1989, which would see communism as nothing but violent political practice.³⁶ Thus, the interpretation of “normalization” after the fall of the communist regime builds upon or merely repeats many of the criticisms transmitted by the Radio Free Europe, but in different geopolitical circumstances. In what follows, I will discuss how the RFE treated the issue of repression and censorship in Czechoslovakia after the Prague Spring, attempting to reconstruct its theoretical and ideological foundation.

The outlook of the Radio Free Europe on the state of affairs in culture within Czechoslovakia was formed based on numerous reports written by the RFE analysts, the so-called *Situation Reports* and *Background Reports*, which singled out and described the most relevant events. The coverage of the events in the Eastern bloc was obtained through interviews with people coming from “behind the Iron Curtain” as well as through the analysis of the Communist media,³⁷ including statements of politicians, analysis of articles in newspapers, news on the current literary production, works of literary criticism, announcements of personal

³⁵ Louis Aragon, “The Biafra of Spirit,” in *A Besieged Culture: Czechoslovakia Ten Years after Helsinki*, ed. Jan Vladislav et al. (The Charta 77 Foundation & International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights: Stockholm-Vienna, 1985), 15.

³⁶ Petr Andreas, *Vybírat a posuzovat: Literární kritika a interpretace v období normalizace* (Příbram: Pistorius & Olšanská, 2016), 24.

³⁷ *Why Radio Free Europe?* (Radio Free Europe: Munich, 1953/1976?), 6, accessed November 10, 2021. <https://digitalcollections.hoover.org/objects/66282/why-radio-free-europe?ctx=b820d17736f144832c8c279b440a9594bb2fad32&idx=5>.

changes of people in power, etc. Reports aimed to acquaint the staff of the RFE with the situation on the ground, thus suggesting the editor's attitude towards different phenomena. The vast majority of the reports concerning literature and culture were written by Antonín Kratochvíl, the literary historian (and the RFE journalist) with particular interests in Catholicism and the Czech Baroque. Besides his main academic interests, Kratochvíl dealt with Czech literature in exile and the repression of writers who remained in Czechoslovakia from the beginning of the 1950s, about which he wrote extensively in a trilogy titled *Žaluji* [I Accuse].

From the collapse of the Prague Spring onwards, the RFE reports follow the gradual cessation of the liberalization of cultural politics in Czechoslovakia. Kratochvíl described the first half of 1969 as “marked by the fading away of the process of democratization and liberalization,”³⁸ noting later that the second half of the year was already “clearly marked by the advance of dogmatists in every sphere of the cultural front.”³⁹ Finally, in late 1970, he conveyed the conclusion of the Czech Minister of Culture Miroslav Bruzek that the “normalization” of the cultural sphere had been completed.⁴⁰ However, in the following years, Kratochvíl's general assessment of the literary life in Czechoslovakia boils down to a conclusion that “normalization” has failed - “the regime has not succeeded in ‘normalizing’ the literary scene.”⁴¹ This fundamental contradiction between the assessment that “normalization”

³⁸ Antonín Kratochvíl, *The Literary Scene in Czechoslovakia (January-June 1969): Czechoslovakia/20* (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute: Munich, 1 August 1969), 1, accessed April 10, 2022. https://storage.osaarchivum.org/low/6c/a5/6ca5a201-7895-47a1-a177-b30dda0e3421_1.pdf.

³⁹ Antonín Kratochvíl, *The Cultural Scene in Czechoslovakia (August – December 1969): Czechoslovakia/2* (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute: Munich, 3 February 1970), 1, accessed April 15, 2022. https://storage.osaarchivum.org/low/a4/ca/a4ca1a8d-254a-40b8-b8c0-b2455eafc002_1.pdf.

⁴⁰ Antonín Kratochvíl, *The Literary Scene in Czechoslovakia (July – December 1970): Czechoslovakia/6*. Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute: Munich, 11 February 1971), 1, accessed April 22, 2022. https://storage.osaarchivum.org/low/91/c6/91c6bdbe-b2e1-4dfa-858f-a6e1794a7bb4_1.pdf

⁴¹ Antonín Kratochvíl, *Literature and Politics of Culture in Czechoslovakia, 1982: RAD Background Report/77 (Czechoslovakia)*. Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute: Munich, 11 April 1983), 14, accessed April 11, 2022. https://storage.osaarchivum.org/low/c5/a6/c5a656a1-6650-45ed-bd9f-d02a9dd9c69c_1.pdf.

succeeded and that it cannot succeed because the culture resists it is evident in almost all analyzed materials.

Following its mission of being “the instrument which projects the image of Western democracy through and over the Iron Curtain,”⁴² the RFE reports mainly focused on the systematic violations of freedoms. Accordingly, “[t]he main characteristics of that process [of “normalization”] were the defamation and terrorization of oppositional authors and heavy-handed censorship of the still existing cultural periodicals.”⁴³ Describing the details of various disputes, bans, and petitions, Kratochvil does not convey a gloomy and lethargic picture of the cultural scene after the collapse of a zestful project, as suggested in Havel’s “Moc bezmocných,” but describes a fierce struggle. In the first few years, literary life was depicted as determined by the conflict between the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of the Interior on the one side and the Czechoslovak Writers’ Union (and the Czech Writers’ Union) on the other.⁴⁴ At the state level, the situation was perceived as a conflict between hardliners and those, like Gustáv Husák, who wanted to pursue a more conciliatory policy.⁴⁵ At the level of the cultural scene, the fundamental dynamics seems to be determined by the conflict between two groups of writers - those who were willing to accept the new regime and those who were not. What Kratochvil implied, and what seemed to be the prevailing view of the RFE on the Czechoslovak literary life, as I will show later, is that from 1969 onwards, the “real” Czechoslovak culture is either the one published unofficially or abroad. The reason for this is not just in the fact that some significant authors were censored or forced into exile, but it also

⁴² *Why Radio Free Europe?* (Radio Free Europe: Munich, 1953/1976?), 4, accessed November 10, 2021.

⁴³ Antonín Kratochvil, *Ten Years of the “Process of Normalization” in Czech and Slovak Literature: RAD Background Report/141 (Czechoslovakia)* (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute: Munich, 21 June 1979), 1, accessed April 16, 2022. https://storage.osaarchivum.org/low/a2/15/a2152ca4-8989-4abc-aecc-7eda01f9ba96_1.pdf.

⁴⁴ Antonín Kratochvil, *The Cultural Scene in Czechoslovakia, January – June 1970: Czechoslovakia/23* (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute: Munich, 27 August 1970), 1-8, accessed April 16, 2022, https://storage.osaarchivum.org/low/3c/df/3cdfec44-3aaf-4b9c-8e75-f5115fbd60bf_1.pdf.

⁴⁵ Thomas E. Heneghan, *Politics and Culture in Czechoslovakia: RAD Background Report/56 (Czechoslovakia)* (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute: Munich, 8 March 1976), 1, accessed April 17, 2022, https://storage.osaarchivum.org/low/6d/f0/6df00951-d85a-474d-82ff-e57da21ab6ec_1.pdf.

lies in a different understanding of what the Czech or Czechoslovak culture was. From the perspective of exile and anti-communist understanding, the coming to power of the communists makes a clear break in the logical continuity of Czech and Slovak culture. Thus, in the late 1980s, the RFE welcomes that “there has been a tremendous upsurge of independent efforts in Czech and Slovak literary life *at restoring* continuity with the pre-communist and noncommunist cultural heritage.”⁴⁶ This view is briefly summarized in Kratochvíl’s ten-year assessment of the “normalization” process in culture. He warns there that on the 23rd International Book Fair in October 1971 in Frankfurt am Main, “Czech literature was represented [...] by authors living abroad and those whose books were not allowed to be published at home. Interest in Czech literature was concentrated primarily upon those works that were put out by Swiss, Austrian, and above all West German publishers.”⁴⁷ The tragic circumstance that some of the significant authors had to publish abroad and sometimes even in translation rather than in the original language, shaped the reception of works supposedly critical of the government that does not allow publication. Transnationality, in this way, becomes the constitutive part of the work, as I will show later.

Before I move to literary criticism, it is worth mentioning that *Background Reports* were primarily focused on the Czech Lands. Although the situation in Slovakia was not entirely ignored, it took up less space in the analysis. Also, it was presented in a different light, primarily regarding repression, which was not clearly of a systematic character as in the Czech Lands. This gap was explained by the assumption that the liberalization process started in Slovakia has been more thoroughly implemented in the Czech Lands.⁴⁸ In connection to that, my

⁴⁶ Antonín Kratochvíl, “A Note on Independent Literature,” in *Situation Report: Czechoslovakia/19* (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute: Munich, 30 December 1987), 43, accessed April 18, 2022, https://storage.osaarchivum.org/low/35/ea/35ead88e-bdbd-4051-a512-a5fa1b082253_1.pdf. Emphasis added.

⁴⁷ Kratochvíl, *Ten Years of the “Process of Normalization,”* 7-8.

⁴⁸ [Ladislav?] Nižňanský and [Hanuš?] Hájek, *Cultural Policy: From Repression to Greater Tolerance: Czechoslovakia/2* (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute: Munich, 8 February 1973), 5, accessed April 25, 2022, https://storage.osaarchivum.org/low/0a/67/0a675fa9-509d-40be-8c85-3d994df5561b_1.pdf.

examination of the period after the breakup of the joint state, which I will offer in the concluding chapter, will be focused on the Czech Republic due to the somewhat different development of events in Slovakia, but also since the treatment of the Czech Lands dominated within the analyzed sources.

The issue of literary criticism seemed to be of paramount importance because it is in literary criticism, more clearly than in literature itself, that the differences in the authors' ideological assumptions are more evident. For instance, in his 1980 assessment, Kratochvil notes that a high official of the Ministry of Culture in his yearly "balance sheet" "carefully avoided all reference to such touchy questions as the crisis of Czechoslovak literary criticism or the problems with new works."⁴⁹ Unlike literary work that allows for different interpretations, literary criticism is more explicit in its ideological and aesthetic normativity. As a form whose task is reflection, contextualization, and evaluation of the literary text, literary criticism unequivocally implies the value system based on which it performs the assessment. Petr Andreas describes the field of literary criticism during "normalization" as a field of "conflict between the political necessity of the moment and cultural tradition."⁵⁰ According to him, this tension was resolved in two basic ways: on the one hand by critics who sought to protect "the political project of socialist literature" by squeezing specific authors, forms, and values out of public cultural space, while other authors have tried to integrate certain traditions within such an ideological framework.⁵¹ However, the conflict between normative systems is not so clearly projected on the cultural life within Czechoslovakia, where the "normalizing" ideological-normative system had absolute hegemony. The open conflict between two

⁴⁹ Antonín Kratochvil, *Literature and Theater: The Cultural Policy of the CPS in 1980: RAD Background Report/106 (Czechoslovakia)*, 22 April 1981, 3, accessed April 15, 2022, https://storage.osaarchivum.org/low/da/ae/daaef03a-5b41-4bf8-a2f5-e564559727e4_1.pdf.

⁵⁰ Andreas, *Vybírat a posuzovat*, 183.

⁵¹ Andreas, *Vybírat a posuzovat*, 183.

normative ideological conceptions that significantly influence literary production becomes apparent only by setting things up in the transnational Cold War context.

Květoslav Chvatík's essay "Funkce kritiky ve společnosti v krizi" [The Function of Criticism in a Society in Crisis] was considered a theoretical basis for the treatment of literature in the RFE's show *Literatura bez cenzury* [Uncensored Literature]. The fate of his essay is an interesting example of how the circulation of a text in the Cold War is a constitutive part of the text itself. Written on the occasion of a proceeding held in West Germany, the shortened version essay was published in *Listy: časopis československé socialistické opozice* [Sheets: Magazine of the Czechoslovak Socialist Opposition] except for chapters 3 and 4 dealing with the development of Czech literary criticism before 1948. The radio show *Literatura bez cenzury* also broadcast a shortened version, without the entire Chapter 3, but also omitting some passages from other chapters. For instance, those parts that praise the collection of poetry by Vilém Závada published in Czechoslovakia in 1970 in the official publishing house *Československý spisovatel* [Czechoslovak Writer] as well as criticism of Pavel Kohout's writing skills (whose novel *Katyně* [The Hangwoman] would be broadcast in the show). That is not to say that Chvatík's text was censored in both cases, but that the editors, forced to fit the content into a 30-minute show and a journal of a limited number of pages, made "digest" versions that suited their formal demands. Simultaneously, those platforms exposed their political biases through different regimentations of meaning. The full version was published in 1991 in the volume *Pohledy na českou literaturu z ptačí perspektivy* [Bird's Eye View of Czech Literature].

As mediated by the RFE, Chvatík's essay approaches Czech literature as national literature (ignoring Slovak authors), which, due to unfortunate historical circumstances, has been split into three main streams: official literature published in Czechoslovakia, unofficial literature published in Czechoslovakia (samizdats) and literature published in exile. He assigns the task to the criticism in a society in crisis to encompass those three layers as "one structural

whole.”⁵² According to Chvatík, the communist dictatorship, especially the “normalization” regime, destroyed critical thought, literary criticism, and the normal development of literature in the Czech Lands. To re-establishing the *critical* literary criticism that Chvatík imagines, it is necessary to establish a single editorial venture of critical editions that should cover all three streams.⁵³ Although the infrastructural basis of this critical venture remains unclear, Chvatík definitely imagined a kind of independent public literary sphere as a necessary condition for recuperating the unity of Czech literature, whose non-print counterpart could be the Radio Free Europe, as its editors and associates imagined it. He warned that Czech exile writers were already dovetailed into the intellectual traditions of the countries to which they emigrated – Věra Linhartová and Milan Kundera in France, Josef Škvorecký in Canada, etc. – so that only *Czech* literary criticism may be able to view their work as part of Czech history and literature, but in the context of the “host” country.⁵⁴ Yet, the role of literary criticism is much more significant than contextualizing the writer within the national tradition:

One of the fundamental paradoxes of art criticism is that the more consistently it defends the autonomy of artistic values, the more it ceases to be only a literary and artistic criticism and becomes a critique of life and life values. It helps create a hierarchy of values outside of art, in society; it imprints the face of the whole national culture.⁵⁵

As presented in the broadcast essay, the cultural scene did not seem too complicated. On the one side, there was a repressive, monolithic, and “ideological” regime, and on the other,

⁵² Květoslav Chvatík, “Funkce kritiky v společnosti v krizi,” In *Pohledy na českou literaturu z ptáčích perspektiv* (Praha: Pražská imaginace, 1991), 33

⁵³ Chvatík, “Funkce kritiky v společnosti v krizi,” 44.

⁵⁴ Chvatík, “Funkce kritiky v společnosti v krizi,” 44.

⁵⁵ “Jeden ze základních paradoxů umělecké kritiky spočívá v tom, že čím důsledněji obhajuje autonomii uměleckých hodnot, tím více přestává být pouze literární a uměleckou kritikou a stává se kritikou života, životních hodnot. Pomáhá vytvářet hodnotovou hierarchii i mimo umění, ve společnosti, vtiskuje tvář celé národní kultuře.” Chvatík, “Funkce kritiky v společnosti v krizi,” 35.

pluralism, polyphony, and an attempt to defend the autonomy of art. From the beginning of the period I am dealing with, the RFE consistently *depoliticized* its position as a merely pluralistic, democratic corrective of the existing culture. Not only in Chvatik's essay, we recognize this tendency in the RFE of presenting the "non-ideological" literature and literary criticism as a political act because it is the regime culture that makes it ideological: "In Czechoslovakia *culture is politics*, not only because the regime decrees it to be on such ideological grounds, but also because a large part of the population perceives it as a vicarious political assertion of the nation against the authorities."⁵⁶

In more universal terms, the process of "normalization" of culture in Czechoslovakia was set as a conflict between the Communist Party and the ideologically neutral "civil society." Thus, during the liberalization in 1967, Kratochvil wrote about "the long-expected clash between the Communist Party and the intellectuals."⁵⁷ Another RFE analyst, Thomas E. Heneghan, opined how "politics and culture are *so* intertwined in Czechoslovakia"⁵⁸ and that "the key to both past and future policy shifts, therefore, lies more in the political constellation in Prague than in a carefully drawn scheme for cultural development."⁵⁹ Later, in 1974, Kratochvil again wrote about "the systematic *ideologization* of the cultural sphere,"⁶⁰ repeating the assessment in the following year by claiming that "[i]n the other arts [other than music] the ideological aspect was strongly emphasized."⁶¹

⁵⁶ V[ladimír] V[.] K[usín], "Czechoslovak Cultural Dissent and the Budapest Forum," in *Situation Report: Czechoslovakia/17* (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute: Munich, 28 October 1985), 3, accessed April 23, 2022, https://storage.osaarchivum.org/low/5d/00/5d002020-ccc8-44e6-b57c-24b167851081_1.pdf. Emphasis added.

⁵⁷ Antonín Kratochvil, *A Survey of Developments on the Czechoslovak Cultural Scene (August – December 1967): Czechoslovakia/20* (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute, 14 March 1968), 24, accessed April 12, 2022, https://storage.osaarchivum.org/low/bf/c1/bfc124fa-7de7-439d-bf3d-5d3c267604e6_1.pdf.

⁵⁸ Thomas E. Heneghan, *Politics and Culture in Czechoslovakia*, 3. Emphasis added.

⁵⁹ Thomas E. Heneghan, *Politics and Culture in Czechoslovakia*, 1.

⁶⁰ Kratochvil, *The Literary Scene in Czechoslovakia (July 1973 – February 1974): Czechoslovakia/3*. Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research: Munich, 13 March 1974), 20, accessed 19 April, 2022. https://storage.osaarchivum.org/low/4b/a1/4ba1e604-e6ba-431f-b818-633ee58dd6a6_1.pdf.

⁶¹ Kratochvil, *The Cultural Scene in Czechoslovakia: March 1974 – April 1975: RAD Background Report/58 (Czechoslovakia)* (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute: Munich, 27 March 1975), 1, accessed 15 April 2022. https://storage.osaarchivum.org/low/ed/83/ed839e9e-3c43-42b1-bbb8-bdbaf461e0bc_1.pdf.

On the opposite side, we read in the RFE reports, were the “independent literature”⁶² and the figure of the critic as “an independent personality and moral authority.”⁶³ In that way, the literary politics of the Czechoslovak Broadcasting Department of the RFE followed the line of the proclaimed mission of the RFE – to “tell the truth.”⁶⁴ Its aim was “to unmask the true nature of communism,”⁶⁵ in which communism is equated with an “artificial” system or just ideology forced upon a fundamentally democratic society, affecting overall social and cultural life, including literature. Communist politics is equated with repression over society, a “false consciousness” that spreads to all spheres of society through repression alone. In the words of Václav Havel, life in such a society is “living within the lie,” which most of the population does not identify with and accepts ideological phrases and codes only as part of a social ritual in which it shows loyalty to power.⁶⁶

However, that it was not all about giving a voice to the oppressed, but also about how the voice was shaped (and how it shaped the public opinion) illustrates Henry Kissinger’s memo to the president of the US Richard Nixon titled “Exploitations of Tensions in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.” Kissinger clarified the CIA’s contributions to the fight against the governments of the Eastern Bloc, emphasizing the role of the Radio Free Europe and the Radio Liberty, and suggested future strategic directions, among which were the “greater exploitation of dissent through modernized radio transmitting facilities, wider dissemination of criticism by the intellectuals” and “intensified exploitation of anti-communist themes abroad.”⁶⁷ When an RFE pamphlet claimed that the radio’s mission was to tear down the barbaric “Iron Curtain”

⁶² Kratochvíl, “A Note on Independent Literature,” 42. Emphasis added.

