

*Routledge Research on Translation and Interpreting History*

# **QUEERING TRANSLATION HISTORY**

**SHAKESPEARE'S SONNETS IN CZECH AND  
SLOVAK TRANSFORMATIONS**

Eva Spišiaková



# Queering Translation History

This innovative work challenges normative binaries in contemporary translation studies and applies frameworks from queer historiography to the discipline in order to explore shifting perceptions of same-sex love and desire in translations and retranslations of William Shakespeare's *Sonnets*.

The book brings together perspectives from poststructuralism, queer theory, and translation history to set the stage for an in-depth exploration of a series of retranslations of the *Sonnets* from the Czech Republic and Slovakia. The complex and poetic language of the *Sonnets*, frequently built around era-specific idioms and allusions, has produced a number of different interpretations of the work over the centuries, but questions remain as to how the translation process may omit, retain, or enhance elements of same-sex love in retranslated works across time and geographical borders. In focusing on target cultures which experienced dramatic sociopolitical changes over the course of the twentieth century and comparing retranslations originating from these contexts, Spišiaková finds the ideal backdrop in which to draw parallels between changing developments in power and social structures and shifting translation strategies related to the representation of gender identities and sexual orientations beyond what is perceived to be normative.

In so doing, the book advocates for a queer perspective on the study of translation history and encourages questioning traditional boundaries prevalent in the discipline, making this key reading for students and researchers in translation studies, queer theory, and gender studies, as well as those interested in historical developments in Central and Eastern Europe.

**Eva Spišiaková** received her PhD in Translation Studies from the University of Edinburgh and is currently a Postdoctoral Research Associate at the Centre for Translation Studies at the University of Vienna, Austria. Her interests include the intersection of translation studies with LGBTQ+ issues, disability studies, and medical humanities, and she is the author of the article “‘We’ve Called her Stephen’: Czech Translations of *The Well of Loneliness* and their Transgender Readings” (2020) and the co-editor of *The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Health* (2021).

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Shakespeare's Sonnets in Czech and  
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# Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	ix
<b>Introduction</b>	1
<i>Mapping the History of – and in - Queer Translation Studies</i>	4
<i>The Method: Translating Sonnets</i>	6
<i>Overview</i>	9
<i>Notes on Terminology</i>	11
<i>Notes on Language</i>	12
<b>1 Queering Czechoslovakia’s History</b>	13
<i>The First Czechoslovak Republic and the Second World War</i>	13
<i>Socialist Czechoslovakia</i>	15
<i>The Velvet Revolution</i>	21
<i>Divided Paths after 1993</i>	23
<b>2 A Century of Sonnets</b>	28
<i>Shakespeare’s Sonnets</i>	28
<i>The Sonnets in Czechoslovakia</i>	34
<i>The First Full Translation</i>	35
<i>The Six Socialist Sonnets</i>	36
<i>Book Production in Socialist Czechoslovakia</i>	39
<i>Socialist Censorship</i>	42
<i>Velvet Revolution, Divided Nations, and Eight More Sonnets</i>	45
<b>3 The Master Mistress of My Passion</b>	50
<i>Gendering Languages</i>	51
<i>Gendering Sonnets</i>	53
<i>Gendering Translations</i>	56

viii *Contents*

*Various Recipients* 56

*Female-Addressed Sonnets* 57

*Male-Addressed and Neutral Sonnets* 64

**4 I Love Thee in Such Sort** 75

*The Lover* 77

*The Friend* 81

*From Lovers to Friends* 83

*Gods and Children* 92

**Conclusion** 98

*References* 105

*Appendix A* 113

*Index* 122

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# Introduction

This book begins in a second-hand bookshop in Prague, with a pale grey and considerably battered copy of Jan Vladislav’s 1955 Czech translation of Shakespeare’s *Sonnets*. While leafing through its yellowing pages, I noticed a curious detail in the wording of Sonnet 18, the one comparing the beloved to a summer’s day. The very last line – “So long lives this, and this gives life to thee” – used the masculine form of the verb “to live”,<sup>1</sup> dedicating the whole poem to a male recipient.<sup>2</sup> While I was aware that many considered the *Sonnets* to be partly written for a young man, Sonnet 18 was in its original form dedicated to an unnamed and ungendered *thou*, greatly contributing to the poem’s universal appeal and ensuring its inclusion in just about every anthology of romantic poetry. The volume was promptly purchased and as I read through the rest of the *Sonnets*, I realised that nearly all of them had an explicitly male recipient. This was not what I expected; given that this version was published in the first decade of Czechoslovakia’s communist regime when homosexuality was both criminalised and considered a taboo subject, such apparent openness about the male gender of the beloved seemed strange. Curious, I soon found myself collecting different versions of the *Sonnets* and comparing the translations, from the oldest editions I hunted down in other second-hand bookshops, to the newest versions found on open-source platforms online. As my collection grew to encompass all 15 full Czech and Slovak translations of the *Sonnets* published between 1923 and 2010, I started to see a distinct pattern in the translators’ approaches to the possibility of a male beloved. All translations published before the year of the Velvet Revolution, which marked the end of the communist regime in Czechoslovakia, seemed to enhance the *Sonnets*’ possibility to be read as a collection celebrating male love; translators readily used vocabulary associated with the most ardent expressions of romantic affection, and, perhaps more surprisingly, the great majority of the original gender-neutral sonnets were translated for an unambiguously male recipient.

1 “dotud zde budeš ty v mých slovech také živ” [until then you too will be (m)alive in my words] (Vladislav 1955: 38).

2 All translations from Czech and Slovak are by the author, unless otherwise indicated.

## 2 Introduction

In contrast, the translations published after the regime change in 1989 were a much more heterogeneous group. While many translators followed a similar approach as the pre-revolutionary versions and translated the *Sonnets* as love poems for an unambiguously male recipient, I also found translations that avoided the use of masculine pronouns, even at the cost of significantly altering the texts of the *Sonnets*; translations that changed the pronouns so that the male recipient became female; those that replaced language of ardent love with that of friendship; and translations that used paratext to suggest going beyond the conventional question of a male or female beloved, and to consider the poems as metaphors of classical mythology.

These patterns seemed to be at odds with a number of studies that explored the translation of queer-themed literature under restrictive regimes (Linder 2004, 2014; Gorjanc 2012; Gombár 2018; Baer 2011; amongst others), all of which confirm that homoerotic elements were frequently subject to censorship, but also with research on Czechoslovak publishing under communism (Špírk 2008; Rubáš 2012), which speaks of the thorough and frequent removal of elements that the regime deemed as unsuitable for the socialist reader. How did the *Sonnets*, with their themes of male love, escape censorship during the supposedly restrictive socialist era, and why did the approach to the *Sonnets* change as the tide of public opinion on homosexuality finally started to turn? The search for answers led beyond the traditional maxims of translation norms, as was suggested by Toury in his study of the *Sonnets* (2012: 145–160) and made me reconsider my original assumptions about how the approach to homosexuality changed throughout Czechoslovak history.

This book is based on conceptual frameworks from queer theory that I suggest can greatly contribute to a more nuanced and contextualised mapping of the history of queer translations, which would take them beyond the search for identities and desires labelled according to our present-day perception. As scholarship dating back to the work of Michel Foucault (1978) and later developed by queer theorists such as Martin B. Duberman, Martha Vicinus, and George Chauncey (1989), Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (1985, 1990), David Halperin (2002), and others demonstrate, what we understand by the term ‘homosexuality’ (or any sexuality that does not fit into the heteronormative mould) is an agglomerate of elements that were categorised and perceived differently across time and space. Sexual attraction, same-sex genital activity, intimate friendships, male and female bonding, and gender-nonconforming appearance and behaviour are all part of human history, yet their understanding and classification varies in different cultures and societies. In order to understand how queer translations developed in these different contexts, it is necessary to destabilise some of the traditional monolithic conceptualisations of identities and ask how the different signs and behaviours associated with them were interpreted and understood.

This study demonstrates the relevance of these frameworks by mapping the changing approaches of Czech and Slovak translators to those elements

that could be interpreted as references to male same-sex love in Shakespeare's *Sonnets* (1609). These 15 translations cover nearly a century, from the first version published in the interwar period, through six versions printed in Soviet-controlled Socialist Czechoslovakia, to the eight published in the democratic era after the Velvet Revolution. The reasons for choosing Shakespeare's *Sonnets* as the vehicle for this inquiry were twofold. First, the inquiry that is at the core of this work requires a substantial corpus that covers a reasonably long period of time, which in turn necessitates a literary work that is famous and popular enough to warrant frequent and regular retranslations. Shakespeare, as one of the world's most universally recognised and beloved authors, has attracted the attention of Czech and Slovak translators since the 18th century and his celebrated status has survived the socialist era and continues well into the present day. The *Sonnets*, with their intimate tone and the timelessness of their central topics of love, life, and death, have enjoyed lasting popularity. Moreover, their compact format of 154 poems in uniform verses offers a particularly appealing challenge to translators and poetry lovers alike, as can be seen from the range of people who tried their hands at this endeavour.

The second reason for this choice is the intriguing paradox that the *Sonnets* present; on one hand they are doubtlessly some of the most famous works in English literature, synonymous with romantic poetry and endlessly quoted in wedding vows. On the other, they are the source of four centuries of literary controversy, as the occasional use of male pronouns opens the possibility of reading at least some of these amorous poems as written by a male author for a male beloved. These issues become even more complex once we leave the Elizabethan source text and transplant the poems into a new linguistic environment. Czech and Slovak translators have to deal not only with the sonnet's traditional rhyming structure and the iambic foot which is ill-suited for being replicated in a Slavic language, but also with the fact that both Czech and Slovak are gendered languages, compelling translators to make choices between masculine and feminine grammatical forms where the original can remain enigmatically neutral. This book explores how the translators dealt with these restrictions while reconciling the *Sonnets* with dramatic shifts in society's understanding of same-sex love as Czechoslovakia changed from a totalitarian socialist state into a member of the European Union. These shifts brought with them not only new legislation and rights for sexual minorities, but inevitably led to a gradual remodelling of society's understanding of romantic and sexual desire. During the socialist regime, the state-supported emphasis on homosocial bonding manifested itself in countless stories of intimate brotherly camaraderie and was seen as wholly unconnected with the purportedly medical problem of homosexuality. With the Velvet Revolution, the opening of the borders to Western media and activism, and with greater freedom of expression, "the homosexual was now a species", to quote Foucault's famous assertion (1978: 43). Instead of a medical diagnosis limited to a sexual praxis, 'homosexuals' now became people who could be in a romantic relationship, show affection

for each other, and experience love and desire, just like the heterosexual majority. This change was, unsurprisingly, also followed by a wave of homophobia. While homosexuality was taboo under the socialist government and was absent from all forms of media and public discourse, there was no foundation for building prejudice against its stereotypical manifestations. However, once the first coming-out stories permeated daily discourse, they provoked a wave of opposition that not only vocally (and sometimes physically) opposed this newly visible minority, but also sought to distance themselves from anything that could be even vaguely connected to this 'new' phenomenon.

This project observes how these changes in the conceptualisation of homosexuality are reflected in the strategies and methods used in the translations of the *Sonnets*. The book aims to contribute to the growing field of Queer Translation Studies in two ways: first, by introducing frameworks from queer theory which have hitherto not been considered in historical studies of queer translations; and secondly, by using an extensive corpus that allows for a historical comparison across a relatively long time period, which has likewise not been used within the scholarship of Queer Translation Studies. The following section will introduce the genesis of this field and position the current project in its corresponding context.