⁶³ Chvatík, “Funkce kritiky v společnosti v krizi,” 131.

⁶⁴ *Why Radio Free Europe?* (Radio Free Europe: Munich, 1953/1976?), 5, accessed November 10, 2021.

⁶⁵ *Why Radio Free Europe?* (Radio Free Europe: Munich, 1953/1976?), 10, accessed November 10, 2021.

⁶⁶ Havel, *The Power*, chap. 5, Kindle.

⁶⁷ Henry Kissinger, “Exploitation of Tension in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe,” April 9, 1970, Library of Congress, 2, accessed May 5, 2022, <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/LOC-HAK-289-6-4-1.pdf>.

that “divides East *from* West,”⁶⁸ it already implied expansionist tendencies. It saw the “wall” as something that separates the East from *us*; the East is left behind the “wall” on the other side of the “Free World.” In other words, although we strive to accurately inform the people on the other side, we imply that they are trapped there and that accurate information will lead them to the logical conclusion that they should be part of the “Free World.” This procedure is not easy to indicate from the perspective of the post-1989 liberal consensus, which changed the perception of what is “neutral.” For example, as understood at the time in the Western political space, freedom primarily meant civil and political, but not economic rights. At the same time, in the Eastern bloc countries, the emphasis was put on economic, health, and labor rights. That is why the collapse of the governments of the Eastern bloc caused an overall shift away from understanding social rights as part of human rights.⁶⁹ Petr Andreas notes that “the social system that made up its frame of reference ceased to exist, its ideology failed, words lost their meaning, and semantic distinctions were lost.”⁷⁰ In that way, a significant part of texts, opinions, formulations, and decisions are difficult to understand from the position of the post-1989 liberal consensus because the shifts in what universal terms stand for obscure the nuances of phenomena. The displacement of facts, ideas, events, and attitudes from one referential sign system to another brings a new meaning. This is perhaps most clearly shown in the notions of freedom of speech and freedom of expression – did any criticism of the lack of space for critical debate or intellectual freedom mean, at the same time, a critique of the entire system and its delegitimization?

⁶⁸ *Why Radio Free Europe?*, Radio Free Europe: Munich, 1953/1976?, accessed 10 November 2021, 11, <https://digitalcollections.hoover.org/objects/66282/why-radio-free-europe?ctx=b820d17736f144832c8c279b440a9594bb2fad32&idx=5>. Emphasis added.

⁶⁹ Pavel Kolář, “Čecháček boží a hříchy světa,” in *Co byla normalizace?: Studie o pozdním socialismu*, ed. Pavel Kolář, Michal Pullmann (Praha: Nakladatelství Lidové Noviny, Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů, 2016), 187.

⁷⁰ Andreas, *Vybírat a posuzovat*, 27.

Western framing of freedom of speech implied criticism of a system that was immanently incapable of providing it, which was not necessarily the opinion of all critics of the communist government, especially the proponents of “socialism with a human face.” By displacing content from one, internal context to the transnational one, it acquires a new meaning, regardless of the primary “intention” of the text. When the art historian and a signatory of *Chart 77*, Miloslava Holubová, wrote that she “dislike[d] the dramatization of our troubles by the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe,”⁷¹ she protested against this framing and directing of the meaning of cultural and civic struggles within Czechoslovakia. Although the RFE has repeatedly been acknowledging that the dissent was diverse and that criticism of the Czechoslovak communist government came from all sides of the political spectrum, the entire literary dissent was framed as a critique of communism as such. However, the struggle for democratic demands does not necessarily have to be a struggle for liberal-Western democracy, but it can be part of the overall demand for a communist revolution. Classics of communist thought, Marx and Lenin, wrote about the alliance of the middle class (bourgeoisie) and the working class in the first phase of the democratic revolution, which should lead to the realization of bourgeois-democratic demands, such as the freedom of expression.⁷² After all, it should not be forgotten that the end of the Prague Spring was seen as an attack on the Czechoslovak path to *socialism* as it was encapsulated in the famous slogan of the time: “Lenin, wake up, Brezhnev has gone mad!”. Public opinion polls in the 1970s show this was not an isolated view. In the advanced phase of “normalization,” in 1979, a significant part of

⁷¹ Miloslava Holubová, “Questionnaire,” in *A Besieged Culture: Czechoslovakia Ten Years after Helsinki*, ed. Jan Vladislav et al. (The Charta 77 Foundation & International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights: Stockholm-Vienna, 1985), 78.

⁷² According to Marxists, even the first phase would be conducted under the hegemony of the working class, primarily to make these demands permanent, then because the revolution should not be stopped when the middle class realizes its interests; Vladimir Ilych Lenin, “Working Class and Bourgeois Democracy,” *marxists.org*, accessed April 20, 2022, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1905/jan/24.htm>. Marx on the unfinished bourgeois revolutions in: Karl Marx, “The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte,” *marxists.org*, accessed April 26, 2022, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1852/18th-brumaire/index.htm>.

Czechoslovak citizens still defined their worldview as Marxist (44%),⁷³ and most considered the planned economy (64%)⁷⁴ superior to the capitalist free market. At the same time, they generally expressed a positive attitude towards liberalism (40%).⁷⁵

Yet, the “dramatization” Holubová complains about is not necessarily just a matter of a different ideological determination or exaggeration in reporting. The literal “dramatization” of events took place by juxtaposing the “original” literary text into the program scheme with other shows, primarily of informative-political character. Literary texts served as “illustrations” of what was said in a political program or as a supplement to what was not expressed, only implied. Also, emphasizing that the text was banned or written by a banned author indicates a testimonial quality, regardless of its fictional character. Thus the informative and literary parts of the program complement each other. In addition, there was another obvious procedure of recontextualization which I will deal with in detail in the next chapter, in which conditioned by the radio form, various literary texts were shortened and reworked so they could be more “digestible” for radio audiences.

⁷³ Marie Dražilová, “Světónázorová orientace občanů ČSSR: závěrečná zpráva z výzkumu č. 79-3,” *Sociologický datový archiv*, Praha: Ústav pro výzkum veřejného mínění, 1979, 3, accessed July 10, 2022, <http://dspace.soc.cas.cz:8080/xmlui/handle/123456789/2975> .

⁷⁴ Lubomír Vacek, “Názory na vliv ideologické diverze: závěrečná zpráva z výzkumu 78-6,” *Sociologický datový archiv*, Praha: Ústav pro výzkum veřejného mínění, 1979, 38, accessed July 12, 2022, <http://dspace.soc.cas.cz:8080/xmlui/handle/123456789/2971> .

⁷⁵ Vacek, “Názory na vliv ideologické diverze,” 30.

Radio Literariness

Summarizing the traditional formalist view of the literary work, the Russian theoretician Boris Tomashevsky singles out its two essential features: it does not depend on real-life circumstances in which it was pronounced, and it is *fixed* by the unchangeable text.⁷⁶ Although this definition is deficient, for it excludes the millennia-long tradition of oral literature, it is a convenient starting point for discussing the literary works broadcast on the RFE, mainly because most of the works and the circumstances in which they were received undermine it. “Could hundreds of millions of gramophone records be considered literature? I’d say so,”⁷⁷ exclaimed the poet and the RFE journalist Ivan Diviš, expressing a systematic lenient understanding of literature on the Radio Free Europe.

Attempting to offer “a reflection on the aesthetic phenomenon of literariness in a cross-national context,”⁷⁸ as I mentioned in the introductory chapter, suggests that the issue of literariness is of paramount importance. But what is literariness? Boris Eichenbaum pointed out that a formalist scholar of literature has to investigate “the specific properties that distinguish such material from material of any other kind.”⁷⁹ Roman Jakobson termed this distinctive feature – that “makes a given work a *literary* work”⁸⁰ – literariness.

Literary work is characterized above all by its artistic use of language. Tomashevsky makes a differentiation, typical of formalist and structuralist theories, between functional/everyday and artistic language, asserting that it is the *emphasis on expression*

⁷⁶ Tomashevsky, *Teoriya literatury*, 23. Emphasis added

⁷⁷ “Jsou literaturou stamiliony gramofonových desek? Já bych řekl, že ano.” Ivan Diviš, “Literatura,” in *Slovem do prostoru: Texty, které odvysílalo Radio Svobodná Evropa v programu GONG v letech 1989-1993* (Bratislava: Fragment, 1993), 5.

⁷⁸ Charles Bernheimer, “Introduction: The Anxieties of Comparison,” 10.

⁷⁹ Boris Eichenbaum, “The Theory of the Formal Method,” *Readings in Russian Poetics: Formalist and Structuralist View*, ed. Ladislav Matějka and Krystyna Pomorska (Cambridge&London: The MIT Press, 1971), 7-8.

⁸⁰ Eichenbaum, “The Theory of the Formal Method,” 8.

[*ustanovka na vyrazenie*] which makes artistic language different. In daily use, we pay attention to verbal formulations only to convey thoughts to the interlocutor, so everyday language is conditioned by the conversation itself and therefore unrepeatable. In the artistic use of language, the expressions are fixed and repeatable because they do not depend on the specific circumstances of the conversation. From this differentiation, he derives the definition of the literary work: “every good expression that is remembered and repeated is the literary work.”⁸¹ Tomashevsky’s traditional definition will serve as a basis in relation to which I will attempt to discuss the influence of the radio as a medium on the reception and creation of broadcast literary works – how the medium shapes the devices employed in the construction of a literary work.

Typical in this respect is the show *Literatura bez cenzury*, created and hosted by Lída Rakušanová initiated to introduce listeners to censored literature published abroad or as samizdat in a small number of copies. The show broadcast not only literature (*belles lettres*) but also writings that were traditionally considered marginal, such as memoirs, essays, biographies, etc. What makes the show particularly interesting is that this was more of a reader’s digest than a typical radio reading (*četba na pokračování*). “I assume the listeners may not hear every session due to interference. I try to make every half hour a meaningful beginning and end,” recalled Rakušanová.⁸² What the process of making a “reader’s digest” looks like – what was omitted, reformulated, and why – I will demonstrate on the example of the surviving recordings. As the last two (of assumed four) surviving records of the “digest” version of Vaculík’s *Morčata* [The Guinea Pigs] show, the reworking of the text to be broadcast made fundamental changes in it for it required the creation of a new hierarchy of meaning. The narration was more dramatic, mostly omitting descriptions, fantastic elements, digressions, and literary nuances, and focused on the main plot. The book’s second half, played in the two surviving episodes,

⁸¹ Tomashevsky, *Teoriya literatury*, 23.

⁸² “Vycházím z toho, že posluchači kvůli rušení možná neuslyší každou relaci. Snažím se, aby každá půlhodina měla smysluplný začátek a konec.” Rakušanová, *Svobodná v Evropě*, 87.

follows two parallel actions. The one is private, dealing with the family relations between Vašek, his wife Eva, and their two sons. The other is social, following Vašek's work, his relationship with colleagues, the problem of the incoming economic crisis predicted by engineer Maelström, and the structural problems of the National Bank in which Vašek is employed. A link between the two is Vašek's gradual advancement of fascination with and brutality towards guinea pigs. The broadcast version significantly reduces segments concentrated on family and psychological issues.⁸³

In his search for the distinctive features of a literary work in the linguistic realm, Roman Jakobson distinguished six different language functions. The communication process is always between the addresser who sends the message to the addressee. To be sent, the message requires contact; it usually refers to the context and has to be expressed in the code that is understandable to both (the addresser and the addressee). Each of these constituents of communication determines one function of language. If the emphasis is on the context, the language is used in its referential function; by focusing on the message itself, the addresser demonstrates the poetic function of language.⁸⁴ Concentrating on the narration of the main plot (events), omitting fantastic elements, reducing the importance of family issues but also introducing short comments in between the readings that sum up and interpret omitted parts of the plot, the radio version of *Morčata* was reworked in a way that emphasizes its referential function. The novel was not only purged of "supplements," but the radio version changed both dynamics and the overall atmosphere of the work. For instance, the eleventh chapter, which depicts the family picnic outside of Prague, closes in the following way:

⁸³ Compare: *Uncensored Literature #17*, July 12, 1982, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) broadcast records, Hoover Institution Library & Archives, accessed April 17, 2022, <https://digitalcollections.hoover.org/objects/43672/uncensored-literature-17> and *Uncensored Literature #19*, July 19, 1982, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) broadcast records, Hoover Institution Library & Archives, Accessed April 17, 2022, <https://digitalcollections.hoover.org/objects/43673/uncensored-literature-19> with Vaculík, Ludvík. *Morčata*. Brno: Atlantis, 2004.

⁸⁴ Roman Jakobson, "Linguistics and Poetics," *Selected Writings III: Poetry of Grammar and Grammar of Poetry*, ed. Stephen Rudy (The Hague/Paris/New York: Mouton Publishers, 1981), 20-27.

The terrain was sloping lower and lower, and we were on a high embankment over the valley. Before the train got onto the viaduct, we caught a short glimpse of the cottage under the hillside. An old man had just emerged from the cottage into the yard as we rode past. He stopped on the threshold, and looked up at the train for an instant. I could have been mistaken, but hardly.

It was Mister⁸⁵ Maelstrom.

And guinea pigs – because this book my dears, is about guinea pigs – guinea pigs don't care for evergreens.⁸⁶

The radio version of *Morčata* broadcast by the RFE omitted the final sentence of the eleventh chapter which serves to de-dramatize and reduce tension through a humorous comment. Instead, the episode was closed with Frank Thomas' short composition, *The March of the Plotters (c)*. Its "disharmonic" combination of brass, timpani, and concertino sections leaves the impression of suspense and horror characteristic of the German Expressionist cinema. The closing part is shaped more like a spy novel, popular in the Cold War, than a grotesque-absurd-surreal-parodying-children-literature novel.⁸⁷

In this case, the referential function of language is stressed by yet another device. The novel's second part is almost utterly deprived of its fantastic aspect in the radio version. Since most of the episodes in the second part are only the unfolding of the events from the first part, the same reduction can be assumed for the entire novel. The somewhat self-contained episode with the mysterious appearance of a cat, as a kind of homage to Edgar Allan Poe's short story

⁸⁵ In the Czech original, Maelström is referred to as "engineer Maelström" which is an important nuance of meaning lost in translation. That Maelström is first and foremost an engineer is important because of the scientific authority of his hypotheses, but also because it alludes to his middle-class identity.

⁸⁶ Ludvík Vaculík, *The Guinea Pigs*, transl. Káča Poláčková (New York: The Third Press, 1973), 100. It is a curiosity that the book was published in the United States by Third Press, which was generally focused on books by black authors but gradually has tried to reorient itself to commercial publishing ("publish for profit") which may speak to the reception of the novel in the English-speaking world – on the one hand as engaged, and on the other as potentially profitable book. Ernest Holsendolph, "Okpaku: To Publish for Profit," *The New York Times*, 5, July 20, 1975, <https://www.nytimes.com/1975/07/20/archives/spotlight-okpaku-to-publish-for-profit.html>.

⁸⁷ *Uncensored Literature #17*, July 12, 1982, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) broadcast records, Hoover Institution Library & Archives, accessed April 17, 2022, <https://digitalcollections.hoover.org/objects/43672/uncensored-literature-17>.

“The Black Cat,” was omitted entirely. Poe’s story is narrated by an unreliable narrator who, distinguished by his meekness and docility and “especially fond of animals”⁸⁸ since boyhood, has a strong affection for his cat Pluto. But having become an alcoholic, he begins to exhibit extremely abusive behavior towards the cat, which will end with him hanging the cat on a tree. The cat’s death is followed by unexplained events, such as the narrator’s house burning down while the remaining wall exhibits the burned shape of a hanging cat, but the narrator will eventually find a rational explanation. After a while, he comes across another cat, similar to Pluto, that will soon become his new pet. Yet, the cat reminds him of his crime against Pluto, so he starts behaving violently again, and when he tries to kill the cat with an ax, the narrator accidentally kills his wife and walls her up in the cellar the next day. Finally, during a police search of the cellar, a scream is heard from behind the wall, and the corpse is discovered, with a cat above it. Much ink has been spilled over the question of the eerie appearance of the cat, especially whether it is a supernatural phenomenon. Tzvetan Todorov defines the fantastic as the “hesitation experienced by a person who knows only the laws of nature, confronting an apparently supernatural event.”⁸⁹ The fantastic requires instability and hesitation about whether a phenomenon can be explained as supernatural or natural. According to Todorov, one of the *sine qua non* conditions of the fantastic is that the implied reader has to reject both the allegorical and the poetic interpretation.⁹⁰ The events shouldn’t be explained by external circumstances that would ultimately resolve the uncertainty.

In Vaculík’s novel, the black cat appears when one of Vašek’s sons falls ill and is transported to the hospital. Vašek interprets the mysterious appearance of a black cat as a sign and even thinks that it is his son that turned into a cat. He decides to let the cat into the cage to sacrifice one of the guinea pigs for his son’s health. At first, the guinea pigs chase away the cat,

⁸⁸ Edgar Allan Poe, “The Black Cat,” in *The Complete Short Story Collection* (Douglas Editions, 2009), Kindle.

⁸⁹ Tzvetan Todorov, *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*, trans. Richard Howard (Cleveland/London: The Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1973), 25.

⁹⁰ Todorov, *The Fantastic*, 33.

but the next day he leaves the cat in the cage and hurries to the hospital to take the son out; when they arrive home, both cats and one guinea pig have disappeared.⁹¹ Although less irrational than Poe's story (there is no burned wall in the shape of a hanging cat, for instance), the way the segment is narrated implies its fantastic feature – neither the narrator nor the implied reader can be sure of the fundamental nature of the events. The other probably omitted fantastic episode (which begins in the book's first half but develops in the second half) represents a situation in which the narrator sees and talks to his son's doppelganger. Throughout the book, Vašek doesn't believe his son's claims that he didn't speak to him, thinking it was just another of his tasteless jokes. We cannot say whether this episode was omitted entirely because the radio version of the first part of the book has not been preserved. Still, since this segment was not even mentioned in the second part, we can assume that the entire episode was omitted. Another reason for this episode's probable exclusion is the plot's understandability and clarity. In other words, fantastic elements might "obscure" straightforward social and political explanations of the events to which the meaning of the book was reduced as mediated by the Radio Free Europe.

Another vital genre element of the book was excluded from the broadcast version. Bronislava Volková notes that *Morčata* is "built on the semantic contrast between a simple, innocent pedagogic story about animals and a Kafkaesque serious and absurd trial of the guilty conscience of the protagonist."⁹² The radio version, at least what survived of it, completely ignored this first aspect. All the parts in which the narrator explicitly addresses the children are left out, thus reducing the novel's more affluent and diverse meaning to a Kafkaesque allegory of life under a totalitarian regime.

⁹¹ Ludvík Vaculík, *Morčata* (Brno: Atlantis, 2004), 123-143.

⁹² Bronislava Volek, "The Guinea Pigs by Ludvik Vaculik: Codes, Metaphors, and Compositional Devices," *Slavic Review* 43, no. 1 (1984): 28

A similar course of action was applied to Alexandr Kliment's novel *Nuda v Čechách* [Boredom in Bohemia]. However, unlike *Morčata*, Kliment's novel does not contain fantastic elements. It is a story of the architect Mikuláš Svoboda who is faced with the dilemma of whether to leave his life in Prague and go into exile or to stay in communist Czechoslovakia. Being faced with an important life decision incentivizes Mikuláš's re-examination of his entire life – whether he has nothing to leave, as his love Olga suggests. The novel follows two parallel periods: the first, contemporary – which takes place at the end of 1967 – and the second, which envelops the earlier life events that led Mikuláš to the point when he has to decide on his future. In the broadcast episode that includes the last two chapters of the novel, the reworking was mainly based on the ejection of fragments related to the narrator's earlier life – recollections, dialogues, short monologues, etc. Again, the reworking is done with the idea of “getting to the point” – to make the text more informative and referential, more dramatic, with fewer details that could confuse a radio listener, who may be listening in secret or while doing something else. Also, the referential, or the documentary, aspect of the work broadcast was further reinforced by radio versions of books with a borderline genre character being released within the same show. For instance, Jára Kohout's memoir book *Hop sem/hop tam* [Woo-hoo Here/Whoo-hoo There], František Janouch's *Ne, nestěžuji si: malá normalizační mozaika* [No, I'm Not Complaining: a Small Normalization Mosaic], Martina Navratilova's *Já jsem já* [I am Myself] and others. In that way, the aired content was perceived rather as a testimony of a society under censorship than a fictional text.

The process of circulation of a literary text did not end there. Lída Rakušanová recalls in her memoir: “After November,⁹³ I learn that in the countryside, where it was difficult to access samizdat publications, people sometimes recorded, transcribed, and distributed

⁹³ Velvet Revolution.

transcripts of banned literature.”⁹⁴ What the final version of the samizdat created based on the radio show looks like is difficult to determine. Yet, some of such examples are preserved in the samizdat periodical *Res Publica*, edited by Vladimír Hajný, which has been in circulation with some significant interruptions from 1973 to 1998. Unfortunately, these are not the same pieces that are publicly available in the audio version, so it is not possible to compare two different versions to determine precisely to what extent the original text was changed and what the “Chinese whispers” of the circulation of literature looked like – from a samizdat author within Czechoslovakia (or an author in exile), through a foreign (usually German, Swiss, English) publisher, through a broadcast on the Radio Free Europe, through the reader who makes a transcript of the radio version into a new samizdat (“digest”) edition, to the reader who has the latest samizdat version in his hands, to possibly someone to whom the reader recounted the content. Preserved are two excerpts from Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn’s *Arhipelag GULAG* [The Gulag Archipelago], in which the copyist explicitly stated that they were broadcast on the Radio Free Europe. The copyist noted that the translator was Emil B. Štefan, an employee of the RFE and the translator of the Slovak edition, but the text is in Czech, with the Czech title *Souostroví Gulag*.⁹⁵ In addition to the standard errors that can be assumed when recording speech, such as inappropriate punctuation marks or missing brackets, the samizdat version also contains factual errors due to sound similarity. For instance, in the last paragraph of the published excerpt, in the samizdat version, it was written that one “convict” (*trestanec*)⁹⁶ had gold teeth that were

⁹⁴ “Po Listopadu dozvím, že na venkově, kde bylo těžké dostat se k samizdatovým publikacím, si lidé občas vysílání zakázané literatury natáčeli, přepisovali a v opisech šířili dál.” Lída Rakušanová, *Svobodná v Evropě*, 87.

⁹⁵ We learn from *Frankfurtský kurýr* [The Frankfurt Courier] that two different editions of the Gulag Archipelago were published in 1974 - the Czech edition in the publishing house *Konfrontace* [Confrontation] (collectively translated by several translators) as *Souostroví Gulag* and the Slovak edition (translated by Emil B. Štefan) published by Pol’ana as *Súostrovie Gulag*, both from Zürich. “Kdy vyjde Solženicyn?,” *Frankfurtský kurýr: List Čechů a Slováků ve Frankfurtu nad Mohanem* 10 (38), May, 1974, 15, accessed June 10, 2022, http://scriptum.cz/soubory//scriptum/%5Bnode%5D/frankfurtsky-kuryr_1974_10_ocr.pdf

⁹⁶ Alexandr Solženicyn, “Souostroví “GULAG”,” *Res Publica* 2 (5), May 20, 1974, 4-5, accessed June 21, 2022, http://scriptum.cz/soubory//scriptum/%5Bnode%5D/res-publica_1974_05_ocr.pdf.

knocked out, while in the original text, Solzhenitsyn writes about an “Estonian” (*Estonec*).⁹⁷ In either case, the point is the same – the brutality of the Stalinists. Thus, it is yet another proof that the whole circulation process looks like a gradual deprivation of “literary surplus.”

Viktor Shklovsky argued that our practical, *everyday speech* is characterized by the automatization process. Everyday speech is based on the routine principle; it should be fast and compress as much information as possible into a few words. By *recognizing* things “by their primary characteristics”⁹⁸ and not really *seeing* them, we do not use our perception fully: “The object passes before us, as if it were prepackaged. We know that it exists because of its position in space, but we see only its surface.”⁹⁹ According to Shklovsky, art aims to achieve the opposite effect – to decelerate and engage our perception: “the device of art makes perception long and ‘laborious.’ The perceptual process in art has a purpose all its own and ought to be extended to the fullest.”¹⁰⁰ Shklovsky only succinctly formulated what has been a formalist understanding of art since Kant (“purposiveness without a purpose”) to the end of the 20th-century theories, which usually associated art with a purpose in itself with a special kind of pleasure. As we have seen, the demands of the radio genre - to keep the material current, digestible, informative, to hold attention - are often at odds with the demand for decelerated perception. The tension between the radio mediation of literary material and the literary material itself was noticed as early as the 1930s. Many of the respondents in Paul Lazarsfeld’s research cite the impossibility of re-reading excerpts as one of the reasons why they prefer print over broadcast material: “One may want to dwell upon the material or re-read it for *sheer aesthetic pleasure*, or to heighten impressions derived from it.”¹⁰¹ The aspect of the unrepeatability of the broadcast material (the

⁹⁷ The original text says “uvideli u èstonca zuby zolotyë.” Aleksandr Isaevič Solženicyn, *Sobranie sočinenij v 30 tomah: T. 4. Arhipelag GULAG. 1918–1956. Časti I–II* (Moskva: Vremya, 2010), 498.

⁹⁸ Viktor Shklovsky, “Art as Device,” in *Theory of Prose*, transl. Benjamin Sher (Chicago: Dalkey Archive Press, 1991), 5.

⁹⁹ Shklovsky, “Art as Device,” 5.

¹⁰⁰ Shklovsky, “Art as Device,” 6.

¹⁰¹ Paul Felix Lazarsfeld, *Radio and the Printed Page: An Introduction to the Study of Radio and Its Role in the Communication of Ideas* (New York: Duel, Sloan & Pearce, Inc., 1940), 172.

fact that the listener cannot hear again those parts that s/he did not understand or that s/he particularly enjoyed) places specific demands on the radio form. Mediation of literary material, to retain or acquire a new aesthetic, entertaining, informative purpose, has to be radically modified in relation to the printed form.

Literature in general and poetry, in particular, are not forms that have always been unequivocally related to the printed form. “It is a commonplace that in modern times – the last two hundred years, say – poetry has come to have less and less connection either with music or with the spoken word,”¹⁰² alerts Orwell. He points to the potential of radio to solve this problem because poetry on the radio is associated with its “original” role and connection with music – an appropriate musical theme usually accompanies the expressive reading of poetry.¹⁰³ Expressive reading, on the one hand, as in the case of reworking of prose texts, introduces dramatic elements into poetry; it directs the dynamics and leads the listener to a specific type of performance and, therefore, interpretation. At the same time, the importance of the musical theme in radio broadcasting goes beyond its supporting role.¹⁰⁴

The role is exemplified by the show called *Krylogie*, edited and hosted by Karel Kryl. Unlike the show *Literatura bez cenzury*, which broadcast texts initially written to be published in print but were then reworked to fit into the radio form, Karel Kryl’s songs were written for radio but were slightly reworked and are available today in multiple print editions. When

¹⁰² George Orwell, “Poetry and the Microphone,” 331.

¹⁰³ For example: *Poems by Ivan Krasko*, June 15, 1983, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) broadcast records, Hoover Institution Library & Archives, accessed April 18, 2022, <https://digitalcollections.hoover.org/objects/43688/poems-by-ivan-krasko>; Also, the reading of poems by Jaroslav Seifert in: *Cultural Program number K-994*, September 22, 1971, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) broadcast records, Hoover Institution Library & Archives, accessed April 20, 2022, <https://digitalcollections.hoover.org/objects/49376/cultural-program-number-k994>.

¹⁰⁴ An intriguing aspect of the American influence worth mentioning is the use of jazz and its derivatives as musical backgrounds for various cultural programs. As polls from 1982 and 1985 show, a significant part of Czechs and Slovaks that listened to foreign radio stations did so because of entertainment and music programs. Broadcasting the new popular music from the West and the literary content could make the RFE and the content more appealing to listeners in Czechoslovakia than political or literary programs alone. Jana Perglerová “Názory československých občanů na některé stránky ideologického působení západní televize a rozhlasových stanic: závěrečná zpráva z výzkumu Č. 85-4,” *Sociologický datový archiv*. Praha: Ústav pro výzkum veřejného mínění, 1985, 38, accessed July 2, 2022, <http://dspace.soc.cas.cz:8080/xmlui/handle/123456789/3014>.

published in the printed form, the material acquires the status of poetry fixed by the text, in a form that will reach a more significant number of readers (than there were listeners), and it will be read for years to come. Also, the approach to Kryl's poems and songs is indicative of the methodological challenges of dealing with the literary politics of the Radio Free Europe – it raises the question of which version is the “real” one, which expresses the intentions of the author, whether the performance was part of the work, etc. From the editorial note at the beginning of the book, we learn that “the text of the fourteen programs is modified only slightly and only where the specificity of the spoken word was in conflict with the requirements of its printed form. All linguistic peculiarities and deviations from the grammatical norm remained unchanged on the expressed request of the author.”¹⁰⁵ Although aware of the fact that “the radio text” is differently composed as well as differently performed than a written literary text, Kryl still decided to publish them in the printed form.¹⁰⁶ Thus published, song lyrics are inevitably interpreted as poetry. However, in printed form, they may sound banal because of their simplicity, short verses consisting of a few words, frequent rhymes, and repetition of verses in the form of refrains. Kryl thought it was “so tricky to print radio texts”¹⁰⁷ because the print edition lacks music and voice, two critical constitutive elements of the listening experience. Since the troubadours, and more recently institutionalized by awarding the Nobel Prize to Bob Dylan, the border between poetry and music has been unclear. The case of Kryl, as a somewhat mythological figure (“a poet with a guitar”¹⁰⁸), encapsulates the fact that this border served as one of the bases for treating poetry in the Radio Free Europe, making vague the distinction between popular and high culture.

¹⁰⁵ Karel Kryl, *Krylogie: Autorské pořady vysílané v letech 1975-1989 rozhlasovou stanicí Svobodná Evropa* (Praha: Academia, 1994), 6.

¹⁰⁶ Karel Kryl, *Krylogie*, 8.

¹⁰⁷ Karel Kryl, *Půlkacíř: Karel Kryl v rozhovoru s Milošem Čermákem*, ed. Miloš Čermák (Praha: Academia, 1993), 79.

¹⁰⁸ Martin Klecán, “Karel Kryl aneb Básník s kytarou,” *m-grafoman.cz*, accessed July 14, 2022, <https://www.m-grafoman.cz/90-karel-kryl-aneb-basnik-s-kytarou> .

The role of radio, as a sound medium, influenced not only the re-separation of poetry from the print media, but in a sense, it also influenced the very creation of poetry, which is now again a public/popular activity. Having experienced the work on the radio himself, Orwell noted that the presentation of poetry on the radio significantly affects the poet himself – “by being set down at a microphone, especially if this happens at all regularly, the poet is brought into a new relationship with his work.”¹⁰⁹ In *Krylogie*, this relationship is, in some cases, literal. The thirteenth edition of the show presented two songs that directly responded to listeners’ reactions. In the first one, “Martině v sedmi pádech” [To Martina in Seven Cases], Kryl replied to a letter from a fan asking him why he lived in exile and not in Czechoslovakia, where he was needed. The other song, “Alibi v a moll” [An Alibi in A Minor], responded to the listener’s reaction to the first song. In it, the listener accused Kryl of providing himself with an “exile alibi.”¹¹⁰ “I had a lot of such contacts with an invisible audience,” he recalled later.¹¹¹ It is difficult to reconstruct the extent to which feedback from listeners within Czechoslovakia formed or influenced the program being aired, but it is for sure that the introduction of a landline in the mid-1980s intensified this interaction.

If poetry was affected by what Lazarsfeld calls “the ‘directive’ role of radio” – a particular show is broadcast at regular hours, with a fixed duration, and with significant influence on the imagination of the listener “through its use of voices, sounding effects, and incidental music”¹¹² – radio drama is a *product* of the limits of the medium. Radio drama, radio play, or audio drama is, it can be said, the only autochthonous radio-literary genre developed at the beginning of the 20th century. Benjamin noted back in the 1930s that radio and the epic theatre share the educational role based on interruption. The radio drama form moved in the direction that Benjamin had anticipated. Like epic theatre, where interruptions and comments

¹⁰⁹ Orwell, “Poetry and the Microphone,” 330-331.

¹¹⁰ Kryl, *Krylogie*, 281-282.

¹¹¹ “Takových kontaktů jsem měl s *neviditelným publikem* spousty.” Kryl, *Půlkacíř*, 101.

¹¹² Lazarsfeld, *Radio and the Printed Page*, 175.

enable the audience to make a rational critical distance from the events in the play, radio plays contain a diegetic authority that helps listeners to develop a critical attitude towards the aired play. Yet, this diegetic authority turned out to be more ambivalent than Benjamin imagined.

Preserved radio dramas broadcast on the RFE encapsulate the double or borderline role of literature in the activities of the Czechoslovak department of the RFE. On the one hand, it was a form of entertainment drama, which should keep the reader's attention through the exchange of dialogue, sound effects, and accompanying music. On the other hand, diegetic comments directed the interpretation of the dialogue while simultaneously creating a kind of counterpoint that made mimetic representation more like actual recordings of a speech or interview, i.e., more "real." This does not mean that listeners were unaware that the presented dialogue was fictitious. However, the combination of mimetic and diegetic devices left the impression of persuasiveness. The role of a diegetic narrator was equated with the role of a journalist-host in documentary shows, and mimetic representation was identified with actual events which, because radio is based only on sound, the host-journalist must explain, contextualize and interpret as the authority. For instance, Vaclav Havel's *Audience* [Audience]¹¹³ and Egon Hostovský's *Osvoboditel se vrací* [The Liberator Returns]¹¹⁴ contain a double diegetic perspective. One narrator provided the play's social context, the performance's occasion, and introductory notes about the author being a forbidden dissident – and the other explained what was happening on stage. In this way was made the link between fiction and feature, which is not merely theoretically generic.

¹¹³ *Havel Play: Audience*, October 30, 1976, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) broadcast records, accessed April 17, 2022, Hoover Institution Library & Archives, <https://digitalcollections.hoover.org/objects/49265/havel-play-audience>

¹¹⁴ *Play: Hostovsky: Dsvoboditel se Vract*, December 26, 1972, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) broadcast records, Hoover Institution Library & Archives, accessed April 16, 2022, <https://digitalcollections.hoover.org/objects/49347/play-hostovsky-dsvoboditel-se-vract>; A bizarre detail about Egon Hostovský's radio drama that makes the discussion of blurred lines between fiction and reality more interesting is that one of the roles in the play was read by Pavel Minařík (as can be heard in the introduction), a captain of the Czechoslovak Intelligence Service – StB, sent on a mission to the Radio Free Europe. See: Minařík, Pavel. *Návrat rozvědčíka*. Edited by Jan Kovář. Praha: Naše vojsko, 1976.

The blurring between the fictional and the documentary was intensified on the one hand by “borderline” shows, as I mentioned earlier, and on the other hand by how entirely documentary shows were arranged. On top of that, due to the limited number of employees and associates, both fictional and documentary shows of the RFE were read by a limited number of voices. This made news, features, press reviews, and other shows of documentarian character more dramatic and “fictional.” On the other hand, it made literary texts and radio dramas more “documentary,” treating them as a kind of illustration. For instance, the show *Soud nad šesti* [Court over Six] broadcast “radio treatment of court protocols,” i.e., reconstructed the so-called Prague Trial, the trial of six members of the Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Prosecuted in 1979.¹¹⁵ Based on the available information about the case, the show had the ambition to *document* the event. Yet, since the trial could not be recorded and the recordings were not available to be put out, a dramatization of the event was made. Tense music and dramatic juxtaposition of statements of the defendants and the judge, with accompanying diegetic comments of the narrator/journalist, make this work a radio drama. In other words, what reached the listeners met to some extent the requirements of both a feature and a documentary program, but it was framed in such a way as to convey “what actually happened.”

Before I conclude this chapter, I will look back on yet another issue that, since the end of the Cold War and the latest wave of globalization, has been such a “normalized” literary phenomenon that it may be almost indistinguishable in earlier periods. Although mild, the linguistic hybridity of the Radio Free Europe was an important cultural fact that hints that the two Cold War blocs are not only ideological-political camps but also two cultural models, as Auerbach noted.¹¹⁶ Yet, those were two cultural models between which the exchange did take

¹¹⁵ *Prague Trial*, part I, April 05, 1980, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) broadcast records, Hoover Institution Library & Archives, accessed April 14, 2022, <https://digitalcollections.hoover.org/objects/47804/prague-trial-part-i>.

¹¹⁶ Auerbach, “Philology and *Weltliteratur*,” 3.

place. Looking back on his time in the RFE headquarters in Munich, Karel Kryl elucidated the problem that “language workers” faced:

[T]he language begins to cripple abroad [...] Over time, you don’t even think about writing “roznemohl se” or “ochořel,” but only “onemocněl” or “byl marod.”¹¹⁷ The word “roznemohl” will remain in your consciousness, but you will stop using these linguistic nuances. Therefore, one must renew one’s language [...]. Moreover, foreign words, especially Germanisms and Anglicisms, are beginning to penetrate the language abroad.¹¹⁸

We learn about a similar problem of the language of exiles from another RFE journalist and poet, Ivan Diviš. In 1974, he noted in a diary entry: “I’m afraid I don’t know my own language, not that I forget it, but that I have never known it [...]. To write a paragraph without error, slapping, arguing, this is an event.”¹¹⁹ Eight years later, summing up more than a decade spent in exile, Diviš writes:

I have been in exile for twelve years, I am fifty-seven now, I am already writing something for thirty-five years; I don’t know why, I note that Czech is starting to oppose me, written and read, as well as written by myself. Above all, I am irritated by its diacritics, then by its obvious non-wordiness, which is not its fault, thirdly by its intrusiveness, exaggeration, and last but not least, its leveling impunity, as deserved by padlockers, dissidents, *Index*, and *Toronto* authors. They are all the same; they cannot be distinguished. They all studied from

¹¹⁷ These are all synonyms for being sick, which belong to somewhat different registers.

¹¹⁸ “Je pravda, že jazyk začíná v cizině krnět. To je zcela normální. Po čase tě ani nenapadne napsat roznemohl se, nebo ochořel, ale jenom onemocněl nebo byl marod. Roznemoci ti sice zůstane v povědomí, ale přestaneš tyhle jazykové fajnivosti využívat. Člověk si proto musí jazyk obnovovat – je zajímavé, že každý předpokládá zvyšování kvalifikace u lékaře nebo technika, ale málokdo u literáta. Je třeba popadnout slovníky a začít si opakovat. Když jsem to zjistil, tak jsem si okamžitě sehnal synonymické slovníky, aspoň první tři díly. To byla v exilu moje velká opora. Navíc, v cizině začínají do jazyka pronikat cizí slova, hlavně germanismy a anglismy.” Kryl, *Půlkacíř*, 80.