### **Mapping the History of – and in – Queer Translation Studies**

Whenever I talk to the most senior generation of Translation Studies scholars, one name inevitably finds its way into the conversation as soon as I mention my work on queer translations: that of the American-Dutch scholar James Holmes. Many who remember him personally recall his unforgettable style, his bright personality, and the fearlessness with which he lived as an openly gay man in the 1970s and 1980s. While his legacy before his untimely death is primarily tied to his pioneering conceptualisation of Translation Studies as a field in its own right, it is impossible to recount the history of Queer Translation Studies without mentioning him as a kind of spiritual godfather of the field. While the term 'Queer Translation Studies' was not used until much later, the first works that looked at translations from perspectives belonging broadly under the queer umbrella of non-normative sexualities and gender identities started appearing in the late 1990s. Building on frameworks of postcolonial and especially feminist translations, as well as in line with the questions of (in)visibility that were brought into the field of Translation Studies by Lawrence Venuti (1995), these works frequently explore the role of translation in creating spaces for gay voices in literature and poetry. Studies from Eric Keenaghan (1998), Alberto Mira (1999), and especially Keith Harvey's monograph exploring the cultural and linguistic obstacles in translating American camp language into French (2003) built what is now seen as the foundations of Queer Translation Studies. With the progress of the new millennium, the field began gradually growing in

breadth and depth as the emerging studies explored different aspects of translation from a queer perspective, including audio-visual translations (Valdeón García 2010; Ranzato 2012; Lewis 2010), paratextual features (Mazzei 2014), queer terminology (Gualardia and Baldo 2010; Tratnik 2011), or the role of translation in queer activism (Mossop 2014; Taronna 2014) to name but a few. As these scattered studies begun amalgamating into a recognisable field, the first collected volumes focusing partly or exclusively on queer-related issues were published, amongst others *Re-engendering Translation* (2011) edited by Christopher Larkosh, a special issue of the journal *In Other Words* (2010) edited by B. J. Epstein, and a special issue of the journal *Comparative Literature Studies* (2014) edited by William J. Spurlin. The first *Queer Translation* conference, organised by the Centre for Translation Studies at the University of Vienna in March 2015, offered a formal platform for scholars working in this area to exchange their ideas, and further helped to solidify the field by creating the first bibliography of Queer Translation Studies (Baer and Kaindl 2015). Two recently published collections have greatly aided in establishing Queer Translation Studies as a field in its own right; *Queer in Translation*, edited by B. J. Epstein and Robert Gillet (2017) and *Queering Translation, Translating the Queer* edited by Brian James Baer and Klaus Kaindl (2017). These collections emphasise interesting parallels between queerness and translations, as both explore the grey zones around seemingly clear-cut borders of cultures, languages, and identities, and question the orderly logic of traditional binaries. Both volumes also stress that the field has thus far paid disproportionately little attention to trans-related issues, represented by a few isolated studies (Casagrande 2013, 2011; Asimakoulas 2012; Robinson 2019), a special issue of the journal *Transgender Studies Quarterly* (Gramling and Dutta 2016) as well as a handful of works in the collected volumes themselves. Finally, Baer's *Queer Theory and Translation Studies: Language, Politics, Desire* (2021) as the most recently published volume on the subject at the time of writing this chapter provides an in-depth consideration of the use of queer theory within translation studies and addresses a wide range of topics including the global circulation of gay anthologies, the work of queer translators, and the representation of queer lives in translated texts.

Considering how much has changed in our perception of queerness in the last century alone, it is unsurprising that a number of studies have explored how translations have affected – or have been affected by – the history behind these changes in perception. Sergey Tyulenev (2014) demonstrates the role of translation in questioning and updating conventional models of sexuality in 18th- and 19th-century Russia. Carol O'Sullivan (2009) maps the various ways in which classical texts with sexual (and same-sex) elements, such as the poetry of Catullus, were 'adjusted' for the sensibilities of a 19th-century English audience. Vojko Gorjanc (2012) explores how Slovenian translation norms that actively repressed homoerotic subtext in the early 20th century were uncritically replicated in later versions of *The Merchant of Venice* and helped to maintain

heteronormative translation structures to the present day. Many of these works focus on translations published under past totalitarian regimes, known for their state-imposed censorship practices and a negative stance towards all non-normative sexualities. Zsófia Gombár's research (2018) represents only a part of a large-scale project that maps the publication of works with overt same-sex elements in Communist Hungary under János Kádár and Portugal during the *Estado Novo* regime. Daniel Linder (2004) examines the restrictions enforced on homosexual references in hard-boiled fiction in Franco's Spain. Baer in his 2011 paper explores the concept of *productive censorship*, the highly creative strategies used by translators in Soviet Russia in order to encode elements of same-sex love in ways that remained unrecognised by the censors, and his 2021 volume explores the role of translation in the global spread of sexual knowledge throughout history.

Although each of these works offers fascinating insight into different contexts, demonstrating the range of possible factors and agents underpinning translation decisions at various points in history and across the world, they all act as individual windows into a particular time and place. While many offer comparative elements, such as Gombár's juxtaposition of the publishing methods of two different regimes, none of these works creates what could be called a continuum, an observation of a series of translations of the same source text over an extended period of time. This project fills this gap with a corpus consisting of 15 translations of a poetry collection spanning nearly a century. The scale as well as the underlying context, one marked by profound socio-political changes, will help to uncover shifting trajectories of translations. At the same time, none of the works in *Queer Translation Studies* actively applies scholarship from queer historiography in order to consider how the changing perception of concepts such as *homosexuality* may have influenced translation strategies. This book asserts that this consideration is a vital element in any work which explores the history of queer translation; in the words of the queer studies theorist Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "an understanding of virtually any aspect of modern Western culture must be, not merely incomplete, but damaged in its central substance to the degree that it does not incorporate a critical analysis of modern homo/heterosexual definition" (1990: 1). This book aims to expand the reach of queer translation scholarship through a better understanding of how the conceptualisation of this homo/heterosexual definition changes through history, and how these shifts in turn are reflected in translation strategies.

### **The Method: Translating Sonnets**

The analysis of Czech and Slovak translations of Shakespeare's *Sonnets* that is at the centre of this study is conducted along two main axes. Both rely on close textual analysis of the translations, but they exploit different ambiguities of the *Sonnets* collection. The first approach is inspired by the original realisation that many of the translated poems refer to a gendered recipient where the original

poem remains neutral. In order to evaluate the extent of this approach, the number of clearly gendered sonnets in each of the 15 translations is counted and then compared with the English source text. The second approach explores the blurred lines between romantic love and friendship depicted in the collection and observes how the portrayal of the relationship between the author and the Fair Youth shifts through a detailed analysis of both the translated *Sonnets* and of the paratextual material surrounding them. The translators who worked on these versions and the decisions they made about these ambiguities are at the centre of this enquiry, and their professional profiles as well as their thoughts on translations provide crucial clues to the shifting reading of the *Sonnets*. However, given that this enquiry starts with a translation published in 1923, nearly a century before this book's publication, the information available about these translators as well as possibilities to ask them direct questions about their approaches to the *Sonnets* are inevitably limited. Out of the 18 translators who have worked on these translations<sup>3</sup> (including those who contributed to a collaborative edition published in 1976), seven are still alive at the time of writing this book: Zdeněk Hron, Anna Sedlačková,<sup>4</sup> Miroslav Macek, Martin Hlinský, Ľubomír Feldek, Miloslav Uličný, and Václav Pinkava. Out of these seven, three were unavailable for an interview: Hron and Feldek as it was not possible to contact them despite the author's best efforts, Sedlačková as she did not respond to the interview request. The remaining four translators – Macek, Hlinský, Uličný, and Pinkava – have all consented to answer questions related to their translations of the *Sonnets*, and these interviews were conducted via email in May 2020.

The interviews were presented in the form of six open-ended questions, and the translators were encouraged to write as extensively as they wished. The six questions were as follows:

1. What led you to translate the *Sonnets*?
2. How did you prepare for this translation? Did you study any materials or scholarly commentaries on Shakespeare and his *Sonnets*, or the previous Czech, Slovak, and other translations? Or did you on the contrary attempt to minimise possible bias from existing translations and avoided these influences?
3. To what degree did you collaborate with your publishing house? Did you have a free hand in your decisions, or did the translation undergo significant editorial changes prior to publication?<sup>5</sup>

3 See Table 2.1 in Chapter 2 for a comprehensive list.

4 Very little information is available about Sedlačková's personal life and she is presumed to be alive as it was not possible to gather any information to the contrary.

5 This question was omitted from the interview with Václav Pinkava, as his version of the *Sonnets* was self-published.

## 8 Introduction

4. Let us now consider the question of the addressee or addressees of the *Sonnets*. Although some poems clearly indicate that the addressee (or the person to whom the sonnet is referring to) is a man or a woman, the great majority omit the (grammatical) gender of this person or persons, something which it is not always possible to retain in a Czech or Slovak translation. How did you decide whether these poems should be dedicated to a man/woman, or retain the neutral gender of the addressee in English?
5. Related to Question 4, did you consider how the *Sonnets*, in particular the poems dedicated to a male addressee, would be received by your readership? Did you think about the various ways in which they could interpret your decisions related to the gender of the addressee? And if so, did these considerations affect your translation?
6. How do you view your translation in retrospect? Would you translate them differently if the *Sonnets* were to be published today (especially when it comes to decisions about the gender of the addressees)?

The questions were prefaced with a brief introduction of the book where the central hypothesis of the project was described as follows:

Given that homosexuality was perceived primarily as a sexual deviation and frequently considered a taboo during the Communist regime, affection or love between men without an explicitly sexual context was tolerated as a sign of friendship and collegiality. The view of male intimacy has changed since the year 1989 with the heightened visibility of issues related to sexual minorities, which affected translations of the *Sonnets* to a certain extent.

The questions were asked in Slovak with the offer to conduct interviews in Czech if needed;<sup>6</sup> this was not required by any of the interviewees. All four translators responded in Czech and replied to all questions they were asked. The relevant excerpts from their individual answers translated into English by the author will be included in Chapters 3 and 4 and accompany the analysis of their translations.

As it was not possible to contact the remaining 13 translators, this book relies on other sources in order to gather details about their life and work. Most of the basic information about their professional output is based on the Czech database of literary translation,<sup>7</sup> which is a website managed by the Czech Literary Translator's Guild and offers biographical details of literary translators as well as lists of their translated works. No similar database exists about Slovak

6 See *Notes on Language* in the latter part of the Introduction for further information regarding the closeness of these two languages.

7 <https://www.databaze-prekladu.cz/>

translators, and the details about their personal lives (with the exception of the popular poet Lubomír Feldek) are accordingly even more scarce.

Beyond these biographical details, the amount of information that could be gathered about the translators varies widely. In some cases, the translators are high-profile public figures whose lives are well documented. The co-author of the 1964 translation, Jaroslav Vrchlický, is one of the most prominent figures of Czech romantic poetry, and several biographies and other volumes were written about his life and literary output (Balajka 1979; Topor 2013). Others are high-profile public figures, such as the popular Slovak poet and playwright Lubomír Feldek or the widely recognised Czech expert on Shakespeare Martin Hilský, who both gave interviews and public talks on a number of subjects including their translations of the *Sonnets*.<sup>8</sup> Others, such as Václav Pinkava<sup>9</sup>, Jiří Josek,<sup>10</sup> or Miroslav Macek,<sup>11</sup> have their own personal webpages and blogs where they share their opinions and (in Pinkava's case) translations with the wider public. Information about the remaining translators is frequently scarce, and in some cases relies on small mentions in other works on Shakespeare (such as a brief note about Stanislav Blaho in Jan Vilikovský's 2014 volume *Shakespeare u nás* [Shakespeare in our Lands]) or small clues in paratexts of other translations (including the sole mention of Anna Sedlačková in the afterword of Feldek's 2006 reprint). The gathered information about these translators will accompany the introduction of the individual editions of Czech and Slovak *Sonnets* in Chapter 2.

## Overview

The first two chapters of this book will detail the historical background of the project's main inquiry and situate the source and target texts in their respective timelines. Chapter 1 outlines the history of Czechoslovakia from the time of its birth after the First World War to the present day and reflects on how the challenges of the 20th and 21st century impacted the lives of the country's non-heterosexual population. Using scholarship from Czech and Slovak gender studies and sociology that utilise oral histories and archival tools to fill in the blank spaces in the country's queer history, together with my own experience of living in post-1989 Czechoslovakia, the chapter aims to reconstruct the changing perception of same-sex love and desire under the shifting socio-political circumstances.

8 See for example an interview with Feldek <https://www.litcentrum.sk/rozhovor/moja-sila-je-v-reci-poezie> and a public talk from Hilský <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7jTvkAK-6-c> (both accessed 20 November 2020).

9 <http://www.vzjp.cz/>

10 <http://www.jirijosek.cz/>

11 <http://www.macekvbotach.cz/>

Chapter 2 is dedicated to the *Sonnets* as both the source and target text for the analysis. The first part of the chapter introduces Shakespeare's original collection published in 1609, and then maps the changing critical responses to the *Sonnets* over the following four centuries, with a focus on the controversy surrounding the possible male recipient of the poems. This section also asks how same-sex desire was viewed in Shakespeare's England, and introduces some of the key studies on the subject. The chapter then moves on to the Czech and Slovak translations of the *Sonnets*, introducing each of the 15 translations in chronological order, and in relation to the socio-political changes mapped in Chapter 1. This section will embed the translations in their respective context through an analysis of the changing publishing practices and the restrictions imposed on book production; it will theorise on the possible issues that the retranslations of the collection might have faced at different points in Czechoslovakia's history; and it will explain the reasons for Shakespeare's lasting popularity in both countries throughout the 20th century.

With the target texts anchored in their time and place, Chapters 3 and 4 will move onto the comparative analysis of the corpus divided by two central questions concerning the Czech and Slovak translations. Chapter 3 looks at the gender ambiguity of the source text, where the majority of the poems are dedicated to an unspecified *you* or *thou*, and asks how many of the translated poems retain this neutrality and how many choose to specify a male or a female recipient instead. After explaining the methodological frameworks used to quantify the results, the chapter evaluates the outcomes and discusses in greater depth several translations that show the most significant results, with the help of additional textual and paratextual analysis.

Chapter 4 turns from the question of the recipient of the *Sonnets* to analysing the emotions expressed by the author for the object of his love, as described in the text of the poems. The central question of this part of the inquiry is whether the relationship described in the *Sonnets* can be interpreted as romantic through the use of nouns like "lover" and other nouns and verbs associated strictly with romantic love, or whether the translation suggests that the *Sonnets* describe love between two friends by using friendship-related expressions and vocabulary. This analysis is primarily based on close textual comparisons of the source and target texts, and also utilises the differences between those versions of the *Sonnets* that underwent editorial changes in preparation for later re-editions. Lastly, the chapter considers the role of paratextual features in the reading of the translated *Sonnets* and examines how alternative interpretations of the emotions and relationship expressed in the collection can influence the reading of the text.

The conclusion will then bring together the results from the two analytical parts of the book and rethink their implications within the broader historical context outlined in Chapter 1. In line with the aims stated earlier in this chapter, the discussion will consider the changing perception of same-sex love across Czechoslovakia's history as mirrored in the shifting translation approaches to the *Sonnets* and trace the unpredictable curves of the *Sonnets'* progress through a century of Czech and Slovak translations.

## Notes on Terminology

One of the core structures underpinning this book is the assertion that the use of modern-day terminology and concepts of sexuality when referring to historical figures is inevitably presentist. Whether referring to people living in socialist Czechoslovakia or Renaissance England, it is nearly impossible to ascertain whether they would in our present discourse identify as gay, straight, queer, or whether they would see their sexual and romantic preferences as part of their identity in the first place. For this reason, I am using a variety of different terms that hope to offer both historical accuracy and inclusivity.

Whenever possible, this book chooses those terms that were in use in their respective historical and geographical contexts. The post-Velvet Revolution activism in Czechoslovakia started under the heading of ‘gay and lesbian’ movement, and only gradually evolved into the present-day LGBTI (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex) acronym. The sexological journals in socialist Czechoslovakia used the term ‘homosexual’ to describe patients who showed preferences for people of their own sex, usually regardless of whether they were also attracted to people of the opposite sex. Going deeper into the history of human sexuality, it is impossible to avoid terms such as ‘sodomy’ which were part of the legal parlance of Austro-Hungarian penal code or the English legislation in Shakespeare’s days. While I am conscious that some of these terms are now outdated, that they may differ across linguistic areas, and that some of them are decidedly offensive, it is necessary to retain them in their historical narratives in order to accurately represent the discourses surrounding these evolutions.

In general, this book uses the term ‘same-sex’, as in ‘same-sex love’ or ‘same-sex desire’ to discuss romantic affection between two men or between two women. While this term is not ideal, it is the most commonly used expression in queer historiography and Queer Translation Studies where words such as ‘gay love’ or ‘lesbian desire’ would simply be a presentist application of modern identities onto the past. The term ‘queer’ is used to denote all discourse that belongs to the non-cisgender and non-heterosexual spectrum, but as it is a term that some members of the community find offensive due to its past negative connotations, I do not use it to describe people’s identities unless they themselves identify as queer. For these purposes, I use the word ‘non-heterosexual’ as an umbrella term for those who are not exclusively attracted (sexually and/or romantically) to persons of the opposite sex. This expression is intended to function as an inclusive description for gays, lesbians, bisexuals, pansexuals, asexuals, as well as a multitude of other identities that have no access to, or do not wish to be described by any of these labels.

Lastly, this book in many ways neglects the ‘T’ in the LGBTQ+ acronym and delves only very occasionally into discussions of trans and nonbinary identities. While a large part of the analytical section of this book rests on the comparison between a male and a female beloved or the contrast of masculine and feminine grammatical forms, it is imperative to emphasise that gender does

not, and never did, fit into this simplistic binary, in the same way as sexuality is not simply divided into gay and straight. The scope and focus of this book necessarily led to oversimplifications and generalisations on some accounts, but I am using the labels ‘male’ and ‘female’ while being conscious of their limitations, and never presuming that they are either all-encompassing, or applicable to everyone.

### Notes on Language

One last subject that needs to be addressed as part of this introductory chapter is the fact that this book works with translations into two languages – Czech and Slovak – while treating them as one target language. The primary reason for this decision is the linguistic as well as cultural closeness of these two languages. I grew up in Slovakia, in a Slovak-speaking household with all my education being in Slovak, but I was constantly surrounded by Czech books, television, and other media. Like many other Slovak people of my generation, I consider Czech to be my second mother tongue. This is in part possible because of the linguistic closeness of the two languages; when talking to my Czech friends, we each use our respective languages without the differences interfering with the flow of the conversation. While the situation is gradually changing with the devolution of Czechoslovakia, and the youngest Czech generation born after 1993 is sometimes struggling to understand Slovak, the close ties between the two languages remain to this day. Whenever I want to explain this enduring closeness, I mention the popular TV franchise *Britain's Got Talent* which was introduced as a single format *Česko Slovensko má talent* [Czech(o)Slovakia has talent], and which continues to be broadcast simultaneously by TV channels in both countries and features presenters, judges, and contestants speaking both languages indiscriminately.

Czech and Slovak were the official languages of Czechoslovakia from the moment of the country's birth in 1918, which is the main reason for including both of them in the present analysis. However, it is important to point out that for various historical and socio-political reasons, Czech has always been the dominant language of the two. This has led to a disparity which is particularly visible in the publishing industry: as the languages are so closely related and mutually understandable by the majority of the population, it was often decided that it is enough to translate a work into only one of them, and this was in most cases the Czech language. The translations of the *Sonnets* that are at the core of this book represent an example of this phenomenon, as only three out of the 15 versions are in Slovak.

Whenever possible, this book offers both the Czech and Slovak alternatives for terms that differ between the two languages. For the aforementioned reasons, as well as for the sake of clarity, the Czech term will be followed by the Slovak one separated with a slash, and with an English back translation in square brackets, for example *přítel/priateľ* [friend].

# 1 Queering Czechoslovakia's History

While the reclaiming of a non-heterosexual past in the Western countries such as the United States has its roots in the 1970s and became an acknowledged part of academic research in the 1990s (Duberman, Vicinus, and Chauncey 1989: 1–2), a similar movement in the Czech Republic and Slovakia only started in the last few decades. As in most other countries of the former Eastern Bloc, the search for a gay, lesbian, or a transgender past is further obscured by the taboo which was imposed on all non-normative sexualities and identities, and the ensuing lack of written records on these subjects. Fortunately, recent years have brought several studies from both Czech and Slovak scholars that attempt to fill the gaps in the two countries' queer past, many of which rely on oral histories as its primary sources of information. This chapter uses these histories together with a chronology of the legislative changes that shaped the official discourse on same-sex desire in order to reconstruct a brief history of the lives of Czechoslovakia's non-heterosexual population in the past century.

## The First Czechoslovak Republic and the Second World War

The term 'First Republic' commonly refers to the period from Czechoslovakia's Declaration of Independence on 28 October 1918 until the forceful and temporary dissolution of the country in 1939. Like many other Central and Southeast European nation states, Czechoslovakia was established from the debris of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire, and many laws in the new republic were directly adopted from the Austro-Hungarian penal code. However, as the two nations belonged to different parts of the former monarchy, the First Czechoslovak Republic had dual legislation for a number of subjects, including laws addressing same-sex intercourse. In the Czech lands, article 129b of penal code based on Austrian law dating back to 1852 defined same-sex acts as *necond-nost contra naturam* [indecent against nature] and could result in imprisonment for up to five years (Zavacká 2001: 95). The Slovak penal code based on former Hungarian legislation from 1878 considered same-sex acts as sodomy, and those found guilty under the corresponding articles 241–42 could be punished

with up to one year in prison (*ibid.*). The dual legislation remained in place largely unchanged until the Second World War, which means that same-sex acts continued to be illegal during the First Czechoslovak Republic. The reality of this status quo can be illustrated by the mass investigation and lengthy interrogations of men accused of same-sex acts in the Czech city of Pilsen in 1932 (Nozar 2013). However, Czechoslovakia of the 1920s and 1930s was also a comparatively progressive and open-minded country, and these attitudes allowed for the emergence of the first movements to campaign for the decriminalisation of homosexuality. The Czechoslovak League for Sexual Reform, a local branch of Magnus Hirschfeld's World League for Sexual Reform, was established in the 1930s (Jusová and Šiklová 2016: 70), and a group of intellectuals started publishing a bi-weekly journal named *Hlas sexuální menšiny* [Voice of the Sexual Minority], succeeded in 1932 by *Nový Hlas* [New Voice] (Lorencová 2006: 106). The field of sexology, which later became instrumental in the decriminalisation of homosexuality in Czechoslovakia, was officially established in 1921 with the world's first Medical School with a separate Institute of Sexology at Charles' University in Prague (Sokolová 2015: 252). This was followed by the first Czech monograph addressing homosexuality from a medical perspective, František Jelínek's *Homosexualita ve světle vědy* [Homosexuality in the Light of Science] (1924). All of these were part of a larger, Europe-wide movement towards liberalisation including the decriminalisation and de-medicalisation of homosexuality which was gaining momentum particularly around large urban centres such as Berlin, London, and Paris. All of these movements, including the grassroots attempts in Czechoslovakia, were cut short and in many cases set back by several decades by the rise of fascism in Central Europe.

During the Second World War, Czechoslovakia was divided into two parts for the first time. Following the Munich agreement in September 1938, the Czech lands, mainly due to their large German minority, were occupied and gradually annexed by Nazi Germany as the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. Slovakia declared *de facto* independence as the Slovak State but was led by a Nazi-controlled puppet government. These fascist regimes were opposed by resistance groups and uprisings in both divided areas. The countries were liberated in May 1945 by joint US and Soviet troops, and Czechoslovakia was restored to its pre-war form, with the exception of the easternmost area of Subcarpathian Ruthenia which became part of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic.

The Nazi persecution of homosexuals inevitably impacted both countries; however, as Fanel (2000: 432–33) describes, there was a difference between the treatment of homosexuals of German origin and of those who did not belong to this group. Homosexuality was perceived as a threat primarily to the 'dominant race' and was therefore not persecuted as intensely in the Czech Lands or Poland as it was in Germany itself. This fact, of course, did not translate into a period of freedom during the war, and many former leaders

of the movement were killed or sent to concentration camps, although usually for reasons unrelated to their campaigning for homosexual rights (Seidl 2016: 175). Unfortunately, the lack of archival and other historical sources does not allow us, as of yet, to correctly assess the scale of Nazi persecution in Czechoslovakia, nor its impact on the surviving non-heterosexual population.

## **Socialist Czechoslovakia**

In February 1948, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia overtook the government in a Soviet-supported coup d'état, which soon led to the closure of borders with West Germany and Austria and the definitive inclusion of the Czechoslovak Republic into the Eastern Bloc of Cold War Europe. The country was governed by the totalitarian Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (*Komunistická strana Československa, KSČ*), a member of the Comintern organisation and largely controlled by the Soviet Union. The most immediate changes that the country underwent were the shift to a planned and centralised economy and the nationalisation of private property, and Chapter 2 will explore the impact of these changes on the publishing industry.

The post-war re-establishment of Czechoslovakia and the newly installed Communist regime prompted a thorough overhaul of the country's legislation. The years 1948 to 1951 were designated as a transitional period during which the legal code from the First Republic was reassessed and adapted so as to suit the purposes of the newly established socialist state. In the hope of utilising these transitions, pre-war activists for the rights of sexual minorities who survived the war briefly campaigned for the decriminalisation of homosexuality in the new legislation. While the suggestion was initially considered, it was ultimately decided not to proceed with this step and homosexuality remained a criminal offence in the new penal code. The reasons for this decision remain unclear; however, oral testimonies gathered by František Schindler (2013) suggest that the responsible committee decided that Czechoslovakia could not legalise homosexuality if the Soviet Union continued to view it as a criminal offence and a "bourgeois phenomenon" (282). The pre-war articles were merged into article 241 now applicable to the whole republic, and sexual acts involving persons of the same sex were now deemed a criminal offence against human dignity, and punishable by up to one year in prison (Zavacká 2001: 95).

Although this decision seems to suggest that Czechoslovakia had little jurisdictional autonomy during the four decades of communist rule, it is necessary to keep in mind that the Soviet Union maintained different relationships with different countries of the Eastern Bloc and these relations underwent their own historical transformations. These countries' adherence to Soviet models was by no means consistent throughout the socialist period, which is perhaps best demonstrated by the fact that, while homosexuality remained a criminal offence in Russia until 1993, it was decriminalised in Czechoslovakia as early as 1961. This change was largely connected with the

work of the Czech sexologist Kurt Freund, which highlights the pivotal role of this new medical field in the lives of the non-heterosexual population. After a series of unsuccessful attempts to subject men who were sexually attracted to other men to behavioural therapy (in line with the contemporary belief that homosexuality was a behavioural issue), Freund concluded that homosexuality is not curable and ultimately harmless to others and renewed the campaign for its exclusion from the penal code (Schindler 2013: 285–86; see also Seidl 2016 for a detailed account of the legislative changes). His efforts proved successful, and a revision of legislation in 1961 brought a new article 244 which partially decriminalised homosexuality between two consenting adults. Intercourse with persons younger than 18 years old, acts that were deemed gross public indecency, and those that involved any kind of reward (not necessarily financial), remained a criminal offence. This is particularly striking when compared to the United Kingdom, where the *Sexual Offences Act* that partially decriminalised homosexuality in England and Wales was only passed in 1967. While this change appears singularly benevolent for a regime known for its restrictive hold on the society, it would be incorrect to interpret this as a sign of open-mindedness towards Czechoslovakia's non-heterosexual population. According to oral testimonies collected by Schindler, while the new legislation brought a general sense of relief as it removed the immediate danger of legal repercussions, it was not followed by any noticeable shifts in the attitudes of the wider Czechoslovak society (Schindler 2013: 291). The freedom from persecution granted by the new legislation too was relative, as the Czechoslovak secret service StB/ŠtB continued to keep a detailed index of homosexual citizens (Schindler 2013: 362, 368) and without laws addressing homophobic hate crimes, police violence against homosexual men (and, to a lesser extent, women) was not unusual (Sokolová 2012: 260). Above all, the new legislation did not bring any visible changes to the regime's official stance on non-normative sexualities, and homosexuality continued to be seen as an undesirable element that had no place within the future ideological aspirations of a socialist country. As Věra Sokolová sums up, "the leading communist party did not support variety and feared all identities that endangered the heteronormative order of society and challenged the ideological foundation of state socialism" (2015: 244). The regime's approach to this issue followed the same pattern as its dealing with many other unwelcome and societally non-compliant phenomena, which was to simply pretend that homosexuality did not exist within Czechoslovakia, with the exception of a few unhappy, isolated individuals living on the outskirts of the society. This meant that homosexuality was virtually absent from public discourse, politics, or popular media, and this taboo was only removed with the Velvet Revolution of 1989 (Schindler 2013: 283, 292).