¹¹⁹ “Obávám se, že neznám vlastní jazyk, ne že ho zapomínám, ale že jsem ho nikdy neznal. Nenapišu správně jedno slovo; slovosled mně odjakživo dělal potíže; nejsem sluchař. Abych po sobě nemusel opravovat, to neexistuje. Napsat odstavec bez chyby, plácání, přetěknutí, to je událost.” Ivan Diviš, *Teorie spolehlivosti: Texty z let 1960/1999* (Praha: Torst, 2002), 354.

the Bolsheviks. [...] If I want to read Czech, I can't help myself; I have to go back to the 19th century, to Masaryk, Pekař, Šalda, and Šusta.”¹²⁰

The scarcity of the language and its hybridity may be more a matter of intimate preoccupation of the individual exiles, writers, and journalists than of the broadcast content. But, as Diviš himself wrote before going to exile, the language “is, in fact, autonomous, but not autarkic,”¹²¹ thus being part of the exile community, being embedded in its linguistic specificity inevitably reflected on the program that was broadcast. For instance, in Diviš, we often come across foreign expressions even in essay-type texts: “*my next statement* [in English]: this is a world where poetry is fading and dying [in Czech].”¹²² Also, in *Krylogie*, we come across songs (published poems) in Polish – “Organy w Oliwie,” inspired by protests in Gdansk,¹²³ in German – “Der Schimmel,” provoked by a concert of an East German dissident singer-songwriter Wolf Biermann,¹²⁴ and “Innterdeutsche Frage,” “an attempt of playing with words in another language.”¹²⁵

In some cases, the hybridity of the language was reflected in the mixing of, say, English and Czech, and sometimes in the adaptation of foreign words and their use as if they were part of the Czech language. Linguistic hybridity may have been brought to a climax in Josef Škvorecký's novel *Příběh inženýra lidských duší* [The Engineer of Human Souls] broadcast on the show *Literatura bez cenzury*. Škvorecký's novel, which follows the adventures of Danny

¹²⁰ “Jsem dvanáct let v exilu, je mně padesát sedm, pětatřicet let stále něco píšu; nevím proč, pozoruji, že se mně čeština začíná protivit, jak psaná, tak čtená, i psaná mnou samým. Především mne dráždí její diakritika, dále její zřejmá nesvětovost, což je ovšem nikoli vina, za třetí její vlezlost, domahačnost, v neposlední řadě nivelační zesprost'áčelost, jak se o ni zasloužili petličáři, disidenti, autoři indexu i toronta. Všichni jsou stejní; nelze je odlišit. Všichni se učili u bolševika. [...] Chci-li číst česky, nemohu si pomoci, musím zacouvat do 19. století, do Masaryka, Pekaře, Šaldy a Šusty.” Diviš, *Teorie spolehlivosti*, 432.

¹²¹ Diviš, *Teorie spolehlivosti*, 113.

¹²² “My next statement: toto je svět, na kterém poesie hasne a už i umírá.” Ivan Diviš, “Zánik poesie v současném světě,” in *Slovem do prostoru: Texty, které odvysílalo Radio Svobodná Evropa v programu GONG v letech 1989-1993* (Bratislava: Fragment, 1993), 106. Emphasis added.

¹²³ Kryl, *Krylogie*, 146-147.

¹²⁴ Kryl, *Krylogie*, 196-198.

¹²⁵ Kryl, *Krylogie*, 235.

Smiřický, a Czech emigrant professor of literature in Canada, is characterized by the frequent use of English words, Anglicisms, English-language inspired neologisms, and incorrect use of Czech grammar.¹²⁶ However, since the RFE dealt exclusively with domestic issues aimed at the domestic audience, it can be reasonably assumed that the linguistic hybridity was not nurtured and was less visible than in the émigré community or other foreign radios such as the Voice of America.¹²⁷

As I have shown, the formal features of literature mediated by the Radio Free Europe were distinctly unstable. The lack and inaccessibility of sources made it impossible to determine the complete picture – how the entire literary material was changed, interpreted, and recontextualized. The process often depended on editorial decisions, which were usually not documented. However, I tried to show how the *mechanisms* worked. The mediation of the literary content via radio either significantly altered the original text, or it was a text written for the radio and therefore with different formal characteristics than a “standard” literary text. In the case of the RFE, these characteristics were altered to “convey the message.” Seen in the light of the literary politics of the RFE, Greenberg’s delineation between content-focused Soviet kitsch and Western art preoccupied with form, mentioned in the introduction, seems all the more unstable, for it shows that the same practice was applied in the West. By emphasizing documentary/referential aspects of literary texts, the RFE, to some extent, blurred the distinction between reality and fiction. In the next chapter, I will try to show what the message looked like.

¹²⁶ The clearest example of this is the way the character Milena Cabicarová, called Blběnka, talks: “Hi, Danny! Jak přide, že sem tě neviděla za tak dlouhej čas? To seš tak lejzy, že mi ani nezazvoníš? Já budu rýli engry, když ke mně někdy nedropneš. Anforčnetly ted’ sem zrovna byzy, a enyvej, ty máš vevnitř nějakej dejt, rajt? Tak báj báj, já nechci slyšet žádný exkjůzy!”; Josef Škvorecký, *Příběh inženýra lidských duší* (Praha: Městská knihovna v Praze, 2019), 49.

¹²⁷ The surviving recordings of this novel's broadcast contain minimal elements of this type of linguistic hybridity: *Uncensored Literature #82*, February 28, 1983, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) broadcast records, Hoover Institution Library & Archives, accessed April 21, 2022, <https://digitalcollections.hoover.org/objects/43682/uncensored-literature-82> .

What Would the World Have Looked Like?

Comrade Štefánie Šušeková, the forewoman of Tatra furniture in Pravenec, is leaving for a shift in the morning at three-quarters to five. Although the factory starts at six, the comrade forewoman cannot sleep, so she goes to work half an hour earlier every day. She has to read the newspaper carefully before the start of the shift to know how and what to explain to her subordinate workers in terms of the current political line.

Recently, when one of the numerous meetings of the Central Committee of the Communist Party ended again, Comrade Šušeková convened her subordinates the day after and told them briefly the following: “There was a meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, so look to fulfill the plan and commitments, use all reserves, because how we work today, we will live tomorrow. Tomorrow, we have a party meeting, so I hope I can assure the comrades that we comrades will fulfill our obligations. And now to work!”¹²⁸

This is the excerpt from a short story published in the issue of samizdat *Res Publica* on August 15, 1975, labeled as Ota Filip’s “literary gloss” and broadcast over the RFE. Filip’s “gloss” is a reworked version of Jan Bartok’s newspaper article “Two Shifts of a Forewoman” published in *Haló sobota*, the weekend supplement of the daily *Rudé Právo* [Red Justice].¹²⁹ The piece depicts Štefánie Sušeková,¹³⁰ the forewoman in a furniture factory, as an exemplary worker and communist, the one who fulfills both her working and her social and political responsibilities. Filip’s parodying consists of regrouping paragraphs and adding sentences that emphasize the

¹²⁸ “Na směnu odchází soudružka Štefánie Šušeková, mistrová Tatra nábytku v Pravenci už ráno ve tři čtvrti na pět. V továrně se sice začíná až od šesti, ale soudružka mistrová nemůže dosípat a proto se do práce vypravuje každý den o půl hodiny dříve. Musí si totiž ještě před zahájením směny důkladně přečíst noviny, aby věděla co má svým podřízeným dělnicím vykládat jak a co ve smyslu momentální politické linie vysvětlovat. Nedávno, když skončilo opět jednou z četných zasedání ÚV KSČ si soudružka Šušeková svolala zítra své podřízené a řekla jim stručně toto: “Bylo zasedání ÚV KSČ, tak koukej plnit plán a závazky, využijej všechny rezervy, poněvadž budeme jak dnes pracovat, tak budeme žít zítra máme členskou schůzi strany, tak doufám, že mohu soudruhy ubezpečit, že my soudružky delnice své závazky splníme beze zbytku. A teď fofrem do práce” Ota Filip, “Literární glosa Oty Filipa.” *Res Publica* 3 (10), August 15, 1975, 18, accessed June 10, 2022, http://scriptum.cz/soubory//scriptum/%5Bnode%5D/res-publica_1975_10_ocr.pdf.

¹²⁹ Jan Bartok, “Dvě směny mistrové.” *Haló sobota: příloha Rudého Práva*, 26 July, 1975, 3.

¹³⁰ Notice that in the samizdat edition the main character is “Šušeková”, while in the original article she is “Sušeková”. It is unclear whether this is an “author’s intervention” or the copyist misheard the name.

naivety of the original article. His hyperbolic mocking remarks are primarily directed at the enthusiastic and workaholic behavior of the forewoman. But he also makes fun of Bartok's "ideologized" language and the depiction of an individual entirely following the doctrine of socialist realism and the ideas about the new socialist woman, which meant acting for the benefit of the entire society.¹³¹ Filip wrote, deleted, commented, and intervened in the original journalistic text to point out that this was merely an ideological construction. Filip produced the opposite effect of the works I analyzed in the previous chapter. He fictionalized documentary material to show its "real" ("fictional") nature, concealed behind the construct of ideology. Filip's "gloss," as well as most of the preserved prose texts broadcast on the Radio Free Europe (at least how they were mediated by the radio), attempted to penetrate through the ideological "veil" of the system. In the previous chapter, I tried to explain how the RFE highlighted the testimonial value of the broadcast fictional text. In this chapter, I will reconstruct the vision of the world those works created, as mediated by the RFE, based on which the Czechoslovak socialist system was assessed.

The fundamental assumptions underlying the ideology of the period of "normalization" were the interpretation of the Prague Spring and its collapse, presented in the document *Poučení z krizového vývoje ve straně a společnosti po XIII. sjezdu KSČ* [Lessons Drawn from the Crisis Development in the Party and the Society After the 13th Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia]. What was experienced as the invasion of the four states of the Warsaw Pact in 1968 was described in this document as "fraternal international help."¹³² What was described by some contemporaries as an attempt at reforms "which would lead to a maximally functional solution to the problem of further development of socialism"¹³³ was labeled

¹³¹ Denisa Nečasová, *Nový socialistický člověk: Československo 1948–1956* (Brno: Host, 2018), 132-133.

¹³² *Poučení z krizového vývoje ve straně a společnosti po XIII. sjezdu KSČ: rezoluce k aktuálním otázkám jednoty strany* (Praha: Svoboda, 1988), 32.

¹³³ Zdeněk Mlynář, *Československý pokus o reformu 1968: analýza jeho teorie a praxe* (Köln & Roma: Index – Listy, 1975), 11.

“counterrevolution.”¹³⁴ It should be noted that the ideology of the system consolidated on “lessons drawn from the crisis development” significantly differed from the Stalinist period. As Michal Pullmann and Pavel Kolář note, the document’s language and the official discourse of the “normalization” were based on a critique of violence and an attempt to “remove chaos and violence from the lives of decent people.”¹³⁵ Besides, unlike in the 1950s, in the period of “normalization,” the state rarely intervened in the sphere of private life.¹³⁶ The ideology of “normalization” implied stability and consolidation from the chaotic, violent, and uncertain times that preceded it. The regime’s repressive actions were removed from public life and were directed away from the majority of what was considered decent working people.¹³⁷ Focusing on the authors silenced within Czechoslovakia, the RFE “intervened” in the sphere of private life, trying to point to the other side of the regime. That way, the RFE, not only through the broadcast literary content and the informative program, contributed to fashioning resentment into dissent. Dissatisfaction and opposition in late socialism were not unanimously anti-communist. However, since the state closed the public sphere for discussions on the strategic courses of the state and the party, the dissent was aesthetically and ideologically shaped by channels through which it was spread, such as the Radio Free Europe.

In a lecture given shortly after 1989, Ivo Bock outlined some of the central thematic concerns of the so-called “independent literature,” i.e., samizdat and exile works, the type of literature primarily broadcast over the Radio Free Europe. He noted that unlike “official” literature within Czechoslovakia, in which the dominating genre was the historical novel, the samizdat and exile literary production in the 1970s was largely engaged in “depicting more or

¹³⁴ *Poučení z krizového vývoje*, 30.

¹³⁵ Pavel Kolář, Michal Pullmann, “Klid k práci, holé ruce a konec našeho komunismu,” in *Co byla normalizace?: Studie o pozdním socialismu*, ed. (Praha: Nakladatelství Lidové Noviny, Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů, 2016), 64.

¹³⁶ Kolář, Pullmann, “Klid k práci,” 65.

¹³⁷ Kolář, Pullmann, “Klid k práci,” 62-63.

less typical destinies of people in the socio-political conditions of real socialism.”¹³⁸ Alluding to the demands of socialist literary criticism in Czechoslovakia regarding what the real progressive socialist literature should be like, Bock described the samizdat and exile prose works as “great social novels of the present, of course not of the socialist-realist type.”¹³⁹ The fact that most fiction was, in one way or another, engaged with contemporary social problems implies a strong link between politics and literature, much stronger than the mere statement that artists write within society, not in the proverbial ivory tower. Pavel Kolář suggests that the ideological pressure and censorship made art in the Eastern bloc more critically oriented than art in the West or in “the East” after the fall of the Iron Curtain.¹⁴⁰ The general development of art and literature in the West, with notable exceptions, was dominated by abstraction and formal complexity. That one does not exclude the other is acknowledged by Karel Kryl, who recalls that “my generation was helped by Bolshevik ideology because we learned to read and write between the lines.”¹⁴¹ It can be argued that Diviš’s already mentioned complaint that “they all studied from the Bolsheviks”¹⁴² contains implications not fully anticipated by him. If most of those authors were “men of their time” in inadvertently meeting some of the demands of the communist literary critics – what were the main points of disagreement with the official politics of the socialist Czechoslovak state? What kind of society did they imagine? What is the vision of the society that was broadcast on the airwaves of the Radio Free Europe? “Free Czechoslovakia is calling!” was the catchphrase of the RFE program, repeatedly asserted throughout the day, but what did the “free world” of the RFE look like?

¹³⁸ Ivo Bock, “Jedna česká literatura? K některým tendencím „oficiální“, samizdatové a exilové prózy 1969-1989,” *Česká literatura* 40, no. 1 (1992): 74.

¹³⁹ Ivo Bock, “Jedna česká literatura,” 74.

¹⁴⁰ Pavel Kolář, “Čtyři „základní rozpory“ východoevropského komunismu” in *Co byla normalizace?: Studie o pozdním socialismu*, ed. Pavel Kolář, Michal Pullmann (Praha: Nakladatelství Lidové Noviny, Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů, 2016), 133-134.

¹⁴¹ “Navíc, mojí generaci pomohla bolševická ideologie, protože jsme se naučili číst i psát mezi řádky.” Kryl, *Půlkacíř*, 79.

¹⁴² Diviš, *Teorie spolehlivosti*, 432.

If the political and economic reforms of the Prague Spring were understood by the “normalization” regime as counterrevolution and by some of the actors as furthering socialism, the third view would be the interpretation that dominated the RFE. Lída Rakušanová, who joined the Czechoslovak Department of the Radio Free Europe after 1968, recalls the period of the Prague Spring as an outburst of discontent that had nothing to do with a different type of socialism: “Although the public swore to ‘socialism with a human face,’ I do not *remember* that most people would do it for a reason other than as offering appeasement to Moscow.”¹⁴³ In the events of 1968, she sees only discontent with “ossified power structures,” saying that “most of the students in Prague, you can bet your life on it, wanted nothing but thoroughbred democracy modeled on the First Republic.”¹⁴⁴ Her outlook reflects what seems to be the constant policy of the RFE since its foundation, that Czechoslovakia was occupied – not in 1968, but since the communists (“Bolsheviks!”¹⁴⁵) came to power in 1948. The establishment of this continuity is not odd, given that, when “Free Czechoslovakia” started “calling” in 1951, the staff mainly consisted of the post-February (1948) exiles, extremely hostile to the communists. The breakdown of the Prague Spring was seen as yet another blow to the Czechoslovak nation. In the days following the invasion, the RFE broadcast a commentary comparing the invasion to the Nazi occupation after the Munich Agreement.¹⁴⁶ Another analysis compared it to the February coup of 1948 as the event which *divided* the people, while the latest events *united*

¹⁴³ “Veřejnost se sice zapřísahala na ‘socialismem s lidskou tváří’, ale nepamatuji si, že by to většina lidí dělala z jiného důvodu než jako úlitbu Moskvě.” Rakušanová, *Svobodná v Evropě*, 38. Emphasis added.

¹⁴⁴ “Jinak nechtěla většina student v Praze, a na to vemte jed, nic jiného než plnokrevnou demokracii po vzoru první republiky.” Rakušanová, *Svobodná v Evropě*, 38.

¹⁴⁵ The pejorative use of the word “Bolshevik” should imply that the communist ideology was imported from Russia and that it is at odds with the local traditional political culture. It is used, for instance, by Karel Kryl and Ivan Diviš, as I will mention later in the chapter. Although I make a difference between views of the RFE employees expressed in private correspondence, diaries or memoirs and the policy of the Radio expressed in official documents and broadcast material, I believe that the subjective remarks shed new light on, or even contextualize, the broadcast content.

¹⁴⁶ *Commentary on how history repeats itself*, August 27, 1968, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) broadcast records, Hoover Institution Library & Archives, accessed March 19, 2022, <https://digitalcollections.hoover.org/objects/48039/commentary-on-how-history-repeats-itself>.

people in resistance to the occupation.¹⁴⁷ The Protectorate took away the sovereignty from the nation, and the February coup divided the nation (because it is the nation that is the main political category, not class), while the resistance to the invasion was the national resistance that united the people of different political affiliations. In other words, the stance of the RFE towards the three pivotal events in the Czechoslovak mid-twentieth century was anchored in the nation.¹⁴⁸ The outlook expressed by Lída Rakušanová that dominated the RFE does not seem to be shared with most of the contemporaries of the Prague Spring during the whole period of “normalization.” For example, public opinion polls at that time provided insights that complicate the picture presented by the RFE. The majority of respondents (86%) preferred socialism over capitalism,¹⁴⁹ and the majority saw the reforms of the Prague Spring as a path to more socialism (76%),¹⁵⁰ not as a call for the restoration of interwar democracy.

The pursuits of the projected “Free Czechoslovakia” were succinctly expressed by Pavel Pecháček, the head of the RFE in 1992: “Czechoslovakia is free again, and the Radio Free Europe has certainly made a significant contribution to this. It fulfilled its original aim. Now our mission has changed - we want to help develop democracy and a market economy, so our country becomes truly prosperous and happy.”¹⁵¹ Pecháček says that the task of the RFE changed, but I will try to prove that the task of developing liberal democracy and a free-market economy was the aim embedded in the policy of the RFE much earlier than in the post-1989 era. In the literary sphere, its critique of the structural features of the late socialist system

¹⁴⁷ *Commentary in response to the Moscow Protocol*, August 28, 1968, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) broadcast records, Hoover Institution Library & Archives, accessed March 25, 2022, <https://digitalcollections.hoover.org/objects/48085/commentary-in-response-to-the-moscow-protocol>. Emphasis added.