The only area where homosexuality could, and indeed was, discussed was the medical sphere in the field of sexology, which retained its popularity

despite the regime change. Here again the official stance clashed with the actual opinions of the practitioners; while the state-approved publications uniformly declared homosexuality to be a sexual deviation, many experts had a much more sympathetic view of the issue in private. Sokolová's study shows that several prominent sexologists not only helped their patients with the frequently difficult road of self-discovery, but also aided them in finding sexual or romantic partners (2015: 257). However, as these acts of support were necessarily secretive, it is likely that the only information about homosexuality which reached the wider population aligned strictly with the official state-approved stance. Moreover, sexological discourse at this stage was ingrained in predictable gendered stereotypes, with frequent claims about the relative effeminacy of homosexual men or the aggressive character of homosexual women, which likewise contributed to the societal expectations and prejudices regarding non-normative sexualities (Sokolová 2015: 258).

This state-imposed silence naturally presented substantial problems for the lives of non-heterosexual citizens of Czechoslovakia. Without any overt representation of same-sex couples in books or television, it was difficult to make sense of non-heteronormative feelings and desires, which is why books with lesbian themes such as *The Well of Loneliness* (Hall 1928), further discussed in Chapter 2, played such a pivotal role in many of these roads of self-discovery. The taboo surrounding homosexuality likewise presented considerable difficulties in finding sexual and/or romantic partners. Both Schindler (2013: 314) and Viera Lorencová (2006: 104) report that some of their respondents frequented public toilets and parks that were accessible overnight for this purpose. These places, known in Czech as *holandy*, were a local version of the phenomenon of *cruising*, identified at around the same time in many Western countries where homosexuality was not tolerated. Despite the difficulties, a clandestine homosexual subculture did exist within some parts of Czechoslovakia, particularly in larger urban centres. Many of these were small networks of friends organised by wealthy patrons and artists whose non-normative behaviour was tolerated to a certain degree, and were associated with particular clubs and venues, such as the Carlton Hotel in Bratislava (Lorencová 2006: 118) and a number of places in Prague (Schindler 2013: 327).

It is also necessary to acknowledge that the apparent blindness of the regime towards the subject of homosexuality sometimes brought unexpected advantages. Oral histories about non-heterosexual lives in socialist Czechoslovakia which have been collected by Sokolová offer an interesting example in the story of one of her respondents who lived in a shared household with her female partner while taking care of the partner's young son (2015: 237). The boy's frequent mentions of another woman who was not a family member but obviously spent a lot of time with him aroused the suspicion of his teachers, and the two women were asked to visit the school in order to explain who this additional member of the household was. During an interview with the headmaster, the respondent simply explained that she was a family friend who

helped to take care of the child, and once the school had ascertained that the boy was well cared for, the matter was dropped. The respondent reflected on her partner's anxiety prior to the interview:

For god's sake, what else could they have said? It was unthinkable that someone would directly ask us if we were lesbians. Impossible! I never really feared that question. Who would dare to ask? And how would they ask?

(Sokolová 2015: 237)

While such possibilities for cohabitation were outside of the reach for most same-sex couples as housing was to a large degree assigned by the state and almost exclusively to young, married, and of course heterosexual families, this example illustrates the lack of discursive strategies that the regime possessed in order to speak about this taboo subject. If we take into account the fact that homosexuality was limited to articles within sexological journals and strictly associated with sexual intercourse, it is easy to see why the lack of any 'proofs' of such conduct meant that homosexuality itself could not be ascertained. This labelling of homosexuality as a strictly medical issue framed as sexually deviant behaviour, together with a complete lack of representation of same-sex couples in popular media, led to the fact that non-sexual displays of physical and verbal affection between two people of the same sex were almost never seen as manifestations of homosexual desire. This becomes particularly interesting within the gendered frameworks of socialist societies and the role of male and female bonding entrenched at its core. Although the regime issued frequent claims about the complete equality of its citizens, the system retained a strong gendered binary with men and women viewed as separate groups with separate pursuits and interests (Fodor 2002: 248). Under the banners of universal fellowship, these groups were expected to create close, personal bonds, which were frequently promoted in popular media and public discourse; as the Dutch scholar Gert Hekma suggests, "The communist states were largely organized along homosocial lines, always an interesting playground for homosexual desires" (2007: 9). While bonding between women was certainly seen as an important element within the society, it was male friendship, the ultimate symbol of two working-class comrades who would give their life for each other and whose relationship was ostentatiously more important than any heterosexual romance in their lives, that became one of the most persistent tropes of the era. These bonds seem so prominent in retrospect precisely because they were frequently expressed with passionate words and gestures that are now, after 1989, much more likely to be associated with romantic relationships, as was noted by several studies of this phenomenon. Wojciech Tomasiak in his paper "The Motif of Male Friendship in Stalinist Mythology" (2001) documents "the primacy of high-spirited masculine relations over the traditional, heteroerotic love" (67) and its role in communist propaganda. He explains the crucial role of male bonding such as between Lenin and Stalin or between Marx and Engels, and how these pairs of men were frequently

depicted in imagery suggesting their particular closeness and intimacy (ibid.). They also regularly appear overlooking groups of young children, which easily bring to mind the image of a family with same-sex parents when viewed from a contemporary perspective. Propaganda pictures depicting two men holding hands or locked in a close embrace go well beyond portraits of these leaders, as is the case in a number of posters celebrating friendships between communist countries or military victories. A cover of the magazine *SSSR na Stroike* [USSR in Construction, n.2–3] from 1940 features an illustration from the famous Russian artist El Lissitzky<sup>1</sup> depicting a male civilian passionately kissing a Soviet soldier in gratitude over liberation. Another display of male solidarity that appears unusual to current Western standards is the socialist fraternal kiss that was a frequent greeting between Soviet officials, perhaps most famously performed by Erich Honecker and Leonid Brezhnev and immortalised on the Berlin Wall. While these depictions and greetings differ in their origins as well as in their reception, and while some of them, like the fraternal kiss, were sometimes privately ridiculed by the citizens of these countries, they nonetheless helped to normalise physical affection between men as well as emphasise the importance of close, intimate male bonds as one of the core elements of society. Various sources suggest that Czechoslovakia was no exception, and the country had an equally strong tradition of close and intimate male friendships. Lissitzky's propaganda poster is echoed in the famous Liberation Statue which stands to this day near Prague's Central Train Station, likewise depicting a male civilian passionately embracing a Soviet soldier. Similar imagery can still be seen around the two countries as some of the last vestiges of the previous regime; the military barracks in Nitra, the Slovak city where I grew up, are to this day decorated with a mural depicting two male soldiers embracing each other.

The military themes of loyal comradeships were inevitably reflected in narratives surrounding the cultural and literary life in Czechoslovakia. Close male friendships were depicted countless times in printed and audio-visual media and were a particularly popular trope in adventure stories aimed at boys and men. Whether it was the highly popular series of Western *Winnetou* novels by the German author Karl May, with their two male protagonists who share a 'blood bond' that is ostentatiously more significant than their respective heterosexual love interests, or whether it was stories for teenage boys by authors like Jaroslav Foglar that were consciously constructed around themes of male bonding, accompanied by repeated statements about mutual devotion and themes of jealousy, these narratives were constantly reiterated throughout the four decades of communist publishing. While, of course, the motif of intimate male friendship is a common theme in literature worldwide, it was particularly

1 [http://www.scalarchives.com/web/dettaglio\\_immagine\\_adv.asp?idImmagine=TG07687&posizione=177&numImmagini=939&prmsset=on&SC\\_PROV=COLL&IdCollection=88465&SC\\_Lang=eng&Sort=9](http://www.scalarchives.com/web/dettaglio_immagine_adv.asp?idImmagine=TG07687&posizione=177&numImmagini=939&prmsset=on&SC_PROV=COLL&IdCollection=88465&SC_Lang=eng&Sort=9)

prominent and visible in the discursive structures of the socialist regime, and the easy physical intimacy with which these men expressed their devotion for each other, together with the passionate language they frequently used, can appear puzzling to a 21st-century onlooker.

The visually striking images and narratives of men in deeply affectionate and intimate relations resemble the work of John Ibson in his book *Picturing Men: A Century of Male Relationships in Everyday American Photography* (2002). Ibson uses an extensive collection of late 19th- and early-20th-century photographs to demonstrate the changes male relationships, and in particular male intimacy, has undergone since these photographs were created. These images, many of which were taken in early photographic studios, show the men sitting in each other's laps, holding hands, or embracing each other. These photographs were frequently used as proofs of male homosexuality in pre-Stonewall years; however, Ibson maintains that this reading is most likely presentist. In his words,

In spite of today's homophobic equation of same-sex affection with sexual interest, affection between men need not involve sex any more than sex between them is necessarily a sign of affection. Indeed what actually constitutes "intimacy" may vary across time.

(xiii)

Ibson suggests that at the time when these photographs were taken, there was a marked gap between the society's perception of male physical intimacy and between sexual acts associated with homosexuality. This is not to dismiss the possibility that some of the men depicted may have had sexual feelings for men or have been involved in sexual relationships with them; Ibson simply proposes that these photographs would not have been seen as symptomatic of homosexual desire by their original viewers. While there are currently no similar studies which look specifically at masculine intimacy in socialist Czechoslovakia, I suggest that there was a similar dissonance between signs of male intimacy and what the society perceived as homosexuality during the socialist era. Whether it was the depiction of soldiers embracing or of the brotherly bonds associated with an ardent and heartfelt vocabulary of mutual love, it is clear that male intimacy was perceived as not only normalised, but that it was praised as a welcome element that strengthened the fibres of society. If we consider that these discursive structures were in place alongside a taboo about homosexuality which was perceived as a strictly medicalised sexual deviation, it is easy to understand why stories and depictions of male love and devotion were not seen as in any way connected to sexual desire. This is, once again, not a claim that homosexual men in socialist Czechoslovakia did not engage in romantic relationships and intimacy with their partners; indeed, many of the oral histories collected by Schindler (2013) and Sokolová (2015) offer stories of just such relationships that existed and often thrived beneath the heteronormative narratives of the state. The regime's apparent blindness towards the connection

between same-sex intimacy and homosexuality paradoxically offered some degree of concealment, as is demonstrated by the school interview mentioned by Sokolová (2015: 237). This paradox of homosexuality being on the one hand repressed by the official structures but on the other allowed to exist unseen in the blind spots of the same regime brings to mind Michel Foucault's seminal work *History of Sexuality* (1978). Foucault explains that prior to the 19th century male same-sex intercourse was in Western European countries classified as an act of transgression which was essentially perceived in the same way as any other crime such as theft or murder. However, while it was under many jurisdictions considered a capital offence, a general reluctance to describe and define what constituted this act resulted in a quiet but widespread tolerance of same-sex intimacy, especially in all-male environments. Foucault ascribes this contradiction to the uneven relationships between power, knowledge, and discourse: "silence and secrecy are a shelter for power, anchoring its prohibitions; but they also loosen its holds and provide for relatively obscure areas of tolerance" (1978: 101). There are obvious similarities with the situation in socialist Czechoslovakia described in this chapter, where the communist regime's removal of any mention of non-heterosexual intercourse or relationships from public discourse inadvertently provided those "obscure areas of tolerance" where non-normative sexualities could survive unseen.

### **The Velvet Revolution**

On 17 November 1989, a demonstration in Prague led by the town's university students set into motion a series of nation-wide events that ultimately led to the demise of the Communist party and the country's return to democracy. While the Velvet or Gentle Revolution [*Sametová revoluce/Nežná revolúcia*], as it became later known, stands out for its relatively peaceful and non-violent character, it was part of a large-scale process that swept through the countries of the former Eastern Bloc and ultimately led to the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War in the early years of the 1990s. The events of the Velvet Revolution officially ended on 29 December 1989 when the former dissident and playwright Václav Havel was elected as Czechoslovakia's first non-communist president in more than 40 years. Since this date, Czechoslovakia embarked on a journey towards capitalism, with the first democratic elections being held in June 1990.