¹⁴⁸ This claim is in line with the claims of Ladislav Holý that the opposition to the communist regime in general was rooted in the national symbolics.

¹⁴⁹ Jaroslav Čáp, Štěpánka Zaorálková, “O některých politických a hospodářských problémech,” *Sociologický datový archiv*, Praha: Ústav pro výzkum veřejného mínění, 1968, 15, accessed July 19, 2022, <http://dspace.soc.cas.cz:8080/xmlui/handle/123456789/2885>.

¹⁵⁰ “Některé aktuální otázky naší společnosti I,” *Sociologický datový archiv*, Praha: Ústav pro výzkum veřejného mínění, 1968, 2, accessed July 19, 2022, <http://dspace.soc.cas.cz:8080/xmlui/handle/123456789/2876>.

¹⁵¹ Karel Sedláček, *Volá Svobodná Evropa* (Praha: Archa 90, 1993), 162.

demonstrates the RFE's role in formulating opposition to the status quo of "normalization" in a way that matches the tasks Pecháček indicated. At the same time, the radio participated in constructing a different "common sense" of what freedom was in the post-1989 era.

When distinguishing between history and poetry, Aristotle argued that the former has the task of describing what happened in real life, while the latter describes what could have happened according to the laws of probability.¹⁵² Broadcasting the stories that had ideas of what the world should look like, different from what the official discourse had to offer, the RFE partook in building a new liberal consensus. Initially, the liberal consensus seemed *liberating* because it opposed the system whose stability depended on suppressing and discrediting the alternatives.¹⁵³ Yet, the new ideology would soon expose its limitations by confining the social imagination into capitalist realism, another doctrine of discrediting alternatives. Mark Fisher describes it as "the widespread sense that not only is capitalism the only viable political and economic system, but also that it is now impossible even to *imagine* a coherent alternative to it."¹⁵⁴ The RFE has prepared the ground for capitalist realism by criticizing communism as an unviable socio-economic system and consistently framed communist Czechoslovakia as "totalitarian," equating communism and Nazism. As did the head of the Czechoslovak Broadcasting Department, Pavel Pecháček, in his preface to the printed edition of the show *Rozhlasová univerzita* [Radio University]: "In literature, we are mainly interested in the authors who were on the index¹⁵⁵ in Prague, *both* under the Protectorate and under the rule of Communism."¹⁵⁶ I will return to the anti-totalitarian argument's significance, its roots, and implications in the Cold War and after it in the last chapter.

¹⁵² Aristotle, *Poetics*, transl. Malcolm Heath (London: Penguin Books, 1996), 16.

¹⁵³ Pavel Kolář and Michal Pullmann, "Nenápadný půvab ideologie," in *Co byla normalizace?: Studie o pozdním socialismu*, ed. Pavel Kolář, Michal Pullmann (Praha: Nakladatelství Lidové Noviny, Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů, 2016), 57.

¹⁵⁴ Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* (London: Zero Books, 2009), 10.

¹⁵⁵ i.e., banned works and authors.

¹⁵⁶ "V literatuře se zajímáme především o autory, kteří byli v Praze na indexu jak za protektorátu, tak i za vlády komunismu." Pavel Pecháček, "Úvod," in *Rozhlasová univerzita Svobodné Evropy: I. díl, humanitní vědy (Výbor)*,

The RFE's mediation of Ludvík Vaculík's *Morčata* epitomizes the anti-totalitarian critique of Czechoslovakia. The main background of *Morčata* is the division of private and public life during the "normalization." The inability to speak publicly about things, such as the economy, which would be a common conversation topic among the employees of the State Bank, leads to the individual's withdrawal to the private sphere. The protagonist's inability to be realized in the public sphere is reflected in his behavior towards the little guinea pigs with which he begins, sometimes brutally, to experiment. Antonín Kratochvíl, in one of his *Background Reports*, summarizes the novel as follows: "Vaculík has drawn a *realistic* picture of the depressing political helplessness of the individual in a *manipulated* socialist society which is also being financially mismanaged."¹⁵⁷

The account of the bank clerk Vašek reveals that by "totalitarianism" was not meant only the impossibility of public debate and expression of different opinions and withdrawal into the intimate sphere – in the so-called "inner emigration." It is not only the exercising of absolute power by a single entity but also the merging of the economic and the political sphere, which were usually seen as two separate realms in the Western liberal tradition. The critique of the administrative/planned economy was accomplished in several ways. The State Bank, where the main character Vašek is employed, is informally called "Státní banda" [The State Gang] due to the normalization of thievery. Employees try to take the money out of the bank daily but are being searched by guards at the entrance. Sometimes they get lucky, and the guards fail to find the money, but if the money is found, the guards take all the money they found with the employees (including the money they did not steal). It is unknown where that vast amount of confiscated money ends up, which creates suspicions in Vašek about some parallel money

ed. Antonín Kratochvíl (Mnichov & Praha: Klub přátel českého baroka & Česká expedice, 1993), 5. Emphasis added.

¹⁵⁷Antonín Kratochvíl, *Contemporary Czech Literature on the European Scene* (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute: Munich, February 17, 1972), 4, accessed April 20, 2022, https://storage.osaarchivum.org/low/b4/57/b457b79e-1e38-4d4c-90d8-c41a9185b48b_1.pdf. Emphasis added.

circulation.¹⁵⁸ In addition, the engineer Maelström anticipates an enormous economic crisis but is being silenced and ignored by colleagues. In other words, the bank is usurped by a political power that tries to control everything, and the general atmosphere of the novel describes the sense of foreboding that things will get out of control. Theft and political pressure seem to be the structural feature of the bank and the entire system. It should be stressed that the mediation of the novel through the RFE contributed significantly to such reduction of the meaning, placing it in a specific context (of the Cold War binary oppositions in the ideological struggle) and making interpretive suggestions throughout. Its reception within the book series edited by Philip Roth – “Writers from the Other Europe” – shows that the novel leaves room for an opposite interpretation. According to Brian K. Goodman, *Morčata* was one of the books that offered new, counter-realist, aesthetic models for Roth,¹⁵⁹ contrary to its framing by Kratochvíl as “a realistic picture.” Goodman writes that “[t]he novel dares the reader to identify the story’s tortured animals with the helpless subjects of the communist state, while simultaneously resisting that same reading at every turn by denying the guinea pigs any stable referent outside of the story.”¹⁶⁰ Yet, as framed by the RFE, the novel is merely an allegory against the regime.

The failure of the planned economy is one of the themes of another novel broadcast over the RFE - Alexandr Kliment’s *Nuda v Čechách*. The architect Mikuláš Svoboda cannot realize his creative capacities because he has to meet the demands “from above.” Decisions are depersonalized, construction is of poor architectural quality, norms are too high and not in line with “rules of the profession,” only projects of those who can negotiate with influential people are realized. After the first Stalinist years, liberalization took place in architecture, and Svoboda

¹⁵⁸ *Uncensored Literature* #17, July 12, 1982, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) broadcast records, Hoover Institution Library & Archives, accessed April 17, 2022, <https://digitalcollections.hoover.org/objects/43672/uncensored-literature-17>; *Uncensored Literature* #19, July 19, 1982, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) broadcast records, Hoover Institution Library & Archives, accessed April 19, 2022, <https://digitalcollections.hoover.org/objects/43673/uncensored-literature-19>.

¹⁵⁹ Brian K. Goodman, “Philip Roth’s Other Europe: Counter-Realism and the Late Cold War,” *American Literary History* 27, no. 4 (2015): 13.

¹⁶⁰ Goodman, “Philip Roth’s Other Europe,” 13.

received indications that one of his projects would be realized, but it was rejected again. Kliment's novel implies, similarly to Vaculík, that structural problems of the system maintain, despite apparent liberalizations, personnel changes, and ideological "deviations."

In both novels, the suppression of personal freedoms is displayed in the form of the impossibility of self-realization. Still, a violent confrontation with individuals by the state is given only briefly in the form of mysterious persons. In *Morčata*, Vašek, because of his curiosity and fascination with engineer Maelström, is killed by a mysterious man, the assumed StB agent. In Kliment's novel, a mysterious person, for whom it is indicated the StB affiliation, is involved in several "unfortunate events." In both books, the StB agents are described as characters in spy thrillers, and the extent of the state repression appears confined to the narrow circle of those "indecent" who interfere in things outside their prescribed position.

Other broadcast books, such as Eva Kantůrková's *Přítelkyně z domu smutku* [My Companions in the Bleak House], describing life in the women's section of the Ruzyně prison, depicted the other side of the regime in a way that emphasizes its structural nature. Preserved records deal with two inmates Helga and Bóži, and they consist to a great extent of the narration of the previous life of the inmates based on the narrator's/author's observations in the cell.¹⁶¹ Kantůrková is not focused on the political aspect of her imprisonment, and almost none of her fellow inmates were incarcerated for political reasons. Instead, she depicts dehumanizing conditions in the prison and intrigues, but she also attempts to humanize roommates, offering a more nuanced view and relativizing the regime's strategy of creating a clear boundary between "decent" and "indecent" people.

¹⁶¹ *Uncensored Literature* #74, October 18, 1985, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) broadcast records, Hoover Institution Library & Archives, accessed April 24, 2022, <https://digitalcollections.hoover.org/objects/60596/uncensored-literature-74>; *Uncensored Literature* #76, October 25, 1985, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) broadcast records, Hoover Institution Library & Archives, accessed April 24, 2022, <https://digitalcollections.hoover.org/objects/60599/uncensored-literature-76>.

The critique of the regime's oppression by the literary works broadcast on the RFE goes beyond the condemnation of the institutionalized incarceration characteristic of all European societies of the time. The main problem appears to be that violence is integral to the revolution itself. The play *Adam stvořitel* [Adam the Creator] by Karel and Josef Čapek was broadcast in the period that is out of my focus, in January 1968.¹⁶² Nevertheless, this case shows that denunciation of the radical change of society has maintained continuity since the foundation of the radio, given that the play was initially aired in 1952, a year after the outset of the RFE. The plot, written in 1927, follows the story of Adam, who destroys the world in the name of anarchy, declaring that “every labor is violence,” “religion is a scam,” “private life is a prejudice,” “laws are slave chains|,” “every government is a tyranny.”¹⁶³ Enraged, God commands him to create a new world out of clay as punishment. The newly created world is full of flaws with people constantly fighting each other, so Adam wants to destroy it again but is being hindered. Finally, Adam accepts the world as it is – full of imperfections.¹⁶⁴ Although the main object of criticism is anarchism, the term in a sense encompasses all “radical” ideologies,¹⁶⁵ condemning them for not accepting the world as it is and engaging in the *hybris* of “playing a God,” trying to fix the unfixable, thus inflicting more damage and suffering.

In Egon Hostovský's *Osvoboditel se vrací*,¹⁶⁶ broadcast in 1973 on the occasion of the author's death, the plot takes place in a fictional state after a bloody civil war, when the leader

¹⁶² Broadcast of the play “*Adam stvořitel*”, January 01, 1968, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) broadcast records, Hoover Institution Library & Archives, accessed April 15, 2022, <https://digitalcollections.hoover.org/objects/47974/broadcast-of-the-play--adam-stvoritel> .

¹⁶³ Broadcast of the play “*Adam stvořitel*”, January 01, 1968, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) broadcast records, Hoover Institution Library & Archives, accessed April 15, 2022, <https://digitalcollections.hoover.org/objects/47974/broadcast-of-the-play--adam-stvoritel> .

¹⁶⁴ Broadcast of the play “*Adam stvořitel*”, January 01, 1968, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) broadcast records, Hoover Institution Library & Archives, accessed April 15, 2022, <https://digitalcollections.hoover.org/objects/47974/broadcast-of-the-play--adam-stvoritel> .

¹⁶⁵ The same is true for “Bolshevism” that encompasses, not only the ideology of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union formed from the faction of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party led by Vladimir Lenin. Diviš, for instance, talks about the “right and left Bolsheviks”, meaning the Nazis and Communists, thus using the word “Bolshevism” as a substitute word for “Totalitarianism”.

¹⁶⁶The printed edition of the play seems to meet with lukewarm reception in the exile cultural public sphere, as the short review of the play published in *Svědectví* demonstrates: “But we miss something there – we don't know what [...] It is an allegory, a bit reminiscent of Čapek's allegorical plays. But it is difficult to explain the meaning of the

of the revolutionary movement that won the war returns home. It is not only his enemies who are petrified of his arrival but also his wife, who knows that he is a cruel and cold man. Again, the conclusion seems to be that real liberation does not come with great liberators who turn out to be tyrants or with the radical means by which even the initially noble impulse turns into bloodshed. A review of the play, published in *Svědectví* [Testimony], noted Čapek's literary influence on Hostovský.¹⁶⁷ The impact is also ideological, and it shows the continuity between the interwar mainstream intellectual background and the section of the culture of the RFE. Egon Hostovský, alongside Jan Čep, the editor of the cultural program in the first years of the RFE, was already a published author in the First Czechoslovak Republic. Both plays, *Adam stvořitel* and *Osvoboditel se vrací*, are principled critiques of (political) violence as such but also imply that this world is not as bad that it is necessary to change it radically. The non-violent resistance is an essential feature of the Czechoslovak political dissent culminating in the symbolic representation of the *Velvet* Revolution with banners of roses and shouts: "We have bare hands!". The continual discourse of non-violence from the RFE to the Velvet Revolution gained the moral high ground for a part of the opposition to the communist regime in the post-1989 era, the implications of which I will return to in the last chapter.

As I have already mentioned, "Free Czechoslovakia" of the RFE was modeled on the First Republic, and it treated the notion of the occupation of the homeland primarily as a consequence of the communist takeover in 1948, not as the aftermath of the 1968 invasion. Ivo Bock noted that most significant works of samizdat and exile literature did not treat historical themes – the First Republic was usually not a setting of the broadcast plots. Instead, it was used as a basis for the critique of contemporary Czechoslovak society with its values, symbols, and

allegory." [...] "We lack a key to him [Hostovský]; perhaps not only through our fault." K[latovský], K[arel]. "Egon Hostovský: Osvoboditel se vrací. Index, Kolín n. R., 1972." *Svědectví: čtvrtletník pro politiku a kulturu* 12 (46), 1973, 361, accessed May 14, 2022, http://scriptum.cz/soubory//scriptum/%5Bnode%5D/svedectvi_1973_046_compr-ocr.pdf.

¹⁶⁷ K[latovský], "Egon Hostovský: Osvoboditel se vrací," 361.

morality. Literature, as mediated by the RFE, attributed to the pre-communist world the following features: having the free public sphere and multiparty system, belonging to the European/Western tradition, cultivating a liberal legacy, respecting private property and human rights, and having the capitalist market economic system.

Most protagonists of the literary works aired by the RFE were middle class: bank clerks (Vašek from *Morčata*), writers (Méd'a from “V úterý ráno (sentimentální povídka)”), playwrights (Vaněk from *Audience*), professors (Danny from *Příběh inženýra lidských duší*), architects (Mikuláš from *Nuda v Čechách*), and the like. Those characters who were currently workers are “degraded” to this level, as in Václav Havel’s *Audience*, broadcast on the RFE after its premiere at the Burgtheater in Vienna. In Havel’s play, Vaněk, who is often identified with the author himself, works in a brewery, a job he is overqualified for. The readers/viewers/listeners understand that based on his general attitude – his polite and restrained demeanor, his initial abstinence and sobriety, and his constant addressing of his superior Sládek in a formal way (vykáání). His superior, Sládek, is a well-meaning but simple and ignorant man who does not understand Vaněk and his introspective melancholy. Sládek is an example of a man who, although of a limited intellectual capacity, excels within the system because he meets all its ritual requirements, similarly to Havel’s greengrocer from “The Power of the Powerless.” Such a representation of the working class in the play indicates the overall paternalistic view of the masses who have accepted “Bolshevism,” or at least did not oppose it, indulged in material well-being and security.

The ironic use of words such as “working people”¹⁶⁸ (“pracující lid”) or “comrade”¹⁶⁹ (“soudruh/soudružka”) was directed at communists’ “abuse” of language, which I will analyze later in the chapter. At the same, it demonstrates the paternalistic view of the gullible working

¹⁶⁸ For instance, Diviš writes about “the February victory of the working people, gigantic farce staged by Moscow”; Diviš, “Zánik poesie,” 108.

¹⁶⁹ For instance, as in the excerpt from the beginning of this chapter.

class who does not understand that not only the current, ossified late-socialist government but communists, in general, do not represent their interests. The critique of the communist bureaucracy, “nomenklatura” or “the new class” as the Yugoslav dissident Milovan Đilas put it in the title of his book, was ubiquitous among the opposition intellectuals throughout the socialist camp (and even within the internal discussions of the communist parties), but the kind of critique the RFE conducted goes beyond that. In line with Čapek, who claimed that he is not a communist “because I am on the side of the poor,”¹⁷⁰ the RFE tried to persuade the listeners that communists are not the people’s representatives. In an essay on Sartre broadcast in the show *Časové a nadčasové* [Timely and Timeless],¹⁷¹ Josef Jedlička chooses the quotes from Sartre’s work in a similar manner. He tries to differentiate between the great intellectual and the political “mud” of the Left: “The Left is, in my opinion, dead. The parties that call themselves “left-wing” are no longer that,”¹⁷² or picking Sartre’s remark that “communist parties are the greatest enemies of the revolution.”¹⁷³ This course of argumentation, from Čapek to the RFE, is an attempt to avoid the class perspective when talking about workers.

Similarly, Pavel Tigrid, who himself was a significant figure of the RFE in its early years and the Minister of Culture in a post-1989 government, published a book *Dnešek je váš, zítřek je náš: dělnické revolty v komunistických zemích* [Today is Yours, Tomorrow is Ours: Workers’ Revolts in Communist Countries] trying to show through examples of workers’ protests and strikes that the countries of the Eastern Bloc do not build a classless society.¹⁷⁴ The state of the so-called “actually-existing socialism” is not the working class state but an amalgam that only declaratively advocated for workers. How this amalgam is constructed negatively

¹⁷⁰ Karel Čapek, “Proč nejsem komunistou,” in *O věcech obecných čili Zoon politikon* (Praha: Městská knihovna v Praze, 2018), 69, accessed March 10, 2022, https://web2.mlp.cz/koweb/00/04/37/75/30/o_vecech_obecných_cili_zoon_politikon.pdf.

¹⁷¹ Josef Jedlička, “Sázka na jednotlivce,” in *Rozptýleno v prostoru a čase* (Brno: Nakladatelství Petrov, 2000), 111-116. The volume *Rozptýleno v prostoru a čase* consists of preserved “scripts” of the episodes of the show *Timely and Timeless* written by Josef Jedlička.

¹⁷² Jedlička, “Sázka na jednotlivce,” 115.

¹⁷³ Jedlička, “Sázka na jednotlivce,” 116.

¹⁷⁴ Pavel Tigrid, *Dnešek je váš, zítřek je náš dělnické revolty v komunistických zemích* (Praha: Vokno, 1990), 6.

affects workers' morality, who now engage in various surviving strategies in relation to the state apparatus.

In Ivan Klíma's short story "V úterý ráno (sentimentální povídka)" [On Tuesday Morning (Sentimental Short Story)], broadcast in the show *Literatura bez cenzury*, the main character meets Lída, the love of his youth who comes to Prague from New York.¹⁷⁵ Besides intimate elements that unfold their love history, the dialogue between the two displays her attempts to grasp the contemporary Czechoslovak society after decades of exile.¹⁷⁶ The situation is paradigmatic; what Lída finds to be odd, unjust, or changed in a wrong way, she does so in relation not only to her memories of the place she left but also in relation to the place that seems to be the center of "normality" and a model of what the things should be like – New York. Měďa recognizes pity in her manner, and through grumpy answers to her questions about why he does not go abroad, he tries to evade the binary opposition between the good West and bad East. Still, he is not convinced of the groundedness of this reasoning because they share the vision of what the world should look like. Similarly to the situation in Kliment's novel, the two also discuss emigration, but unlike Mikuláš, Měďa is determined not to leave the country. One of Lída's repeatedly asked questions about why he does not go abroad provokes the following ruminations:

I could have replied: because I like to walk along the granite cobblestones of several Prague streets – their names remind me of the history I know and understand at least a little. But I might as well have replied: my homeland is no longer to be found; it has disappeared like that place in the grove. Most of my friends had left or were about to leave anyway. They *rape the language* daily by every means in their possession, and they have many. What's left are the alleys. They've mostly renamed them or still rename them and let them fall into disrepair.

¹⁷⁵ Lída comes from London, but she lives in New York.

¹⁷⁶ *Uncensored Literature* #128, August 08, 1983, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) broadcast records, Hoover Institution Library & Archives, accessed April 24, 2022, <https://digitalcollections.hoover.org/objects/43840/uncensored-literature-128> .

Even the pavement is being torn up, and the cobblestone is being sold to build some dams in Holland.¹⁷⁷

What is left is a complete cultural catastrophe, the world turned upside down. Life in the country is stagnant, the individual is helpless, and the entire social life is utterly corrupt. Surviving strategies are no longer related to trying to live a “normal” life through hypocrisy and lying to the regime. Everything seems to be about negotiating the amount of “acceptable” anguish. The ubiquity and pervasiveness of disorder and corruption are particularly exposed in the communists’ violence over the language, which is a recurring theme in the literary politics of the Radio Free Europe.

“The word fallacy – another Bolshevick oral gobbledygook,” wrote Ivan Diviš in a diary entry.¹⁷⁸ The “abuse” or “ideologization” of language by communists is the anti-communist and anti-totalitarian commonplace ever since the invention of Newspeak in Orwell’s *1984*. When the Czech translation of the novel was broadcast on the RFE, Newspeak was listed as one of the fundamental means of manipulation and control.¹⁷⁹ Such a view of language was connected to the previously mentioned assurance that communism was imported and that it is not compatible with the domestic political and cultural tradition. In the essay “Zánik poesie v současném světě” [The End of Poetry in Contemporary World] broadcast on the RFE, Diviš gives a cataclysmic conclusion about the influence of Communism on Czech culture. Renouncing its two cornerstones, which played the role of the Czech *Iliad*, Máchas’ *Máj* [May]

¹⁷⁷“Mohl jsem odpovědět: protože se rád procházím po žulových kostkách několika pražských uliček – už svými názvy mi připomínají historii, kterou znám a aspoň trochu jí rozumím. Ale zrovna tak jsem mohl odpovědět: moje vlast už se nedá nalézt, zmizela jako to místo v lesíku. Většina mých přátel už stejně odešla anebo se chystá odejít. *Jazyk denně znásilňují* všemi prostředky, jež mají v držení, a mají jich hodně. Zbývají uličky. Ty už většinou přejmenovali anebo ještě přejmenují a nechali je zpustnout. I to dláždění vytrhávají, kostky prý prodávají na stavbu jakýchsi hrází v Holandsku.” Emphasis added; *Uncensored Literature* #128, August 08, 1983, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) broadcast records, Hoover Institution Library & Archives, accessed April 24, 2022, <https://digitalcollections.hoover.org/objects/43840/uncensored-literature-128>.

¹⁷⁸“Slovo pomýlenost – další bolševický orální žmolek.” Diviš, *Teorie spolehlivosti*, 133.

¹⁷⁹*Uncensored Literature* #207, May 11, 1984, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) broadcast records, Hoover Institution Library & Archives, April 24, 2022, <https://digitalcollections.hoover.org/objects/43687/uncensored-literature-207>.

and Smetana's *Prodaná nevěsta* [The Bartered Bride], in the name of "the February victory of the working people, gigantic farce staged by Moscow," the Czech people "destroyed themselves and erased themselves from history."¹⁸⁰ Moreover, "[i]n an incomprehensible and insulting way, namely vehemently *collaborating* on this own destruction, this nation lost all historical memory, and thus erased "from its midst" all poetry, not only that, even *its possibility*, and placed it or better threw it into the Tartarus and Cocytus."¹⁸¹ Historical memory, poetry, and language are lumped together here under the umbrella of the nation, thus showing that the communists mistreat the *national* language (which stems from the national tradition and poetry). That is why Diviš uses the word "collaboration" to describe the activity performed against one's nation for the benefit of the occupier.

Ladislav Holý suggests that the main opposition to the communist regime in Czechoslovakia throughout its existence was formulated in national terms,¹⁸² which brings forth literature and culture, because of their role in building cultural memory and national identity. "My homeland is not to be found," confesses to himself, the narrator of Ivan Klíma's short story "V úterý ráno."¹⁸³ By using the word "vlast" [homeland], Klíma opposes the national (that is lost) and the current regime suggesting that the latter obliterated the former. Mikuláš Svoboda's lyrical outburst takes him back to his childhood towards the end of Alexandr Kliment's novel: "My father turned me into a landscape, and the landscape turned into me, it is my world, my destiny, my history, my language, my idea, my project, say what you want, but it is, and I am stuck in it."¹⁸⁴ Lumped together, language, history, and landscape represent a kind of

¹⁸⁰ Ivan Diviš, "Zánik poesie v současném světě," 107-108. Emphasis added.

¹⁸¹ "Nepochopitelným a urážlivým způsobem, totiž vehementně kolaborujícím na tomto vlastním zničení, ztratil tento národ veškerou paměť a tím ovšem i vymítl "ze svého středu" všechnu poesii, nejen to, dokonce i její možnost, a umístil či lépe uvrhl ji do Tartaru a Kokytu." Diviš, "Zánik poesie," 108. Emphasis added.

¹⁸² Ladislav Holý, *The Little Czech and the Great Czech Nation: National Identity and the Post-Communist Social Transformation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 16-55.

¹⁸³ "Moje vlast už se nedá nalézt," *Uncensored Literature #128*, August 08, 1983, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) broadcast records, Hoover Institution Library & Archives, accessed April 24, 2022, <https://digitalcollections.hoover.org/objects/43840/uncensored-literature-128> .

¹⁸⁴ "Můj otec mě převrátil do krajiny a krajina se převrátila do mě, je to můj svět, můj osud, moje historie, můj jazyk, moje myšlenka, můj projekt, říkejte si tomu, jak chcete; je to a já jsem v tom zanesen." *Uncensored*

metaphysical foundation or escapism from repressive everyday life. In all these cases, the nation has been imposed as the alternative, not to the government but class. “We” have become those who share the language and selective historical memory, not “we” who share the position in the production process. This element of the literary politics of the RFE should be seen in the light of the overall efforts of the US during the Cold War to exploit the national tensions or to work on the “stimulation of nationality aspirations,”¹⁸⁵ as Henry Kissinger put it. Yet, what is the vision of the national society broadcast on Radio Free Europe airwaves?

It is interesting to note that Catholicism played an important role in the broadcasting of the RFE – the Catholic-themed programs, Masses, poetry, and prose by Catholic authors were a significant part of the overall cultural program. For instance, the work of Jan Čep, an editor of the RFE, was widely promoted and debated. Besides, many of the employees of the RFE dealing with culture were devoted Catholics, such as repeatedly mentioned Antonín Kratochvíl, Olga Kopecká-Valeská, Josef Jedlička, Ivan Diviš, and others. Also, the RFE being stationed in Bavaria, one of the German regions/states with a substantial percentage of Catholics, completes the picture of its links with Catholicism. This may appear in contrast with the previous analysis of the identification with the First Republic, given that at the time, Catholicism was widely seen as a means of oppression by the Habsburg Monarchy because the Czech statehood was closely connected to Protestantism. However, most Slovaks were Catholics, as were most of the Czechs; only the state symbols were expressed as Protestant.¹⁸⁶ In connection to that, the importance of baroque and the scholarship on baroque is unusually significant in the RFE’s cultural program. The baroque period had an ambivalent role in the national memory of the Czechs because of their lost statehood. At the same time, it is the period

Literature #19, July 19, 1982, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) broadcast records, Hoover Institution Library & Archives, accessed April 19, 2022, <https://digitalcollections.hoover.org/objects/43673/uncensored-literature-19>

¹⁸⁵ Kissinger, “Exploitation of Tension in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe,” 2.

¹⁸⁶ Holy, *The Little Czech*, 41.

when significant and valuable works were created on the territory of Czechoslovakia. The RFE used Catholicism and the Czech baroque to draw the continuity of the tradition when “we” were a part of Europe, i.e., Western Europe, with its vision of future Czechoslovakia. The utilization of Catholicism and baroque demonstrates that the nationalism of the RFE was cultural. Selective use of historical memory in minimizing the importance of Protestantism was aimed at framing the national culture in the main intellectual currents of Western Europe, the assurance succinctly expressed by Kundera’s remark on Central Europe being “culturally in the West and politically in the East.”¹⁸⁷

In a brief note at the end of the first volume of the printed edition of the RFE show *Rozhlasová univerzita* [Radio University], its editor, Antonín Kratochvíl, acknowledges: “I tried to give *Radio University* a democratic fulfillment in accordance with the American political line.”¹⁸⁸ His note reveals that the primary American influence, the influence that shaped the RFE’s literary politics, was more in terms of ideology than in terms of aesthetics and literary theory. The Anglophone literary influence was undeniable, as shown in Chapter 3. However, based on the preserved content, it seems this influence was not decisive or more important than the influence of some other national literature, such as German or French. In a nutshell, it was only a part of seeing oneself as part of the Western Judeo-Christian cultural tradition, which is being interrupted and kidnapped by communism.

The political and ideological influence of the US on literary theory was exercised similarly by anchoring in the local tradition. For instance, the defense of the autonomy of literature and insistence on its unique purpose unconnected to its social tasks fits into the understanding that dominated the Anglophone world for most of the twentieth century,

¹⁸⁷ Milan Kundera, “The Tragedy of Central Europe,” *New York Review of Books*, accessed June 14, 2022, <https://www.nybooks.com/articles/1984/04/26/the-tragedy-of-central-europe/>.

¹⁸⁸ Antonín Kratochvíl, “Doslov a ediční poznámka,” in *Rozhlasová univerzita Svobodné Evropy: I. díl, humanitní vědy (Výbor)*, ed. Antonín Kratochvíl (Mnichov Praha: Klub přátel českého baroka & Česká expedice, 1993), 217.

primarily thanks to New Criticism. Nevertheless, when it comes to content broadcast by the Czechoslovak department of the RFE, advocating the autonomy of literature probably did not come from the Anglosphere but its own tradition of the Prague Linguistic Circle (partly formed by the “former” Russian formalists). Yet, the RFE’s promotion of this type of thinking about literature seen on the background of the Cold War was a political decision *par excellence*, made to fight the dominating view in the Eastern bloc that saw literature in its function of helping the advancement of society. The theoretical assumptions of autonomy of literature, which I described in Chapter 2, were usually in discord with the practice of the RFE because most of the works broadcast were intensively dealing with society and politics, being a kind of commentary on the contemporary political culture. This discord will be dealt with in the concluding chapter. For now, I would like to outscore that promoting the autonomy of literature was not the literary-theoretical but ideological influence of the West, in tune with “the American political line” in the Cold War. So were the social ideas of literary works as mediated by the RFE – advocating individual freedoms and human rights, the free market economy, nationalism, and the anti-totalitarian critique of communism.

“Normalizing” Liberal Democracy

Traditional comparative research is usually concerned with how cultural material or values travel from one national culture to another. From this point of view, the Anglophone literary influence on the Czech or Slovak culture would be gauged by the amount of translation of Anglophone writers or intertextual connections of Czech and Slovak writers with Anglophone literary texts. All that is discernable evidence of *Anglophiness* in the local culture is a valid research subject. In the context of the Cold War radios, that would be the case of the Voice of America, which, although broadcast to Czechoslovakia, primarily dealt with affairs in the US, overtly representing its foreign policy agenda.¹⁸⁹ But the Cold War allowed for more subtle forms of ideological struggle.

In the previous chapters, I dealt with how a corpus of works (and cultural values they contained) was mediated from the “outside” by the Radio Free Europe to be included in the national cultural memory institutionalized after 1989. I attempted to demonstrate how a dialogue of culture with itself, conditioned by the Cold War, was conducted and how profound the effects on its cultural tradition were. The reconstruction of those processes sheds new light on the transnational circulation of knowledge in the Cold War era obliquely, for it does not deal with the transfer of cultural material from one national culture to another but with two different and parallel developments of the “same” culture. The comparison of the two, which I will conduct in this chapter, would deepen the understanding of the Anglophone influence on the Czechoslovak cultural space because it will not show the palpable *Anglophiness* but will point to the vision of Czechoslovakia as imagined from the Anglophone side in the Cold War.

¹⁸⁹ Kristýna Bardová, “Hlas Ameriky o bojích na frontě, před komunistickými soudy i na ledě NHL,” *Paměť národa*, accessed 10 July, 2022, <https://www.pametnaroda.cz/cs/magazin/pribehy/hlas-ameriky-o-bojich-na-fronte-pred-komunistickymi-soudy-i-na-lede-nhl>.

In mid-1994, the RFE ceased broadcasting from Munich and moved to Prague. In 1995, the original Czech staff of the Czechoslovak Broadcasting Department of the RFE joined *Český rozhlas* (the Czech Radio) and formed *Český rozhlas 6/Radio Svobodná Evropa* (Czech Radio 6/Radio Free Europe) under the editorial leadership of Pavel Pecháček, the previous head of the Czech department of the RFE. The station operated until 2002, when the US Congress stopped funding, and the station rebranded itself as *Český rozhlas 6*.¹⁹⁰ The development of the RFE after 1989 reveals that the station has institutionally integrated into the mainstream of the Czech public sphere throughout the 1990s, shaping it actively.

The role of the RFE in the *literary* life of Czechoslovakia (and later the Czech Republic) was canonized within the same period when many works it broadcast in the Cold War era were published in the form of books: Karel Kryl's *Krylogie*, Ivan Diviš's *Gong*, Josef Jedlička's *Rozptýleno v prostoru a čase* [Scattered in Space and Time], Antonín Kratochvíl's *Rozhlasová univerzita*, etc. Also, most of the books published in exile or as samizdats broadcast by the RFE have got official editions, such as, Alexandr Kliment's *Nuda v Čechách* (1990) and Eva Kantůrková's *Přítelkyně z domu smutku* (1990) or Ludvík Vaculík's *Morčata* (1991) – all three by the publishing house *Československý spisovatel* which had previously published official literature, approved by the regime. Apart from the official publishing house, which would soon lose its significance, dozens of private commercial publishers emerged, printing other samizdats or books written in exile. Furthermore, the RFE was canonized in its role of being a platform for exile and samizdat literature. In the extensive four-volume history of Czech literature from 1945 to 1989 published in the early 2000s, the Radio Free Europe, along with exile magazines, departments of Bohemian Studies abroad, publishers such as *Index* (Cologne) and *'68 Publishers* (Toronto), was counted as “the natural and functional background of the Czech

¹⁹⁰ “RFE/RL, INC.,” *provenio.net*, accessed 15 July, 2022, <https://provenio.net/records/6c5748e6-ac4c-4825-b834-7209cf5b98d9>.

literary exile and a place of communication between different generations.”¹⁹¹ It was assessed as “of fundamental importance for the parallel cultural activities of Czech society.”¹⁹² Notably, it was pointed out that some plays written in exile, due to lack of contact with live audiences, were intended for radio broadcasting, including that of the RFE, therefore acknowledging its share in influencing the formal characteristics of this stream of Czech literature.¹⁹³ Simultaneously, the literary life within Czechoslovakia was described mainly in politics, ideological influence, and government repression. Following the fundamental division of Czech literature during “normalization” similar to that of Květoslav Chvatík, Czechoslovak literary life is broken into three parts: official, unofficial literature written in Czechoslovakia and exile. Indeed, it should be acknowledged that the edition in which only the fourth volume, covering a period of twenty years (1969-1989) counts over 900 pages, offers a more detailed and nuanced view of the structure of literary life in relation to Chvatík, acknowledging many “borderline” cases, but the basic assumption was still retained. A 1000-page long textbook-like overview of Czech literature *Česká literatura od počátků k dnešku* [Czech Literature from the Beginnings to the Present], encompassing literary life from medieval times to the 1990s, treats the period of “normalization” in a similar way. It follows the same Chvatík’s three-part concept: “[E]ach of the three literary currents of the 1970s and 1980s worked in different conditions and appealed to different layers of readers.”¹⁹⁴ Despite encompassing such an extended period, the editors of the volume left room for paying a brief tribute to the Radio Free Europe for the development of exile literature.¹⁹⁵ Due to the lack of all information, it is impossible to fully reconstruct the RFE canon and compare it with that legitimized through literature, publishing, and education histories after 1989. Nevertheless, this short overview shows that the prominent place of the

¹⁹¹ Pavel Janoušek (ed.), *Dějiny české literatury 1945–1989, svazek IV (1968–1989)* (Praha: Academia, 2008), 146.

¹⁹² Janoušek, *Dějiny české literatury 1945–1989*, 815.

¹⁹³ Janoušek, *Dějiny české literatury 1945–1989*, 556.

¹⁹⁴ Janoušek, *Dějiny české literatury 1945–1989*, 853.

¹⁹⁵ Janoušek, *Dějiny české literatury 1945–1989*, 741.

RFE and its contribution to the literature and culture of Czechoslovakia was from 1989 confirmed from multiple sides, by literary experts (and literary community in general) and by the state, media, and market. The change of the system did not mean only the re-evaluation of literary values and cultural politics but a shift in *social* values. The integration of the RFE into the mainstream culture after 1989 meant accepting the American-Cold-war-side view of what Czech culture should look like. I demonstrated in the previous chapter how most of the fictional works broadcast over the RFE suggested structural flaws in the communist regime in Czechoslovakia. Missing political pluralism was only one of them, alongside censorship, an inefficient planned economy, firm control over civil society, etc. The course of events after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the restoration of capitalism, and the (re)introduction of liberal democracy in Eastern Europe have shown the limitations of this kind of social criticism, especially the background into which it was anchored. I brought up that most of the characters in the broadcast prose works were middle-class people having a hard time in a totalitarian regime. The middle class and national state go hand in hand, as do “the return to Europe,” the restoration of capitalism, and the radical redistribution of wealth in the 1990s. In what follows, I will briefly demonstrate a strong connection between the shift in ruling values indicated in literature and socio-economic change.