The first attempts to connect and unite Czechoslovakia's non-heterosexual population occurred almost immediately after the regime change and resulted in the establishment of several gay and lesbian non-governmental organisations (NGOs) later united under the umbrella of SOHO (*Sdružení organizací homosexuálních občanů* – The Association of Organisations of Homosexual Citizens), founded in June 1990 (Lorencová 2013: 87). Working largely on a volunteer basis and with no government funding, these organisations aimed to fill the informational void around key issues including the AIDS crisis and used

self-published magazines and mailing lists to create the first tentative networks of gays and lesbians across both countries. Amongst their first tangible victories were changes in Czechoslovak legislation, and the movement succeeded in obtaining the revision of *Act 244* into *Act 242* of the penal code in 1990 that lowered the age of consent for same-sex partners from 18 to 15, the same as for heterosexual intercourse. The year 1991 put an official stop to the indexing of homosexual individuals, and the National Association of Czech and Slovak physicians removed homosexuality from its list of diagnoses in 1993. Apart from these legislative changes, the initial years after the Velvet Revolution aimed to reclaim the discursive spaces that had been kept closed by the previous regime and “to put end to the decades of silence, and take off the cloak of invisibility” to quote one of the first Slovak gay activists Ivan Požgai (cited in interview with and translated by Lorencová 2013: 88).

These changes are again echoed in Foucault's *History of Sexuality* (1978), where he describes how the sudden interest in sexual variation in the late 19th century made it necessary to classify these differences, leading to the ‘discovery’ of homosexuality as a new category. These advances generated not only a wide array of academic and non-academic studies, but also allowed and encouraged persons who engaged in same-sex activities to find their own voices. The homosexual “began to speak in its own behalf, to demand that its legitimacy or ‘naturalness’ be acknowledged, often in the same vocabulary, using the same categories by which it was medically disqualified” (101). The opening of Czechoslovakia's borders and the influx of information following the Velvet Revolution strongly resembles this sudden discursive shift identified by Foucault in 19th-century Western Europe. Rather than a ‘discovery’ of homosexuality as a new category, the revolution caused the concept to expand beyond the medical field, and to become not only an identity but also a member of the society requiring basic human rights. However, as was the case in Victorian England, this sudden presence of a minority group that had hitherto been virtually invisible to the heterosexual majority, triggered a backlash in the form of homophobia. While it would, of course, be wrong to describe Czechoslovak socialist society as being free from homophobic sentiments, the invisibility of non-heterosexual relationships or desire meant that there was nothing to provoke openly antagonistic sentiments. This changed with the sudden visibility of the first organisations campaigning for the rights of sexual minorities immediately following the Velvet Revolution; while until this point, homosexuals were presented as lonely asocial individuals who were unable to integrate themselves into the healthy socialist society and were destined to live on its outskirts (and hence, unseen by the majority), the post-revolutionary years revealed that homosexuality was present and had always existed in the very midst of the population. As studies mapping the post-revolutionary changes in the Czech Republic and Slovakia show, homophobic attitudes are deeply entrenched in political and public discourse to this day, despite the post-revolutionary legislative changes (Fojtová and Sokolová 2013;

Lorencová 2013). Paradoxically, it is likely that the intensity of this homophobia has its roots directly in the previous regime (Fojtová and Sokolová 2013: 109). Although the communist ideology ostentatiously presented explicit discrimination as a matter of the past and/or a phenomenon only occurring in capitalist countries, it also promoted the image of a wholly heterogeneous and artificially equal society where difference, including sexual difference, was non-existent; “the Communist societies were generally subjected to one ideal, one model of appropriate living. Everything else was deviation and not acceptable” (Stroehlein 1999). Once this status quo was challenged and the full diversity of the population became apparent, it was met with immediate resistance.

These changes impacted not only the way the heterosexual majority viewed the newly visible sexual minorities, but they also completely transformed society's view of male intimacy, a phenomenon that the sociologist Eric Anderson explains through his concept of *homohysteria* (2014). Unlike homophobia, which is the hatred of others perceived as homosexuals, homohysteria “refers to one's fear of being thought homosexual through the ‘wrongdoing’ of cultural gender norms” (2014: 41). Homohysteria was particularly widespread in Western societies in the 1980s as the AIDS crisis brought attention to the fact “that homosexuality exists as a significant, static, and immutable percent of the population” (ibid. 45). While the AIDS crisis took a very different course in Czechoslovak perception (see Kolářová 2013 for a detailed study of the subject), the statement certainly applies to the sudden awareness of homosexuality within the fibre of the country's population. Anderson suggests that this phenomenon drastically changed gendered behaviour and the conceptualisation of masculinity amongst American men; while before the advent of homohysteria, male affection such as that seen in Ibsen's photographs was considered an everyday occurrence, the sudden fear of being thought homosexual by one's peers created both physical and verbal barriers to men's intimacy (Anderson 2014: 44). The fact that so many of the expressions of male bonding from the previous regime are seen as transgressing the conventions of masculinity in the present-day Czech and Slovak understanding of gendered behaviour suggests that a similar large-scale shift occurred with the Velvet Revolution. While Anderson's research shows that the force of homohysteria is slowly diminishing in the United States (US) and United Kingdom (UK) with the new millennium, these barriers remain present in Czech and Slovak societal frameworks well into the present day.

### **Divided Paths after 1993**

On 1 January 1993, Czechoslovakia peacefully dissolved into two sovereign states, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, although it is worth mentioning that this was a political decision which was not preceded by a referendum or any other indication of public opinion. Both countries became member states of the European Union in 2004 with Slovakia adopting Euro as its currency in

2009, and both are part of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). While the public opinion naturally varies, both countries are generally seen as being pro-Western and pro-Europe. Partly due to the linguistic closeness of the Czech and Slovak languages described in the previous chapter, the two countries maintain close political and cultural bonds, and a feeling of kinship that persists nearly three decades after the separation. Despite this closeness however, the two countries' paths in regard to the legal and societal recognition of same-sex relationships went in very different directions.

After 1993, the gay and lesbian movements in the newly independent Czech Republic concentrated their efforts primarily on the legal recognition of same-sex unions, and the first attempt to pass such legislation was made in 1998. The attempt was unsuccessful, but, as it failed by only two votes, it clearly signalled a positive change in public consciousness. Further failed attempts in 1999, 2001, 2004, and 2005 did not weaken the determination of the activists, and the Czech parliament finally passed the bill on 15 March 2006 with article 115. Since the passing of this article, Czech same-sex couples can enter a so-called *registered partnership* [registrované partnerství] which grants them rights similar to married heterosexual couples. However, the same article also prevents same-sex couples from using in vitro fertilisation or from adopting children together. This difference has become the most contentious issue of present-day LGBTI campaigning in the Czech Republic and illustrates the changes that have taken place since the fall of the Iron Curtain. As Simona Fojtová and Věra Sokolová (2013: 111) describe, the early activism that ultimately led to the legalisation of same-sex unions was led primarily by gay men, and used the strategy of appeasement with a conscious choice not to question the traditional model of a nuclear heterosexual family. While this decision probably contributed to the relatively early legalisation of these partnerships, it has done little for larger structural changes in Czech society's perception of gender and sexuality. In the past decade, this situation has changed as feminist, lesbian, and queer groups have started collaborating on campaigns that aim to question the stereotypes rooted in the so-called traditional family and gender roles, and at the time of writing this chapter there are further attempts being made to change the legislation on adoption for same-sex couples. Another significant challenge that the LGBTI organisations in the Czech Republic are facing is the legislation regarding trans and non-binary persons, as the current law makes it obligatory for all those who wish to change their legal gender to be sterilised. Although the need for these initiatives shows that the pathway to equality is still long, and while homophobia and transphobia are definitely still present and palpable, it is necessary to also mention that the Czech Republic is generally considered one of the most LGBTQ+ friendly countries in Central and Eastern Europe, and polls suggest it is ahead of all its former Eastern Bloc neighbours in acceptance of same-sex couples (Pew Research Centre 2018: 12). These differences are particularly evident when the Czech Republic is compared with its closest neighbour Slovakia, which does not recognise any form of same-sex partnership at the time of writing.

This disparity is most frequently ascribed to religious differences; while the Czech Republic was in the past a partly Protestant territory, it is at present one of the least religious countries in Europe, with 72 per cent of adults describing their religion as “atheist, agnostic or ‘nothing in particular’” (Pew Research Centre 2017: 9). In contrast, Slovakia has traditionally been a Catholic country, and present surveys show that around 63 per cent of the Slovak population are Roman Catholic (Pew Research Centre 2018: 8). As religion was considered an undesirable element during the socialist period and many had to perform their religious rites and traditions in secret during the four decades of communist rule, it is unsurprising that the fall of the previous regime led to a resurgence of religious sympathies and contributed strongly to the building of a new national identity. Unfortunately, this anchoring of Slovak values in religious principles became one of the greatest obstacles to the progress of LGBTI campaigning. While Slovak activists fought with equal zeal and frequently in collaboration with their Czech colleagues, comparable legislative changes still seem a long way off in Slovakia. One small victory was the passing of the so-called *Anti-Discrimination Act* in May 2004 (article 365), which made it illegal to discriminate against a person based on their sexual orientation. While this law was presented as one of the requirements for joining the EU at the time of Slovakia's candidacy, its approval was preceded by fierce opposition, particularly from Slovakia's right-wing party, the Christian Democratic Movement (*Kresťansko-demokratické hnutie*, KDH), and the law passed only with strong pressure from the EU itself.

Moreover, despite the ceaseless campaigning as well as external funding from international NGOs, the events of the past decade seem to be going against a linear progress towards greater equality. In 2014, the Slovak National Council made an amendment to the Slovak constitution explicitly defining marriage as a bond between one man and one woman. This effectively prevented any same-sex marriage laws from being passed in parliament until further constitutional amendments, and as these require a three-fifths majority in parliament, it places further bureaucratic obstacles in the path of any future changes. The following year, the anti-LGBTI organisation *Aliancia za rodinu* [Alliance for Family] collected the necessary signatures to stage a referendum that claimed to protect the institution of a (nuclear) family as the core unit of society, likely inspired by a similar Croatian referendum in 2013. The referendum asked whether marriage should be exclusively a bond between one man and one woman (amongst other questions), presumably aiming to confirm that the already existing constitutional rule was reflected in nation-wide attitudes. The referendum did not reach the turnout necessary to be considered valid (21.4 per cent out of the 50 per cent required); however, the campaign preceding it has caused further rifts in Slovak population and reinforced many of the stereotypes LGBTI groups seek to dismantle. The fact that Slovakia's highest religious organisation, the Episcopal Conference of Slovakia, officially supported the referendum, helped to further associate Roman Catholic principles with anti-LGBTI sentiments. While, of course, a great number of religious

people in Slovakia fully support or are members of LGBTI communities, the claim that Slovakia is an overwhelmingly Roman Catholic state and should therefore adhere to the moral codes of the church remains one of the strongest arguments for maintaining the current status quo.

The post-Revolutionary events in both countries show that although it is tempting to presume that these new democracies can 'catch up' with Western LGBTQ+ developments and undergo some condensed version of events beginning with the Stonewall Riots and ending with legalisation of same-sex marriage, this is simply not the case. Although the Czech LGBTI activism has achieved some of the most palpable victories, especially compared to other countries of the former Eastern Bloc, the movement is frequently criticised for its non-radical, non-threatening approach that conforms to the structures of the heterosexual majority instead of questioning its binary stereotypes (Fojtová and Sokolová 2013: 107). As such, it seems far removed from the aims and strategies of queer movements in present-day Western Europe. Despite the expectation that small legislative victories could lead to large-scale and ever more radical changes, the example of Slovakia shows that the process towards equality can instead be cyclical, with regressive steps sometimes following the progressive ones. A similarly convoluted evolution is apparent in other neighbouring countries which were likewise part of the Soviet sphere of influence in the second half of the 20th century. Kulpa, Mizielińska, and Stasińska (2012), a team of researchers working primarily with Polish queer history, point out the difficulties that the application of modern, Western queer activism faces when transplanted to a different socio-political realm. While scholars like Lee Edelman in his work *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (2004) criticises the traditional patterns of human reproduction as a heteronormative construct that needs to be challenged by queer scholarship, these radical ideas are difficult to sustain in the former Eastern Bloc. This is particularly true of Poland, a country heavily influenced by the Roman Catholic Church where the institution of the family is seen as one of the elemental and sacred cornerstones of society (Kulpa, Mizielińska, and Stasińska 2012: 135). At the time of writing this book, Poland is facing some of the strongest waves of public hatred against LGBTQ+ communities, with the current president Andrzej Duda likening the promotion of LGBTQ+ rights to an 'ideology' worse than communism (BBC 2020).