Thirty years after the Velvet Revolution, *Český rozhlas* published a sociological study titled *Rozdělení svobodou: Česká společnost po 30 letech* [Divided by Freedom: Czech Society 30 Years After], in which researchers detected six social groups/classes as well as several polarizing topics in Czech society. The study shows that what Ladislav Holý iterated as the primary form of expressing opposition to communism, the national, is one of the least polarizing topics since most respondents identified with what they perceived as patriotic sentiments. However, the change of system in 1989, the event presented as the moment when the people stood up for freedom, is not unanimously accepted as positive. More precisely, the way the

respondent viewed the path that Czech society has taken after 1989 shows a deep polarization among six classes of Czech citizens.¹⁹⁶ The poll does not offer an obvious conclusion that “winners” of the restoration of capitalism expressed positive and “losers” negative views on the development after 1989 but, above all, that not all the citizens identified themselves with the core values of the post-1989 society. The study quantitatively demonstrated what I implied in Chapter 4, that the values of the middle class were promoted by part of the opposition, including the RFE, as universal. The qualitative study conducted two years later, drawing upon the research project *Rozdělení svobodou*, elaborates on that. For instance, while the “winners” appreciate the freedom as such – meaning civil liberties, the freedom of travel and enterprise – the “losers” do not identify with those values *per se* because they are unable to use them, mainly for economic reasons. In the words of the authors of the study: “[W]hat the positive group experiences as a welcomed freedom, the representatives of the critical group [“losers”] perceive as an all-pervasive loss of calculability, rules, and control, coupled with the fear of losing what they have either built up in an economic sense or what constitutes a clear cultural and identity framework for them.”¹⁹⁷

These two studies show that there is no universal social consensus on ideology the way it was formalized in *Zákon o protiprávnosti komunistického režimu a o odporu proti němu* [Act on the Illegality of the Communist Regime and on Resistance to it]. The act signed in 1993 not only condemns the crimes of unjust executions, detentions, torture, suppression of civil liberties, and human rights violations, it is equally concerned with “the programmatic destruction of the traditional values of European civilization.” Among other things, it accuses

¹⁹⁶ Positive evaluation of the path the Czech society took after 1989 prevails among what the researchers called the secure middle class (65%), the emerging cosmopolitan class (67%) and the locally connected class (54%), while the negative evaluation dominates among the traditional working class (52%), the endangered class (55%) and the suffering class (62%). Daniel Prokop *et al.*, *Rozdělení svobodou: Česká společnost po 30 letech* (Praha: Radioservis a.s., 2019), 27, accessed July 4, 2022, <https://www.irozhlas.cz/sites/default/files/documents/4cb643625998e931d8f0a9aa34bbb254.pdf>.

¹⁹⁷ Martin Buchtík *et al.*, *Jedna společnost - různé světy: Poznatky kvalitativní studie o fragmentarizaci české společnosti* (Praha: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, e. V.; Masarykova demokratická akademie, z. s., 2021), 69, accessed July 5, 2022, <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/prag/18056.pdf>.

the regime of “the replacement of a functioning market economy by directive management,” “the destruction of traditional principles of property rights,” and “the abuse of education, science, and culture for political and ideological purposes.”¹⁹⁸ In other words, the liberal, anti-communist consensus after 1989 legally formalized its values as universal in a way that criminalized not only the crimes of the previous regime but also its core values. Most of the listed objections were also found in most of the broadcast works I analyzed in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4. I recognize two – “the programmatic destruction of the traditional values of European civilization” and “abuse of education, science, and culture for political and ideological purposes” – particularly relevant for my further discussion. They illustrate that a value shift was not the result of a “non-political” resistance to the communist regime. Part of the opposition, including the RFE, had a clear political and ideological agenda behind the struggle fought in the name of universality.

Writing about post-socialist nostalgia in the Czech Republic, Veronika Pehe brings up the “eventlessness” of the period of “normalization,” the era missing major historical events, which led to the turn to the everyday life of the private sphere. Accordingly, the resistance to the regime was subsequently depicted as the accumulation of small resistance acts in everyday life.¹⁹⁹ Listening to RFE during normalization is usually recalled in the post-1989 period as one of those small acts of resistance: “I listened to it under the duvet from a transistor.”²⁰⁰ Similar to Havel’s greengrocer, who does not believe in the official ideology but displays the social ritual that makes public his loyalty, the listeners of the RFE recollect listening to the radio as part of their private everyday life. It is less important whether they did it or not, i.e., whether

¹⁹⁸ *Zákon o protiprávnosti komunistického režimu a o odporu proti němu*, Zákon č. 198/1993 Sb. (1993), accessed July 15, 2022, <https://www.zakonyprolidi.cz/cs/1993-198#>.

¹⁹⁹ Veronika Pehe, *Velvet Retro: Postsocialist Nostalgia and the Politics of Heroism in Czech Popular Culture* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2020), Kindle.

²⁰⁰ Janni Vorlíček, “O poslechu Svobodné Evropy se vtipkovalo. I když za to hrozil kriminál,” *Deník*, accessed June 4, 2022, <https://www.denik.cz/listopad-89-kazdodenni-zivot/o-poslechu-svobodne-evropy-se-vtipkovalo-i-kdyz-za-to-hrozil-kriminal-20191025.html>.

they embellish their role under the regime they now condemn as totalitarian. More important is the awareness that it is now desirable to talk about small private acts of resistance to the outside world of totalitarianism that squeezes free private space as much as possible. As if ideology were functioning exclusively from the “outside.”

Explaining Kundera’s contested heritage in the Czech Republic, Žižek suggests that he does not depict the private sphere as “the free domain of innocent pleasures”²⁰¹ but introduces the unpleasant fact that ideology penetrates from within the private sphere, which appears to be the haven from it.²⁰² Louis Althusser argued that ideology functions through the so-called “interpellation” or “hailing,” i.e., by addressing people as subjects who are being *interpellated* by the very fact that they recognize themselves as addressed subjects.²⁰³ Widening the traditional definition of ideology as “false consciousness,” he thinks it “represents individuals’ imaginary relation to their real conditions of existence.”²⁰⁴ For instance, seeing oneself’s role in the world as a self-made entrepreneur makes sense of the world in a series of representations that are constructed but still related to reality. An interpellated individual does not recognize that s/he is inside ideology. That is precisely one of its main effects – “it is characteristic of ideology,” Althusser furthers his case, “to impose the self-evident facts as self-evident facts.”²⁰⁵ In other words, imaginary relations seem “normal,” “natural,” and “self-evident,” while the subject only recognizes this obviousness. Contrary to what an “apolitical” literary scholar or author might argue, Althusser asserts that it is impossible to act “outside” of ideology; all we can do is to be aware of it, as communists are.²⁰⁶

²⁰¹ Slavoj Žižek, *The Metastases of Enjoyment: Six Essays on Woman and Causality* (London & New York: Verso, 1994), 64.

²⁰² Žižek, *The Metastases of Enjoyment*, 63-64.

²⁰³ Louis Althusser, *On the Reproduction of Capitalism: Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*, transl. G. M. Goshgarian (London & New York: Verso, 2014), 190-191.

²⁰⁴ Althusser, *On the Reproduction of Capitalism*, 181.

²⁰⁵ Althusser, *On the Reproduction of Capitalism*, 189.

²⁰⁶ Althusser, *On the Reproduction of Capitalism*, 189-192.

A proper analysis of the ideology of the RFE would show that the involvement of individuals in the ideological net of late socialism is not as simple as the RFE journalist and editor Sláva Volný or Václav Havel presented it. Writing about the government's pressure on the public, Volný suggests that an individual living in Czechoslovakia needs two faces – “one for the public, the other for the home.”²⁰⁷ Václav Havel's greengrocer, mentioned in Chapter 1, may not believe in the slogan “Workers of the World, Unite!” or that Gustáv Husák is a sincere representative of international proletarian solidarity. Still, that is not evidence of his refusal of the foundational values of the system – that the workers should act united. Shortly, to become its enemy, it is not enough for the listener of the RFE or any other Czechoslovak citizen to recognize the futility or artificiality of the public ideological rituals of the regime. The citizen may think that Jan Bartok's article from *Rudé právo* (which I quoted at the beginning of Chapter 4) is naive, exaggerating, and propagandistic, i.e., to spot the agenda behind it (siding with Ota Filip's parody). At the same time, the citizen may agree with the fundamental values expressed in the article, i.e., that those values are something to strive for (disagreeing with Ota Filip) because not every critique of the system presupposes its total rejection.

The communist government was involved in the active ideological battle against the Radio Free Europe not only by jamming the signal. It launched open campaigns against the Radio, including the intensive media mobilization following the return of the undercover StB agent Pavel Minařík who worked in the RFE, series of newspaper articles and manuals on fighting anti-communism. The active battle against the Radio meant a public acknowledgment of its existence. More importantly, it made public the fact that programs of a foreign radio station were appealing to some Czechoslovak citizens. Unlike the political alternatives within Czechoslovakia, which were silenced, the RFE has always imposed itself as a consistent ideological alternative and was understood by the authorities as an “ideological diversion.”

²⁰⁷ Sláva Volný, “Nechte si tu politiku!,” in *Pražské blues aneb Sláva je Volný*, ed. Karel Moudrý (München: Obrys/Kontour – PmD, 1988), 28.

Thus, the relationship of the RFE with the communist authorities was primarily “a struggle for hearts and souls” (ideological struggle) more clearly than that within Czechoslovakia, where different opponents of the regime had different ideological beliefs. Foreign radio stations were relatively unpopular, especially in the years before the jamming stopped as part of the policy of *glasnost*. According to a poll conducted by the Institute for Public Opinion Research in 1973, only 17% of respondents listened to a foreign radio station; in 1978, the percentage of listeners increased by 1%,²⁰⁸ while six years later, the share of listeners grew to 25% of Czechoslovak citizens. The poll from 1985 shows that although the number of listeners to foreign radio stations grew steadily, most Czechoslovak citizens still did not listen to Western stations at all (64% in 1982, 67% in 1985).²⁰⁹ Those who listened to foreign radio stations did so mainly to “hear the other side” (73% in 1982, 77% in 1985) or “to compare with the information in the domestic media” (73% in 1982, 76% in 1985).²¹⁰

It should be noted that this unpopularity was not necessarily caused by the state’s repression alone. More than that, it could be argued that most Czechoslovak citizens did not identify with ideological values and topics covered by the RFE. In a word, they did not feel “hailed” by its ideology.²¹¹ To this must be added the distrust of the exile community,²¹² or the suspicion of its moral integrity, especially because the exiles regularly imposed themselves through the moralistic critiques of the Czechoslovak communist system as moral arbiters. The

²⁰⁸ Vacek, “Názory na vliv ideologické diverze,” 24.

²⁰⁹ Perglerová, “Názory československých občanů,” 30.

²¹⁰ Perglerová, “Názory československých občanů,” 41.

²¹¹ Although the number of listeners grew over the years, during the entire period of “normalization” it was not more significant for the formation of attitudes than Czechoslovak Television, which was cited as the main source of economic and political attitudes in 1987 (39%), followed by Czechoslovak Radio (9%) while only 6% answered with “other than our media”. Vladimír Švestka, “Názory občanů na informovanost: závěrečná zpráva z operativního výzkumu Č. 87-8,” *Sociologický datový archiv*, Praha: Ústav pro výzkum veřejného mínění, 1987, 6, accessed July 5, 2022, <http://dspace.soc.cas.cz:8080/xmlui/handle/123456789/3037>.

²¹² A public opinion poll from 1969 shows how specific the exile position was, when, despite the violent repression of the Prague Spring, the attitude towards emigration was very diverse, 14% think it is right, 10% that it is right in most cases, 28% say that it is sometimes justified and sometimes is not, 11% say it is mostly unjustified, 24% condemn it. Most of those who disagreed with emigration explained it with patriotic and moral reasons. A year earlier, the attitude towards migration was far more negative, as over 50% of respondents viewed it with disapproval. “Veřejné mínění o emigraci,” *Sociologický datový archiv*. Praha: Ústav pro výzkum veřejného mínění ČSAV, 1979, 1-4, accessed July 10, 2022, <http://dspace.soc.cas.cz:8080/xmlui/handle/123456789/2898>.

key question, out of the scope of my thesis, is how and when citizens ceased recognizing themselves as being addressed by the ideology of late socialism and felt that it is the “self-evident” truth of liberal capitalism *the* self-evident truth. Alexei Yurchak partially explains this metamorphosis or “re-interpellation.”

Rather than as a dissident, overtly anti-regime activity (which may be the case of those indulging exclusively in the political shows), listening to cultural and literary shows of the Radio Free Europe should be seen in the context of what Yurchak calls “being vnye”/ “living vnye.” In his analysis of the late Soviet socialism, Yurchak uses the expression “living vnye” to encompass “various styles of living that were simultaneously inside and outside of the system.”²¹³ He explains that those styles “generated multiple new temporalities, spatialities, social relations, and meanings that were not necessarily anticipated or controlled by the state, although they were fully made possible by it.”²¹⁴ The last Soviet generation did not change the forms of “authoritative discourse,” they remained unchanged, but those forms gained a new meaning, being rethought from within.²¹⁵ Following Yurchak, I suggest that the role of the literary politics of the RFE played a significant role in the ideological net of late socialism, offering a new material with which the listeners could have filled the old forms. Regardless of the initial intentions of the RFE and the Communist Party policymakers, the listeners within Czechoslovakia were usually exposed to both ideologies simultaneously. This means that they didn’t have “one face for the public, the other for the home”²¹⁶ but were attracted by various elements of each ideological source. As Althusser acknowledges – people could be simultaneously subject to more than one ideology.²¹⁷

²¹³ Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 128.

²¹⁴ Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever*, 128.

²¹⁵ Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever*, 130.

²¹⁶ Sláva Volný, “Nechte si tu politiku!,” in *Pražské blues nebo Sláva je Volný*, ed. Karel Moudrý (München: Obrys/Kontur – PmD, 1988), 28.

²¹⁷ Althusser, *On the Reproduction of Capitalism*, 199-200.

The political and economic transformation has changed what is normal and implied, i.e., desirable and undesirable values. I suggest that changes in values – the process through which “underground” values became mainstream, and the mainstream values of the official culture of “normalization” became marginal – after the collapse of the communist regime in 1989 were anticipated in the literary politics of the Radio Free Europe long before. The change in the dominant cultural values shows the relation of the literary canon with the “common sense” of a particular culture in a certain period. Canonical works, as a set of socially negotiated values, describe the world according to the laws of probability and outline the limits of the *imaginable* in a society. It is encapsulated in the “canon wars” that the change does not happen by itself but that “common sense” is created, among other things, through cultural institutions.

Suppose literature, as Aristotle suggested, tells us what is probable (what could have happened according to the laws of probability). In that case, while history tells the story of what happened, its role in creating the sense of what is “*common sense*” seems equally important as that of history. Probability is connected to ideology, for it depends on ideology how we think a particular course of events would unfold – what is the logical, “probable,” “natural,” and “self-evident” in its development. For instance, many contemporaries of “actually-existing socialisms” recall that in late socialism, no one could have guessed that regimes would collapse so quickly – everything was forever, until it was no more, as Alexei Yurchak put it in the title of his book.

I have suggested multiple times throughout the chapters that the influence of the RFE was primarily ideological. It was not predominantly expressed in the presence of the American cultural influence in the most basic sense of the word – promoting American authors and Anglophone literary tradition in general. But it was reflected in harmonizing the imagined national cultural policy with the US foreign policy interests. In the Cold War, those interests were primarily about fighting communism. However, fostering the *national* policy was only

one of the ways of delegitimizing communist regimes. The other one, which reveals a much more coherent picture of the ideological framework of the RFE's literary activities, was anti-totalitarianism.

Words “totalitarismus,” “totalitní režim,” “doba totality,” or simply “totalita”²¹⁸ frequently accompany considerations of the communist period in the Czech post-1989 public sphere. Forged in the 1920s by Italian anti-fascists to describe Mussolini's state, the term “totalitarianism” was quickly adopted and adjusted by fascists themselves. Historian Enzo Traverso points out the particular flexibility of the term to be applied to various phenomena and periods, from fascism and Stalinism to Islamic terrorism in the post-2001 era, questioning its usefulness as an analytical tool. He notes that after WW2, “‘totalitarianism’ became above all an English-American word, quite neglected in continental Europe except for West Germany, a geopolitical outpost of the Cold War.”²¹⁹ The book *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy*, which Traverso calls “a canonical book for two generations of political scientists,” was particularly relevant because Zbigniew Brzezinski, a late Cold War policymaker, had co-authored it. The case of Brzezinski encapsulates Abbott Gleason's remark that totalitarianism was “the great mobilizing force” that “channeled the anti-Nazi energy of the wartime period into the postwar struggle with the Soviet Union.”²²⁰ The fundamental assumption of Friedrich and Brzezinski was that “fascist and communist totalitarian dictatorships are *basically* alike, or at any rate more nearly like each other than like any other system of government, including earlier forms of autocracy.”²²¹ Six traits are, according to the authors, common to all totalitarian regimes: they have an official ideological doctrine that all society should obey, a single party

²¹⁸ For instance, the research institution *Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů* [*Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes*] or the project “Stopy totality” [Traces of Totalitarianism], etc.

²¹⁹ Traverso, “Totalitarianism,” 101.

²²⁰ Abbott Gleason, *Totalitarianism: The Inner History of the Cold War* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 3.

²²¹ Carl J. Friedrich and Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1965), 15. Emphasis added.

led by one man, a system of terror established through the party and secret police, a monopoly on the mass media, a monopoly on armed forces and “a central control and direction of the entire economy through the bureaucratic coordination.”²²² These six features correspond strikingly to those I brought up in the previous chapters. That should come as no surprise because, as Traverso briefly notes, “totalitarianism is an abstract model” and “[i]ts total control of both society and individuals is more reminiscent of literary fantasies– from Aldous Huxley to George Orwell – than of the real communist regimes.”²²³ Although there was a real need to broadcast censored works, presenting them on the RFE blurred the relation between reality and fiction, as I pointed out in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4. This aspect of the literary politics of the RFE makes the notion of totalitarianism so important. As an abstract concept, totalitarianism was fit to be easily integrated into the artistic construction while the “scientific” aura added to its verisimilitude. This conclusion by no means should be equated with the stance that the authors of the broadcast texts or editors of the RFE shows lied, deliberately exaggerated, and told untruths about the regime under which they suffered and whose dark side was indeed terror. Above all, it means calling into question *how* their thoughts, ideas, experiences, fantasies, and literary shapings were synthesized as a whole. Even in discussions on the totalitarian label of Czechoslovakia, there is a difference between experienced injustice and its framing. Abbott Gleason argues that the notion of totalitarianism among Polish and Czechoslovak dissidents was applied “in a more practical and activist way” than among Western intellectuals:

They were not so concerned with what totalitarianism was (they thought they knew) as with how to escape from it, step by step. However, they did need to know, practically speaking, what the opposite of totalitarianism was or, to put it another way, precisely what they had lost under Soviet domination and how to set about getting it back. One answer to that question was their national identity, since “Soviet totalitarianism” was inextricably bound up with

²²² Friedrich and Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship*, 21-22.

²²³ Traverso, “Totalitarianism,” 103.

foreign domination. Another answer was a nongovernmental sphere, or what came to be known as “civil society.”²²⁴

As I suggested in the previous chapter, one of the most noticeable changes after 1989 was the one from class to national identity, also reflected in the literary programs of the Radio Free Europe. This may have contributed to the mutual misunderstandings and the disintegration of the federation after 1989, especially when we consider the recollection of some Czech employees of the RFE. They remember the break-up as a sudden and unexpected event caused by the amplified national sentiments of their Slovak counterparts.²²⁵ Yet, the opposition to the communist government as formulated in the cultural program of the RFE was consistent with how things unfolded in the Eastern bloc after 1989. The overall shift of the political paradigm from the class to the national one finally led to the dissolution of all three socialist federations: Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union, and Yugoslavia.²²⁶

The paradigm shift meant the change of “we,” which implied solidarity among people sharing similar positions within the process of production, to “we,” which implied seeing oneself as a part of the wide-ranging entity of people who share a common language, selective history, and cultural institutions. Understanding oneself as a part of the nation obfuscates individual class differences; as Benedict Anderson put it: “regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship.”²²⁷ The instances of the “imagined community” being reproduced by the RFE I

²²⁴ Abbott Gleason, *Totalitarianism*, 172.