As was shown above, Slovakia is similarly tied to religious moral codes, while the Czech Republic chose the path of lesser radicalism in order to win over a still deeply conservative society. Kulpa and Mizielińska illustrate the mismatched timelines in the West and the East with a diagram published in an earlier study (Figure 1.1). While we should be mindful of the fact that the East-West divide is never clear cut, and that Western developments are rarely linear and straightforward in themselves, the image illustrates the difficulties that these attempts in the East face in order to 'catch up' with histories on the other side of the Iron Curtain, as well as the issues that accompany any attempt

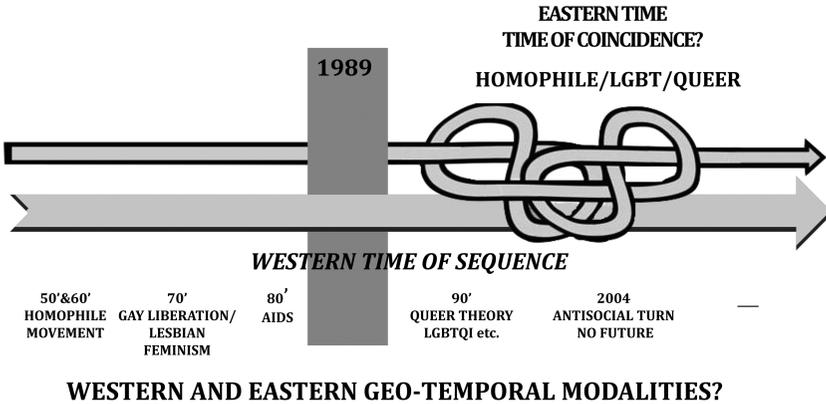


Figure 1.1 Western 'Time of Sequence' and Eastern 'Time of Coincidence' (Kulpa and Mizielińska 2011: 15).

to compare the methods and goals of the individual activist movements. The cyclical, two steps forward and one step back nature of these changes, particularly where non-normative sexualities and gender identities are concerned, also closely resembles the historiographic branch of queer temporality, which criticises the expectation of “a developmental curve from the proto-gay to the gay, from the sodomite to the homosexual, in which the latter provides the settled term, transparent in its meaning and identifiable in its physiognomy” (Menon 2005: 492). To view the past as a series of inevitable consequences is an oversimplification that obscures the fact that human history is always varied, and no two evolutions, whether in the global sense or in the very specific area of human sexuality, follow the same patterns in different time and space. The differing fortunes of the LGBTQ+ campaigns in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, two countries that shared a federation for nearly a century and have close cultural, linguistic, and political ties even after their separation, clearly illustrate that these seemingly logical advancements are always subject to a whole range of different factors, some of which cannot be pre-empted.

## 2 A Century of *Sonnets*

Few other literary figures are as highly revered or as comprehensively studied within the anglophone realm as William Shakespeare, and his name or his legacy hardly require an introduction. But while his *Sonnets* are in our present-day era a ubiquitous symbol of romantic poetry and lines such as “Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?”<sup>1</sup> are instantly recognisable by anyone remotely interested in English literature, their path through history has been winding and frequently obscured by controversy. The first part of this chapter will offer a brief introduction of the collection and then map the four centuries of the *Sonnets*’ existence while focusing on the different critical interpretations of the male beloved at their centre. It will also offer an insight into the scholarship exploring same-sex desire between men in Shakespeare’s times, as this will become relevant in the various interpretations of the love depicted in the poems. The second part of this chapter will move the *Sonnets* to their two target cultures and list the 15 Czech and Slovak translations starting from 1923 to the present day. The chronology of the individual editions will be accompanied by a description of how the two countries’ printing and publishing culture changed alongside the shifting socio-political landscape and consider what impact these changes could have had on the translation and publication of these collections.

### Shakespeare’s *Sonnets*

The volume titled *SHAKE-SPEARES SONNETS. Never before Imprinted* containing 154 sonnets together with the narrative poem *A Lover’s Complaint* was entered into the Stationer’s Registry in London on 20 May 1609. By this time, William Shakespeare was 45 and at the height of his professional career, with the majority of his most famous works, including *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *Othello*, already written and staged (Dobson and Wells 2015: 565). While the title suggests that the 1609 version was the *Sonnets*’ first official publication date, it is generally assumed that most of the sonnets were written in the mid-1590s

1 The text of the *Sonnets* is transcribed into present-day English spelling following the Arden edition edited by Katherine Duncan-Jones (1997).

(Dobson and Wells 2015: 340). Contemporary sources confirm that individual poems were circulated in manuscript form prior to the official publication, and some scholars suggest that the collection might have been printed without the consent of the author (Duncan-Jones 1997: 32). The claim that the *Sonnets* were written several decades before their official publication date is further supported by the fact that the poetic form itself was celebrating its greatest success in the last decade of the 16th century, through sonneteers such as Sir Philip Sidney and his famous work *Astrophil and Stella* (1591). The sonnet as a poetic format was imported to England from Italy and adjusted to the different metric and rhyming possibilities of the English language, creating the so-called English or Shakespearean sonnet, as opposed to the original Italian or Petrarchan. Its typical structure consists of 14 rhymed lines in iambic pentameter with a rhyming pattern ABAB CDCD EFEF, which are sometimes thematically divided into either three quatrains or two sestets, and two final lines GG called a *volta* or a *couplet*. This structure is designed to achieve a gradual development of one central idea, with the couplet serving as a pivotal turning point that presents a conclusion, an answer to a rhetorical question, or a contradiction. It is this compact yet eloquent framework that is behind the lasting popularity of the poetic form; the 14 lines offer enough space to develop a substantial idea through a series of progressing claims or arguments, but the format is also brief enough to be printed on a single page and is easily memorised. This makes the sonnet an ideal vehicle for expressing personal, self-reflexive, and intimate thoughts, and it is not surprising that the great majority of sonnets in all language variations focus on amorous themes. Shakespeare's own plays frequently use sonnets for these romantic purposes; characters in *As You Like It* and *Much Ado about Nothing* write sonnets for their lovers, and Romeo and Juliet's conversations in the eponymous play are written entirely in sonnet form.

However, the format's introspective nature and emphasis on subjectivity, together with the complex and distant language of Renaissance England, also considerably complicate attempts to make any definitive statements about Shakespeare's 1609 *Sonnets* collection. We can establish that they are all written from the first-person point of view of an unspecified narrator who is referred to in several instances as "the poet" (17, 79, 83), and that several poems (32, 34, 89) suggest that this poet is male. The majority of the poems are addressed to an unnamed *you* or *thou*, but a few of them use third-person pronouns or gendered nouns such as *mistress* or *boy*, making it possible in some instances to identify the gender of this recipient. As the *Sonnets* are usually reprinted in the same order as in the 1609 edition, there is a tendency to read them as a series of poems that belong to an overarching narrative. Although this practice is controversial, as many commentators doubt whether Shakespeare authorised the order of the collection (Dobson and Wells 2015: 341), it is still the most popular approach to the *Sonnets* and one that the majority of translators in the latter part of this book have observed as well. While this reading reveals several smaller thematic clusters, such as the first 17 sonnets that persuade a young man to settle down and father children (usually called the Procreation

sequence), the most commonly used division is into the Fair Youth and Dark Lady sequences. This reading, first suggested in a reprint of the *Sonnets* edited by John Malone (1790), rests on the fact that all sonnets that use masculine pronouns or gendered markers to denote their recipient as male are within the first 126 poems, while those with feminine pronouns or markers are between poems 127 and 154.<sup>2</sup>

Regardless of the gender of the recipient, the overarching theme of the collection is love in all its forms, and the poems alternate between idolised description of the recipient's beauty and virtues, the author's declarations of the constancy of his attachment, and motives of jealousy, betrayal, and forgiveness. The *Sonnets* also include other subjects typical for Renaissance poetry, such as the *memento mori* reminders of the fleeting nature of youth, as well as the occasional socio-political criticism. Nonetheless, all of these themes tend to be in some way tied to the expressions of love towards the recipient; lamentations about the transience of beauty are countered by promises of the recipient's immortalisation through poetry, and despair about the corrupt state of the world is appeased through the beloved's presence.

The sonnet collection printed in 1609 also includes the following dedication:

To the only begetter of these ensuing sonnets Mr W. H. all happiness and that eternity promised by our ever-living poet wisheth the well-wishing adventurer in setting forth. T. T.<sup>3</sup>

It is generally assumed that the initials T. T. refer to the publisher Thomas Thorpe, who registered the *Sonnets* for printing in 1609. Much research within Shakespearean studies has been dedicated to the uncovering of the identity of Mr W. H., including an extensive rivalry between advocates of the two most likely candidates, Henry Wriothesley, 3rd Earl of Southampton and William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke. The dedication also opens further questions about whether the *Sonnets* were written with a real person – or persons – in mind. Many believe William Wordsworth's claim in his poem *Scorn Not the Sonnet* (1827: 305) that “with this key | Shakespeare unlocked his heart” and contemplate to what degree the poems mirror the author's own personal experiences. Although the meticulous work of historians and literary enthusiasts have ensured that we know more about Shakespeare's life than about any of his English contemporaries with the exception of the royal family, there are still many blank spaces that offer plenty of scope for competing theories about his private relationships. It is this possibility that Shakespeare based the amorous poems for a man on his own lived experience that is at the core of the *Sonnets'* controversy. While many of his plays are easily subjected to queer

2 With the exception of Sonnet 144 which has both a male and a female recipient.

3 The original dedication is in 14 centred lines in all capital letters and with full stops after each word and has been simplified to fit the page.

readings – male bonding in *The Merchant of Venice* or *Troilus and Cressida*, or the gender-transgressing scenarios of *Twelfth Night* and *As You Like it*, to name but a few – they place the author into the position of a narrator of a fictional story, and do not necessarily offer any direct implications about his own love life. In contrast, the *Sonnets* with their intimate format, first-person perspective and their inherent ambiguity, raise questions and doubts which are amplified by the position Shakespeare occupies within the English literary tradition; as Gregory Woods comments, “[i]n Shakespeare’s case, the manhood of Englishness is at stake” (1999: 100).

The first reedition of Shakespeare’s *Sonnets* which alters the way the male addressee is portrayed dates back to John Benson (1640), who in his reprint of the collection under the name *Poems: written by Wil. Shake-speare. Gent.* edited some of the most obvious male markers from the *Sonnets* into ungendered ones, and expressions like “sweet boy” (S.108) became “sweet-love” (52) instead. He also changed the printing order of the original collection, further disrupting the possibility of reading the poems as a narrative with a male and a female recipient. While some commentators suggest that Benson’s version should be seen as a personal reading of the poems where the editor engages in a private dialogue with the author (Shrank 2009), other commentators maintain that Benson’s changes serve to insinuate clear male-to-female eroticism (Smith 2007: 14). More than a century later, John Malone struggled to come to terms with the possibility of a male beloved, referring to these elements as one of the *Sonnets*’ “great defects” (Vickers 1981: 294). During the Romantic era, the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge empathically claimed that “the sonnets could only have come from a man deeply in love, and in love with a woman” (Coleridge 1990: 180–1), while the historian Henry Hallam, dismayed by the possibility of a male recipient of the *Sonnets* and the effect they might have on young men, wished “that Shakespeare had never written them” (Hallam 1839: 504). By the end of the 19th century, Oscar Wilde’s theory about the Fair Youth’s identity was published in the form of a short story titled “The Portrait of Mr W. H.” (1889), and the *Sonnets* themselves were cited during his trials for gross indecency. Wilde defended his relationship with men like Lord Alfred Douglas as based on the same “deep, spiritual affection that is as pure as it is perfect” that can be found in the *Sonnets* (Hyde 1948: 236), and therefore could not be seen as wrong or criminal. The trials ended with Wilde being sentenced to two years of hard labour, and literary criticism of the *Sonnets* in the following decades carefully centred on the image of the Dark Lady, suggesting that many readers feared the same persecution that Wilde had faced (Duncan-Jones 1997: 80). The anglophone reception of the *Sonnets* in the 20th century mirrors the large-scale social changes that were taking place in the 19th century in Western countries as the non-heterosexual population gradually gained visibility with the gay rights liberation movement in the 1970s, followed by a wave of homophobia in the 1980s. C. S. Lewis in his lectures on English literature admits that Shakespeare’s language is “too lover-like for that of an ordinary friendship” (Lewis 1954: 503), while W. H.

Auden in the 1964 Signet Classic edition assures the reader that “men and women whose sexual tastes are perfectly normal” never found any issues in the collection (Auden 1964: xxix). Eric Partridge, the author of a glossary of Shakespearean slang *Shakespeare’s Bawdy* from 1968 considers the possibility of Shakespeare being homosexual “‘trivial’: at worst, ‘the case is not proven’; at best – and in strict accordance with the so-called evidence, as I see it – it is ludicrous” (1968: 13). Partridge’s words perhaps best illustrate the anxiety some readers must have felt at the prospect of Shakespeare being associated with the newly visible non-heterosexual population, particularly if we consider that his words were published a mere year after the partial decriminalisation of homosexuality in England and Wales. The first open claim of such an association is usually ascribed to Joseph Pequigney’s *Such Is My Love*, where he boldly writes that “Shakespeare produced not only extraordinary amatory verse but the grand masterpiece of homoerotic poetry” (1985: 1). The question of the male beloved naturally accompanied the *Sonnets* into the new century, and nearly all critical commentaries and edited versions of the *Sonnets* that I have collected while working on this book address ‘the controversy’ in some capacity. Their statements range from the Folger Library edition’s careful statement that “there is simply too little information about Shakespeare’s life on which to build arguments about his personal relationships or their intensity” (Mowat and Werstine 2004: 357), to the Scottish poet Don Paterson’s blunt “‘was Shakespeare gay?’ [the question] is so stupid as to be barely worth answering, but for the record: of *course* he was” (Paterson 2010: xiii, emphasis in original).

These four centuries of controversy surrounding the possible inspiration for the *Sonnets* and their implications on Shakespeare’s sexual or romantic preferences are, of course, further complicated by the fact that any retrospective assignment of present-day categories such as gay or straight on historical figures is decidedly presentist. At the same time, attempts to reconstruct exactly how Shakespeare’s contemporaries understood male love and desire are equally challenging. The first English law that made male same-sex intercourse into a crime punishable by hanging was Henry VIII’s Parliamentary Statute from 1533 to 1534, where Chapter 6 directly mentions “the detestable and abominable vice of buggery committed with mankind or beast” (cited in Borris 2004: 87). Smith associates the change with Henry VIII’s split from the Roman Catholic Church, as the law transformed an originally religious offence into a political one and gave the newly Protestant monarch greater control over his subjects’ procreative capacity (1991: 45). However, despite the fact that sodomy was now a capital offence in England and Wales, contemporary lawsuits suggest that the rate of conviction for sodomy was significantly lower than for other crimes in the same category (like bestiality), and that those crimes that led to execution either included violence or underage partners (Smith 1991: 49). Furthermore, there were cases where a person was convicted of sodomy but avoided punishment or any public condemnation. Elizabeth Pittenger studied the case of Nicholas Udall, a schoolmaster in Eton, who confessed to the Privy

Council to committing buggery with one of his students in 1541 (Pittenger 1994: 164), and then continued to lead a successful teaching career in the decades following the offence. The search for answers in archival documents is further obscured by the lack of clarity with which the largely interchangeable terms *buggery* and *sodomy* were used in legislation as well as in everyday discourse. Alan Bray identifies uses of sodomy within English law that relate to what we currently define as adultery, bestiality, incest, rape, and sexual intercourse with underaged persons (1995: 14). Another problem Bray detects is the usage of the term in supernatural context, where sodomy appears referenced alongside basilisks, werewolves, and sorcerers, limiting the credibility of such an expression (19). A third issue is the frequent usage of the word “sodomite” as an expletive for ‘papists’, meaning Catholics and particularly Jesuits (20).

The often-contradictory legal limitations to same-sex acts are further complicated by the homosocial structures underpinning the strongly patriarchal Renaissance society, creating the same dichotomy between same-sex intercourse and same-sex bonding as was explored in the previous chapter. Bray (1990: 4) identifies a number of sources that describe various public forms of male intimacy including kisses and embraces as well as bed sharing; we are reminded of this practice in Shakespeare’s *Othello* in Iago’s line “I lay with Cassio lately” (1958: 999, 3.3: 410). Bray further demonstrates that these displays of affection were seen as not only acceptable but desirable methods of maintaining social relationships between men (1990: 3–4), analogous with the way the socialist system supported male bonding and placed a particular emphasis on masculine friendships in Czechoslovakia. Perhaps the best example of this discrepancy between the official condemnation of sodomy and endorsed male intimacy is James VI of Scotland and I of England, who succeeded Elizabeth I on the English throne in 1603 and was the ruling monarch at the time of the *Sonnets*’ publication. In *Basilikon Doron* (1599), a treatise on kingship originally written as a letter for his son Henry, James warns about “some horrible crimes that you are bound in conscience never to forgive: such as witchcraft, wilful murder, incest [...], sodomy, poisoning, and false coin” (McIlwain 1918: 20, transcribed to present-day spelling), equating sodomy with the highest criminal offences with the exception of treason. At the same time, James I’s personal life contained several intimate relationships with his male courtiers, in particular George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham. The letters exchanged with Buckingham contain lines such as “I desire only to live in this world for your sake, and that I had rather live banished in any part of the earth with you than live a sorrowful widow’s life without you [...] my sweet child and wife” (Loughlin 2014: 105). It is of course impossible to ascertain whether James and Buckingham were involved in a sexual or romantic relationship as understood from our present-day perspective; however, this example demonstrates that the blurred definition of the term sodomy, the public reluctance to delineate its boundaries, and the widely endorsed practice of close male friendships could well allow for such a relationship to exist, undetected under the terms of the

official penal code. These examples also demonstrate that it is unhelpful to use terms such as *homosexual* or *heterosexual* in the case of Shakespeare or anyone else living prior to the 20th century, but at the same time that this lack of identity-based conceptualisation did not automatically translate into an absence of same-sex desire. As the cultural theorist Alan Sinfield succinctly sums up, “the early-modern organization of sex and gender boundaries, simply, was different from ours. And therefore Shakespeare couldn’t have been gay. However, that need not stem the panic, because, by the same token, he couldn’t have been straight either” (2005: 19).

Barring highly unlikely possibilities, such as a discovery of Shakespeare’s personal journal, it will never be possible to determine the *Sonnets*’ ‘true’ meaning or their relationship vis-à-vis the author with any certainty. What this overview aimed to demonstrate is that the potential for a queer reading is difficult to overlook, as it has been prominent enough to puzzle, dismay, and excite readers from the moment of the collection’s publication. The second part of this chapter will introduce the *Sonnets* in the two target cultures under examination and consider how the changing socio-political regimes could react to this contentious element of the collection.

### **The Sonnets in Czechoslovakia**

The 15 Czech and Slovak translations of Shakespeare’s *Sonnets* that will be introduced in this chapter are the works of different translators and translation teams, but they are united by one common feature; they contain all 154 poems from the original volume. The reason for limiting the corpus to only those translations that are complete is related to the nature of the collection itself. As was described in the previous section, the *Sonnets* can be read as a continuous narrative, but each of the poems also represents a miniature story arc on its own. For this reason, individual poems frequently appear in anthologies of poetry or are simply used as romantic epigrams in a wide variety of contexts. While of course there is no reason to oppose this practice – indeed, as was mentioned, the *Sonnets* themselves were circulated individually before their publication – this decontextualisation of the poems does diminish some of the potential to read them as a collection of amorous poetry written by a man for another man. It is no surprise that the poems most frequently anthologised are either gender neutral or explicitly mention a female recipient, and their inclusion alongside other famous poems written by a male author for a female beloved helps to frame the poems in an implied heteronormative narrative. The best example of this is perhaps Sonnet 116, “the poem of ten thousand weddings” (Smith 2007: 4), which speaks about the “marriage of true minds” (l.1) so strong that it survives all tempests and ravages of time. For this reason, the sonnet is a popular element of (usually heterosexual) marriage vows, which is made easier by the absence of gendered pronouns or gendered markers. However, when read as part of the original collection, the sonnet is positioned between numbers 108 that address the recipient as “sweet boy”, and number

126 with “my lovely boy”, making it potentially part of this male-addressed narrative. In order to prevent possible issues caused by this changing context, the corpus of this study excludes both partial translations and individual sonnets published in anthologies. This results in 15<sup>4</sup> different versions published in Czechoslovakia and, later, in the Czech Republic and Slovakia between the years 1923 and 2010. The following section will briefly characterise each of these translations and situate them into their relevant historical context. The overview mentions some of the critical commentaries on the individual versions in those cases when they help to explain their relative popularity (or the lack thereof); however, I do not pass any personal judgements on the relative qualities of the individual poems. Such an evaluation lies outside of the focus of this book as well as my own poetic abilities and has in part already been conducted in studies by Stanislav Rubáš (2000, 2017).

### The First Full Translation

Although the first Czech and Slovak translations of Shakespeare’s plays date back to the 18th century (Vilikovský 2014: 47–8; Drábek 2012: 78) and several Romantic poets translated individual sonnets into both languages, the collection was translated into Czech for the first time in 1923 by the poet and translator Antonín Klášterský. While it is rightfully celebrated as the first full translation of the *Sonnets*, as well as the only one produced in the pre-socialist era, critics rarely praise the poetic qualities of this version. For many, the translations are too indebted to the romantic tradition of the late 19th century and lack both the finesse and originality of the later translations (Uličný 2015: 180). An interesting point from the perspective of this work is the translator’s introduction. After a brief description of the major themes of the *Sonnets*, the translator addresses the same-sex affection in the poems as follows:

If anyone in our sober and suspicious age should wonder about the ecstatic devotion of the poet for the [male] friend, I recommend [him] to become acquainted with the letters and verses written to a friend by another genius, Michel Angelo.

(Klášterský 1923: x)

Michelangelo’s letters and sonnets which predate Shakespeare’s collection by half a century express ardent affection particularly for his male friend Tommaso dei Cavalieri, but, like Shakespeare’s *Sonnets*, are written in a formal language that makes it difficult to read them as a direct proof of a same-sex relationship (Hughes 1997: 173). It is unclear whether Klášterský’s comment was

<sup>4</sup> This work also excludes a Czech translation by František Nevrla produced in the late 1950s. While Nevrla translated the full collection, the immense popularity of the translation by Jan Vladislav in this era dissuaded him from publishing it, and the translation never went into print (Drábek 2012: 217–20).

intended to reassure the reader that, like Michelangelo's, Shakespeare's affections were devoid of carnal desires, or whether he sought to obliquely indicate that there cannot be anything wrong with two men loving each other in any sense of the word, if these geniuses of the past did so, too.

The *Sonnets* were published during an era of booming book production, as the newly established Czechoslovak Republic was keen to both strengthen its own cultural consciousness and create connections with its European neighbours. This led to a heightened interest in translations that were seen as crucial in these dialogues with other cultures, and the 1930s witnessed the publication of a number of major classics from English, French, American, German, and Russian literature (Hrala 2002: 63–64). Book production flourished and a particularly popular method of publishing was through small, privately owned printing presses, which was also the case with the first *Sonnets* collection. They were printed by Jaroslav Šnajder, who kept a printing press in his family home in the Czech city of Kladno, and who funded his more niche literary choices by printing popular leaflets and advertisements (Vykouk 2003). While Klášterský's translation is the only version of the *Sonnets* published during the interwar period, it is an important representative of the privately owned and personally curated system of book production which disappeared completely after the war, and only reappeared with *Sonnets* published in the 21st century.

### **The Six Socialist Sonnets**

Although it is tempting to see the four decades of communist rule in Czechoslovakia as one homogeneous 'dark ages' period, the country went through a number of dramatic changes that alternated between different levels and forms of state control. In necessarily simplified terms, it is useful to divide the history of socialist Czechoslovakia into two periods, separated by the year 1968. The first two decades after the communist coup d'état in February 1948 were known as the Stalinist period, and were marked by a swift implementation of communist economic practices and the enforcement of Marxism-Leninism as the leading ideological principle enshrined in the Czechoslovak constitution. It was also the period of the harshest and most open persecution of those who were deemed enemies of the regime, and the period when censorship was not only visible but openly presented as a positive force that would remove the last vestiges of capitalist thinking from the population. The situation improved only gradually in the years after Stalin's death in 1953 with Nikita Khrushchev's rise to power. Khrushchev's reforms and the subsequent 'thawing' of the Soviet stranglehold on Czechoslovak politics slowly culminated in what became known as the Prague Spring of 1968. Under the leadership of the newly elected First Secretary of the Communist Party, Alexander Dubček, Czechoslovakia embarked on a programme of reform under the slogan "socialism with a human face", and the following months brought unprecedented freedoms to all areas of the society including the loosening of censorial restrictions that applied to book and film production. These efforts

were terminated on the 21st of August the same year, when Czechoslovak citizens awoke to find the country occupied by tanks of the Warsaw Pact. These were sent by the Soviet Union as a clear signal to cease all attempts at liberalisation. The following two decades became known as the Normalisation era, and they brought a tightening of the party's hold on public life, widespread purges of politically 'unsuitable' individuals, and further repression aimed to strengthen Soviet control over daily life in Czechoslovakia. While the situation begun to gradually improve in the early 1980s with the *Glasnost* policies of Mikhail Gorbachev, the normalisation policies were only repealed with the Velvet Revolution of 1989.

Six different full versions of the *Sonnets* were published during the socialist regime, a remarkable number in just four decades and in a country that imposed strict limitations over its book production. The first translation of the *Sonnets* by Jan Vladislav appeared seven years after the communist coup in 1955 and was published by the largest Czechoslovak publishing house SNKLHU.<sup>5</sup> While Vladislav was a competent author and poet himself, his opinions were deemed too radical by the communist government and he turned to the more 'acceptable' work of a translator instead. This was a common practice within the Soviet Bloc of influence and affected celebrated Russian authors such as Boris Pasternak and Anna Akhmatova (Baer 2011: 27), who were banned from publishing original work and likewise turned to translations instead. Although some critics have reservations over Vladislav's changes to the metric structure of the poems, his translation was met with an extraordinarily good response from the public, and they were reprinted by different publishing houses in 1958, 1969, and most recently in 2017, testifying to his version's timeless appeal. His translation became the most recognisable and widely read version of the *Sonnets* during the socialist era, and later translators mention its dominant position in the general consciousness of Czechoslovak readers (Uličný 2015: 183) as well as its influence on their own work (Hodek 1995: 179).