²²⁵ Rakušanová, *Svobodná v Evropě*, 173-174.

²²⁶ The general shift from the class and social to the national in socialist countries was in a humorous way caught in an anecdote concerning the Yugoslav late socialism. Talking about discontent of the workers of a large industrial plant on the outskirts of Belgrade in 1988 and 1989, philosopher of the so-called Praxis School, Nebojša Popov, described one of the protests that was eventually soothingly terminated by then a rising politician Slobodan Milošević (who was part of the structures against which they protested), sardonically noting that people “gathered at the protest as workers and dispersed as Serbs.” Olivija Rusovac, “Ko su i šta su radnici?: Stvarni život, s onu stranu »ikone« i »strasila«,“ *Republika: Glasilo građanskog samooslobođanja* (Belgrade) 269, 16-30 Sep, 2001, accessed May 8, 2022, http://www.yurope.com/zines/republika/arhiva/2001/269/269_16.html .

²²⁷ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York & London: Verso, 2006), 7.

provided in Chapter 4, but it is perhaps best encapsulated in the hitherto unmentioned Josef Jedlička's collection of essays. His book *České typy aneb Poptávka po našem hrdinovi* [Czech Types or Demand for our Hero], written for broadcasting on the RFE, consists of his considerations of *types* in Czech literature and their relation to the Czech national tradition and mentality. For instance, in one of the essays, he searches for elements in Karel Hynek Mácha's poetry that make up "our national type and habitus" because he "expressed something hidden and denied for us, and something of his work has gone into our blood."²²⁸ In another essay within the same volume, he writes: "Czech thought spends most of its energy harmonizing reality. Surrounded by contradictions and often right amid tragedy, we have never indulged in extremes. The titanic revolt has always been as alien to us as the gloomy Weltschmerz."²²⁹ Towards the end of the same essay, dedicated to the Czech nineteenth-century classic Božena Němcová's *Babička*, Jedlička writes:

When Němcová portrays her princess as an enlightened and humane lady, she fulfills the usual romantic stereotype; but when she puts her in active contact with *Babička*, she fulfills the old Czech fairy-tale longing for superiority with whom it would be possible to communicate at all, for a coherent society to which the lowest, as well as the highest social strata, belonged. This longing is by no means merely contemporary. It runs through our whole modern history as an ideal of statehood, with little interruptions, which we have felt mostly as a situation out of fables and fairy tales. The motif of the noble lady who takes a kindly interest in the lives of her subjects resounds in our sentiment; this theme is to us the content of a comforting idyll because we have so rarely experienced one who ruled us to be noble, learned, compassionate, and helpful.²³⁰

²²⁸ Josef Jedlička, "O hrdinství aneb Hloupý Honza," in *České typy aneb Poptávka po našem hrdinovi* (Praha: Nakladatelství Franze Kafky, 1992), 19.

²²⁹ "České myšlení vynakládá většinu své energie na to, aby harmonizovalo skutečnost. Obklopení rozporů a často rovnou uprostřed tragédie, nikdy jsme si nelibovali v krajnostech. Titánská revolta nám byla vždycky právě tak cizí jako ponurý světobol." Josef Jedlička, "O skromné idyle aneb *Babička*," in *České typy aneb Poptávka po našem hrdinovi* (Praha: Nakladatelství Franze Kafky, 1992), 29. Emphasis added.

²³⁰ Jedlička, "O skromné idyle aneb *Babička*," 34. "Tvoří-li Němcová svou kněžnu jako osvícenou a humánní paní, naplňuje celkem obvyklý romantický stereotyp; dává-li jí však vstupovat do čínorodého kontaktu s *Babičkou*,

His essay on Němcová stands for the overall literary politics of the Radio Free Europe – it exemplifies the shift from the class to the national. Jedlička understands the princess as an embodiment of the centuries-old desire of the Czech people for an enlightened aristocracy and a society that encompasses all strata and allows them to communicate with each other. This passage encapsulates why the middle-class characters and the critique being carried out from middle-class positions had such an important place within the literary politics of the RFE. The middle class is, as Žižek suggested, a “non-class” that primarily defines itself by the opposition to the “extremes.”²³¹ Only this “classless” identity of the middle class allows for national unity, i.e., “a coherent society to which the lowest, as well as the highest social strata, belonged,” as Jedlička put it. Building upon the case that the middle class is the opposite of class as such, Hadas Weiss notes that “to reject class or (what amounts to the same thing) to assert middle classness is to spurn the notion that our chances of success in life might be shaped by anything other than our own desires, capacities and, above all, efforts.”²³² The flip side of this attitude is blaming exclusively individuals for their own failure. If the change in 1989 meant that people, i.e., individuals, took power into their hands, there was no “totalitarian state” with structural deficiencies to be blamed, but the people themselves.²³³ I suggest once again that such a formulation of the oppositional views in a way that opposes the class perspective contributed

splňuje si tak dávnou českou pohádkovou touhu po vrchnosti, s níž by vůbec bylo možno komunikovat, po ucelené společnosti, do níž patřily právě tak společenské vrstvy nejnižší jako nejvyšší. Tato touha není nikterak pouze dobová. Prochází celými našimi moderními dějinami jako ideál státoprávní, s malými přerušeními, která jsme pociťovali opravdu většinou jako situaci z bájí a pověstí. Odeznívá v naší citovosti ten motiv ušlechtilé paní, která se laskavě zajímá o život svých poddaných; toto téma je pro nás obsahem utěšlivé idyly, protože jsme tak zřídka zažili, aby ten, kdo nám vládl, byl ušlechtilý, vzdělaný, soucitný a nápomocný.”

²³¹ Žižek, Slavoj. *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology* (London & New York: Verso, 2000), 186.

²³²Hadas Weiss, *We Have Never Been Middle Class: How Social Mobility Misleads Us* (London & New York: Verso, 2019), Kindle.

²³³ Martin Kreidl, “Changes in the Perception of Poverty and Wealth: The Czech Republic, 1991-1995,” *Czech Sociological Review* 6, no. 1 (1998): 73–97.

to the disintegration of the joint state and the stratification of the Czech society in the post-1989 era.²³⁴

In his book on the role of the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF) in the Cold War, Giles Scott-Smith argues that “from its very beginnings, [the CCF was] an institution created by and shaped by the political demands of the Cold War” yet “it was also representative of cultural – intellectual concerns held by many in that same period.”²³⁵ What Smith notes in his assessment of the CCF stands for many American Cold War institutions, including the Czechoslovak Broadcasting Department of Radio Free Europe. This issue is exemplified in the ostensibly autonomous, non-ideological, and apolitical nature of the literary politics of the RFE, i.e., of the broadcast works, which I analyzed in Chapter 2 and Chapter 4. On the one hand, this kind of representation of what was broadcast was undoubtedly part of “[t]he projection of American values abroad via an all-pervasive commercial – media apparatus claiming a monopoly of the truth was an important aspect of Cold War strategy.”²³⁶ Because, as Giles Scott-Smith proves, the autonomous and allegedly apolitical culture “was institutionalized by the US government (in particular the CIA) as an ideological force representative of the free society of the West from which it emerged.”²³⁷

On the other hand, the fight for the autonomous culture was indeed related to concerns many held within Czechoslovakia, regardless of political affiliation. This was particularly relevant for the period of “normalization” after the intensified repression of the Party hardliners against artists, intellectuals, and their associations that maintained the reformist course. Also, the “apolitical” literary politics of the RFE could be considered a part of the Czech *national* intellectual tradition of “non-political” engagement in politics, attributed to intellectuals from

²³⁴ On the increased inequality in the Czech Republic after 1989, see: Filip Novokmet, The long-run evolution of inequality in the Czech Lands, 1898-2015, accessed June 7, 2022, <https://wid.world/document/7736/>

²³⁵ Giles Scott-Smith, *The Politics of Apolitical Culture: The Congress for Cultural Freedom, the CIA and post-war American hegemony* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 1.

²³⁶ Scott-Smith, *The Politics of Apolitical Culture*, 1.

²³⁷ Scott-Smith, *The Politics of Apolitical Culture*, 1.

Karel Havlíček Borovský, Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk to Václav Havel. As Miloš Havelka suggests, the earlier understanding (that of Havlíček and Masaryk) of non-political politics is a strategy of socialization and national and cultural emancipation of Czechs in their resistance to the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. Havel's "anti-political politics" had a deeper metaphysical and broader meaning in the critique of culture and civilization. Although he rarely used the term with indeterminate implications, "anti-political politics" was likely formulated as a form of resistance, but now to the communist regime and was associated with the affirmation of civil society.²³⁸ Although concepts of "apolitical politics," "non-political politics," and "anti-political politics" differ significantly in their structural role in the cultural and political context of the time, as Václav Bělohradský notes, these various concepts of non-political politics share the disdain for "mere politics."²³⁹ Being part of the "apolitical stream," the RFE contributed to picturing the political landscape of Czechoslovakia after 1989, in step with the global trends, as something based on the "higher order" – as the end of the political politics and ideology, the end of history and or even as the end of the modern era, as Havel opined in a 1992 op-ed in *The New York Times*.²⁴⁰ Acknowledging the deception of presenting the neoconservative understanding of the American geopolitical role as an "American view," Pavel Kolář notes a tendency in those circles to perceive the meaning and purpose of Czech history as the realization of Havel's path of advocating human rights.²⁴¹ Thus, neoconservatives inscribed "a higher meaning" in the Czech historical role, which is the outlook that may be hinted at in Havel's work but is certainly not defined by it. The researched material does not prove whether the staff of the Czechoslovak Department of the RFE supported neoconservative policies. Nevertheless,

²³⁸ Miloš Havelka, „Nepolitická politika “: kontexty a tradice,” *Sociologický časopis/Czech Sociological Review* 34, no. 4 (1998): 455-466.

²³⁹ Václav Bělohradský, “On Political and AntiPolitical Politics,” *Atlas of Transformation*, accessed June 19, 2022, <http://monumenttotransformation.org/atlas-of-transformation/html/a/antipolitical-politics/on-political-and-antipolitical-politics-vaclav-belohradsky.html> .

²⁴⁰ Václav Havel, “The End of the Modern Era,” *The New York Times*, accessed June 22, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/1992/03/01/opinion/the-end-of-the-modern-era.html>.

²⁴¹ Pavel Kolář, “Konec komunismu a konec dějin,” 180-182.

the RFE did build a kind of stable ideological construction as an alternative to communism at the time of the rise of neoliberalism and neoconservatism. Furthermore, although the employees of the Czechoslovak Broadcasting Department of the RFE repeatedly denied any interference from “above” on their editorial decisions,²⁴² those decisions were, in almost all analyzed cases, anti-communist. They let a hundred flowers bloom insofar as those were not red.²⁴³

I argue that the concrete “daily-political” consequences of the literary politics of the RFE were linked to the delegitimization of the official ideology and values of communist Czechoslovakia. I brought up in the previous chapter that the discourse of non-violence gained a moral high ground for a particular part of the anti-communist opposition. The moral “superiority” enabled them to obtain a cultural hegemony²⁴⁴ within the entire opposition imposing specific solutions to deal with the political crisis.²⁴⁵ Ladislav Holý suggested that communism, appealing as an ideology after WW2 to most Czechoslovak citizens for its introduction of the “moral” aspect in the economy (a fairer distribution of wealth), lost its legitimacy on the very same basis.²⁴⁶ Michal Pullmann proposes that the ideology of “normalization” was based on the stigmatization of alternatives. However, “[t]he widespread uncertainty about the ability of the socialist state to keep its own commitments, to ensure

²⁴² “Spojené státy nikdy obsah vysílání neovlivňovaly. Šlo jim především o objektivitu. Navíc, československá redakce nebyla servilní k americké vládě, ale k oficiální československé a hradní politice. Byla to příčinnost malých českých duší, nikoliv nějaký zásah shora.” Karel Kryl, *Půlkacíř*, 103.

²⁴³ In the late 1950s, in a radio program, the American conservative and ardent anti-communist journalist, the supporter of McChartyism, Fulton Lewis, Jr. iterated accusations of the RFE “being loaded with pinkos.” The answer was issued by the Crusade for Freedom, an organization founded with the aim of fundraising the RFE but at the same time to conceal its ties with the CIA: “The voice of Free Czechoslovakia was founded precisely because the Communist take-over of that country [Czechoslovakia] denied the people a free radio and a free press. Mr. Lewis’ charge of pinkos is absurd. The Czechoslovakian employees of Radio Free Europe go through the same *rigorous screening* as do all other employees both American and exile.” “Transcript of Broadcast by Fulton Lewis, Jr., Station WGMS at 7-7:15 P.M.,” January 2, 1958, General CIA Records, accessed June 1, 2022, <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP63T00245R000100220158-2.pdf>. Emphasis added.

²⁴⁴ In this place, I use the term “cultural hegemony” in its original meaning as it is defined by Lenin, Gramsci and others. They used the term to denote the role of the working class in the common revolution of the working and other classes in which working class, they thought, has to gain the hegemony in order to take the revolution to its final conclusions. Later, the term started being used in a wider sense, as a dominant discourse of a certain class in the public sphere.; Perry Anderson, *The Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci* (New York & London: Verso, 2017)

²⁴⁵ Michael Hauser, “Existuje také jiný listopad 1989,” *A2larm*, accessed 10 June, 2022, <https://a2larm.cz/2019/11/existuje-take-jiny-listopad-1989/>

²⁴⁶ Holý, *The Little Czech*, 18.

internal peace, disrupted in November 1989 the hitherto well-functioning stigmatization of dissident groups.”²⁴⁷ As an analyst noted, the role of the RFE was crucial primarily in moments of crisis, when citizens recognized the importance of additional reporting and “different perspectives.”²⁴⁸ For instance, the role of the Radio, especially its (incorrect) reporting on the student being killed by the police, proved momentous in fueling the protests in November of 1989. Yet, the constant production of a stable ideological alternative turned out to be critical in the long-term ideological struggle.

Previous research on the activities of Radio Free Europe in Czechoslovakia has mainly gauged the radio either as an alternative source of information (usually presented as objective and independent) or as a platform of censored cultural content. Thus, the analysis of the literary politics of the RFE delivered here sheds new light on its role in the Cold War circulation of knowledge. I traced out and described the ideological and aesthetic consequences of the circulation of literary, literary-historical, and literary-theoretical content from Czechoslovak to Czechoslovak culture through an American radio station. The way the Czech culture developed after 1989 was significantly influenced by how certain phenomena were articulated within the Radio Free Europe, given its later integration into the cultural mainstream. Previously not dealt with in detail, the span of its influence extends from being a platform for exile and samizdat issues to being a creator of a liberal-democratic “common sense” opposed to the ruling ideology of late socialism. Finally, I demonstrated the critical role of the RFE in changing the system from state socialism to liberal capitalism. Promoting the values of liberal anti-totalitarianism, anti-communism, and opposing class identity, the Radio Free Europe helped the successor state

²⁴⁷ Michal Pullmann, “Násilí a sametová revoluce,” in *Co byla normalizace?: Studie o pozdním socialismu*, ed. Pavel Kolář, Michal Pullmann (Praha: Nakladatelství Lidové Noviny, Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů, 2016), 95

²⁴⁸ “Listening to foreign broadcasts in Czechoslovakia,” Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute: Munich, 30 December, 1987, accessed July 18, 2022, https://storage.osaarchivum.org/low/f0/c4/f0c4dce8-7f77-40ad-b21d-8fb4d7a20053_1.pdf.

consolidate its new ideology and fully integrate into the Western ideological, political, and military structures.

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Abstract

The MA thesis aims to reconstruct the political and aesthetic framework based on which the Czechoslovak Broadcasting Department of the American Radio Free Europe created its “literary canon” and interpreted literature and society in Czechoslovakia in the period after the breakdown of the Prague Spring, usually referred to as “normalization.” The thesis contextualizes the RFE’s literary activities and political implications within the late Cold War transnational dynamic to demonstrate the influence of the Anglophone cultures on Czechoslovak literary and political life. Unlike the traditional comparative research, usually concerned with how cultural artifacts or values travel from one national culture to another, the thesis explores the Anglophone influence through the way in which this American transnational institution promoted the Czechoslovak cultural products primarily but framed them to be aligned with the American foreign policy. Chapter 1 provides the historical and theoretical background of the activities of Radio Free Europe based on the critical overview of the existing literature on the Radio’s cultural activities during the late Cold War with the emphasis on funding, its role in international politics, and its underlying ideology and internal structure. Chapter 2 deals with the Radio Free Europe treated the issue of repression and censorship in Czechoslovakia after the Prague Spring, reconstructing its theoretical and ideological foundation. Chapter 3 examines how the radio medium shaped the aesthetics of literature, attempting to answer the question of what makes a work a *literary* work, according to the editors of the RFE. In Chapter 4, the thesis analyses the main points of critique of the Czechoslovak socialist system by the RFE, such as the critique of bureaucratic socialism and the suppression of individual liberties. Finally, Chapter 5 follows the changes in the literary canon and ideological values after the political changes in 1989. It reveals how “underground” values

became mainstream, and the mainstream values of the official culture of “normalization” became marginal.

Abstrakt

Cílem této diplomové práce je rekonstruovat politický a estetický rámec, na jehož základě československé vysílání amerického Rádia Svobodná Evropa vytvářelo svůj „literární kánon“ a interpretovalo literaturu a společnost v Československu v období po konci pražského jara, obvykle označovaném jako „normalizace“. Práce kontextualizuje literární aktivity a politické implikace RFE v rámci transnacionální dynamiky konce studené války, aby ukázala vliv anglofonních kultur na československý literární a politický život. Na rozdíl od tradičního komparativního výzkumu, který se obvykle zabývá tím, jak kulturní artefakty nebo hodnoty putují z jedné národní kultury do druhé, zkoumá práce anglofonní vliv prostřednictvím způsobu, jakým tato americká nadnárodní instituce propagovala především československé kulturní produkty, ale rámovala je tak, aby byly v souladu s americkou zahraniční politikou. Kapitola 1 poskytuje historické a teoretické pozadí činnosti Rádia Svobodná Evropa na základě kritického přehledu dosavadní literatury o kulturních aktivitách rádia v období pozdní studené války s důrazem na financování, jeho roli v mezinárodní politice a jeho základní ideologii a vnitřní strukturu. Kapitola 2 se zabývá tím, jak Rádio Svobodná Evropa přistupovalo k problematice represe a cenzury v Československu po pražském jaru, a rekonstruuje jeho teoretické a ideologické základy. Kapitola 3 zkoumá, jak rozhlasové médium formovalo estetiku literatury, a pokouší se odpovědět na otázku, co podle redaktorů RFE činí dílo literárním dílem. Ve 4. kapitole práce analyzuje hlavní body kritiky československého socialistického systému ze strany RFE, jako je kritika byrokratického socialismu a potlačování individuálních svobod. Stejná kapitola přináší rekonstrukci a diskusi hodnot, které vysílaná literární díla stvrzovala, jako jsou tržní kapitalismus, liberální demokracie a individualismus. Konečně pátá kapitola sleduje proměny literárního kánonu a ideologických hodnot společnosti po politických

změnách v roce 1989. Odhaluje, jak se „undergroundové“ hodnoty staly hlavním proudem a základní hodnoty oficiální „normalizační“ kultury se staly marginálními.