This second Czech version of the *Sonnets* was followed by the first complete Slovak translation in 1958, which was the work of the translator Stanislav Blaho. The translation is often criticised for a lack of poetic finesse and occasional awkward phrasing (Vilikovský 2014: 76) but as the first complete translation of the *Sonnets* into Slovak remains a significant endeavour within the country's literary tradition. The next version of the *Sonnets* published in 1964 brings together versions from two translators. The impetus was the discovery of handwritten notebooks belonging to the celebrated Czech romantic poet Jaroslav Vrchlický, more than 40 years after his death. These notebooks contained what was obviously Vrchlický's attempt to translate the entire collection, and despite the fact that the notebooks did not contain all 154 sonnets,

5 Státní nakladatelství krásné literatury, hudby a umění [State publishing house of *belles-lettres*, music, and art], renamed to SNKLU in 1961 and to Odeon after the Velvet Revolution, as it is known to this day.

Vrchlický's fame ensured that they went into print.<sup>6</sup> The missing sonnets 108–29 and 131–40 were supplied from Klášterský's 1923 translation, and they were printed together as part of a six-volume series of Shakespeare's complete works.

No further translations of the *Sonnets* appeared in the following 12 years between 1964 and 1976, which can be at least partly ascribed to the events of the Prague Spring in 1968 and the ensuing normalisation. The next version from 1976 is another co-translated piece; however, unlike the Vrchlický–Klášterský translation which was put together after both translators had died, this was a collaborative effort. At the core of this collection were 35 sonnets translated by Erik Adolf Saudek, a prolific scholar whose attempt to translate Shakespeare's complete works was cut short by his sudden death in 1963. The Czech publishing house Československý spisovatel invited six translators – Břetislav Hodek, Zdeněk Hron, František Hrubín, Pavel Šrut, Miloslav Uličný, and Jarmila Urbánková – to divide the rest of the collection amongst themselves in order to complete the translation. Four of these translators built on these partial translations and used them as a foundation for their own full versions of the *Sonnets* published later in their career.

In the early 1980s, the publishing house Lyra Pragensis commissioned three translators to produce their own full versions of the *Sonnets* with the aim of publishing them as a small series, perhaps partly to emphasise the variations in the individual translations. The Lyra Pragensis *Sonnets* were all printed in pocket-sized leather-bound editions that were popular amongst poetry lovers and affectionately known as *kolibříky* [hummingbirds]. Only the first of these hummingbird *Sonnets* was published during the socialist era in 1986 and was the work of the Czech translator and diplomat Zdeněk Hron. This version builds on the 30 sonnets he had already translated for the 1976 version without any discernible changes and was later reprinted by BB Art in a regular format in 2001.

The final *Sonnets* collection printed before the regime change, and the second Slovak translation, was printed by the publishing house Slovenský spisovateľ. The then editor-in-chief (and later also translator of the *Sonnets* himself), Ľubomír Feldek, received a manuscript in the post containing a full translation of the *Sonnets* completed by an English teacher named Anna Sedlačková, who had translated them on her own initiative (Feldek 2006: 195). Her version was added to the publishing plan for 1987, and later reprinted by Tatran in 1989 as part of *Shakespeare's Collected Works*, and as a standalone book by the publishing house Nestor in 1998.

These six translations of the *Sonnets* represent a number of different approaches to publishing – from invitations issued by the publishing houses, to

<sup>6</sup> Vrchlický's poems were published in their partial form by the publishing house Československý spisovatel (1954), but as this version is incomplete as well as identical to the 1964 version, it does not feature in the present analysis.

the initiative of individual translators, and to the recycling of older translations. They also appear in different formats and for varied readerships, from the hummingbirds that were small enough to fit into the poetry lover's pocket, to the six tomes of the *Complete Works of Shakespeare* from 1964, clearly intended to be a reference work. What unites them is that they were all products of the complicated and state-controlled publishing mechanism of socialist Czechoslovakia, and the following section will map some of the structures underpinning this system.

### **Book Production in Socialist Czechoslovakia**

The establishment of socialism as the leading economic principle of Czechoslovakia after the coup in February 1948 had immediate and lasting effects on all aspects of book production and distribution, beginning with the process of collectivisation and the related dissolution of private property. According to Marxist-Leninist principles, personal ownership was a fundamentally capitalist phenomenon that supported production for purely commercial reasons while creating wealth inequality, and which should therefore not exist in a communist society. This resulted in large-scale expropriation reforms that affected all areas of production, including the book industry. Instead of the formerly flourishing system of small book presses and private publishers, all books were now produced in a few state-owned and party-controlled publishing houses, resulting in the government's complete monopoly over official book production (Hrala 2002: 71). Collectivisation also used five-year planning policies to distribute the wealth of the country across industries in order to achieve equality between them. The state-assigned budget limited all resources that the publishing houses could work with, resulting in phenomena such as a cap on the amount of paper that could be used within a given fiscal period (Fialová in Rubáš, 2012: 80). Another issue that had a particular impact on translated literature was the closure of national borders and the ensuing limited possibilities for trade with countries on the other side of the Iron Curtain. As any book purchases outside the Soviet Bloc were only possible with foreign currency which had to be allocated by the state, the government had, at least in theory, full control over all foreign literature available to Czechoslovak readers.<sup>7</sup> Further changes and limitations followed the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 and the subsequent Normalisation period. Many of the most prolific translators and editors found themselves on the lists of unwanted individuals as their opinions were judged to be insufficiently compliant with the regime, and this meant that their names could not appear in print anymore (Rubáš 2012: 78, 337). This resulted in a widespread practice of so-called 'covering up' [*pokryvání*], where a politically approved translator lent their name to a

<sup>7</sup> This excludes the lively culture of *samizdat* publications, which was a clandestine system for the printing and circulation of books forbidden by the regime.

translation carried out by one of their blacklisted colleagues (*ibid.*, 78, 341, and 351).<sup>8</sup> The level of control over book production was likewise strengthened during the Normalisation period, but instead of the previous regulations and overt censorship, increasingly covert methods were used to ensure that published works complied with the regime's aims. Rather than relying on censors to remove unsuitable elements from books, translators were expected to self-censor before their work even reached the editing stage, or otherwise risk their work not being published at all. This general reluctance to issue written directives or instructions while relying on unspoken rules is a common feature of most countries under Soviet influence and stands in contrast to other totalitarian governments such as Franco's Spain or *Estado Novo* Portugal that kept meticulous archival documentation about all decisions related to book production (Gombár 2018: 146). Needless to say, this also makes research into the publishing industry in Czechoslovakia considerably more difficult, as it relies in most cases on oral histories, such as a series of interviews with translators conducted by Rubáš (2012).

The reason why book production was such a tightly controlled and restricted area within socialist Czechoslovakia was because books were considered an important tool in the restructuring of the society. Socialism was supposed to be a transitory period during which the population would evolve from the original capitalist thinking towards the final stage of the process, a communist society. Literature was a key component in this large-scale change, which is why it was so important to control its production. The imposed policies meant that the state could control individual titles through the whole process of translation, editing, and distribution, with repeated checkpoints to ensure that the final product was aligned with Marxist-Leninist principles. Each book was first examined for suitability, often by an externally appointed and state-approved committee (Kondrysová in Rubáš 2012: 196). Once approved, the book was assigned to a translator, usually working on what we would now call a freelance contract. The finished book was read and revised several times by the editor responsible for the corresponding language group, a process which frequently involved comparing the source text and target text sentence after sentence and was followed by a detailed discussion with the translator about individual linguistic choices (Fialová in Rubáš 2012: 79). Lastly, all publishing plans had to be defended by the editor-in-chief personally in front of a party-approved committee at the Ministry of Culture (*ibid.*). Eva Kondrysová mentions that the members of these committees “were people who had no fondness for literature and saw books as a burden. Above all, they perceived

8 The Czech Literary Translators' Guild published a list of these 'covered up' translations under the name *Zamlčování překladatelé* [Silenced Translators], featuring more than six hundred such titles (Rachůnková 1992). As the list was put together retrospectively after the Velvet Revolution and at a time when many of the translators and editors were not alive anymore, it is likely that the real number of these falsely attributed translations was much higher.

them as potential for future trouble, and they would have been the happiest if no books had been published at all” (Rubáš 2012: 197).

At the same time however, it would be deceptive to represent the socialist publishing industry as a black and white struggle between the ‘good’ publishers and translators and the ‘evil’ government-approved censors. Many party members used their political influence to help translators who found themselves blacklisted to find alternative employment, while others turned a blind eye to the very transgressions they were supposed to prevent. Kondrysová herself remembers an instance when an editor-in-chief returned her dispatch note with the words “management error”, alerting her to the fact that she forgot to remove the name of a blacklisted translator whose work was covered by a different person, and giving her a chance to fix her mistake before the dispatch was sent to higher authorities (Rubáš 2012: 204). Anecdotes like this suggest that the censors were in many cases aware of the various ways in which the official regulations were being bypassed, and that the real picture of the power structures underpinning book production were complicated and depended on personal allegiances as much as on political sympathies.

Similarly, while the communist publishing practices were doubtlessly restrictive and frequently subject to economic and ideological limitations, they also had their positive aspects. Translators mention relatively high pay for literary translations, especially compared to present-day standards, and praise the meticulous care with which books were edited and printed (Rubáš 2012: 50, 79). Others emphasise that translated literature was for many the only form of escapism in a country with closed borders and limited travel opportunities, and that books were as a consequence valued in ways that are difficult to fully comprehend in retrospect (*ibid.*, 256). While the queues in front of shops are a well-known cliché about the regime, many remember “people waiting in a line half a street long every Thursday, knowing it was the day when new books were added to bookshop shelves” (Rubáš 2012: 17). Without the commercial pressures of a free market and with a print budget pre-defined by the state, publishing houses could choose books without taking into account their mass appeal or sales figures. Those books that were deemed appropriate for a wider audience were also sold at truly accessible prices suitable for nearly any budget; a paperback reprint of Vladislav’s translation of the *Sonnets* from 1956 that I own shows the price tag of 5.86 Czechoslovak Crowns, at a time when a loaf of bread had cost 2.60 Crowns (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic 2011). Some of the popular books were also printed in numbers that appear staggering by current standards. Another copy of Vladislav’s *Sonnets* from 1970 lists a print run of 170,000 copies, and this was already the third re-edition of the original 1955 translation. Of course, these numbers need to be seen within the limitations of the Czechoslovak book market; the regime opposed ‘cheap’ commercial literature, such as romance novels or thrillers, ‘decadent writing’ that included fantasy fiction, magical realism, and anything deemed unrealistic, as well as many authors who were too ‘bourgeois’ to support the communist cause. With such limited choices on the bookshelves, it is

unsurprising that the highly accessible *Sonnets* were a collection that “practically every reader of poetry was familiar with” (Rubáš 2012: 17).

Given that Shakespeare’s work is synonymous with England and as such represented the Western capitalist side of Europe, it might be surprising to see his work enjoying such popularity in socialist Czechoslovakia. The reason for this can be found in the fact that Shakespeare’s work was considered a classic of world literature, and what is more, a classic that fit into the ideological frameworks of the regime. According to Marxist-Leninist principles, one of the highest priorities of a communist society was to ensure that the working class had access to all the treasures of world literature that were hitherto out of their reach due to inequalities of wealth and education (Baer 2011: 27). This led to a high number of these classics being included in the publishing plans, or at least those that were seen as supporting the communist cause. One of the most popular genres was realism, and authors such as Charles Dickens or Victor Hugo were widely promoted for their sympathetic and authentic descriptions of the plight of the working class. These authors were included in a reimagination of history which inevitably progressed towards a completely classless society, and the authors were hailed as “prophets of socialism” (Baer 2011: 28). Shakespeare, the son of a glovemaking from a small English town who was born with neither rank nor title and whose plays were performed for everyone from London’s poorest to the queen of England, was easily included in this narrative, and contemporary literary criticism, as well as the paratextual material surrounding his works, place a great emphasis on his humble, working-class beginnings. However, although these classics were strongly promoted and widely distributed, they were not exempt from occasional textual alterations that ensured their content did not violate the country’s ideological principles. In order to understand which elements of Shakespeare’s works were the most likely targets of these alterations, we need to take a closer look at the structures and methods of the country’s censorship.

### **Socialist Censorship**

As was the case in the workings of publishing houses, the lack of official records complicates any retrospective attempts to define what was and what was not subject to censorship in socialist Czechoslovakia. Censorship also rarely functions as an infallible system, and several translators remember lapses in the supposedly watchful eye of the censor as well as frequent contradictions in what was viewed as problematic by the regime (Rubáš 2012: 15). Nonetheless, the interviews with Czechoslovak translators, as well as research done in other countries of the former Eastern Bloc, allow us to create at least a somewhat coherent picture of the type of elements that would be most frequently subject to censorship, and those in turn will help us understand what kind of opposition Shakespeare’s *Sonnets* might have faced prior to their publication.

For the purposes of this book, I am using Francesca Billiani's definition of censorship as "a form of manipulative rewriting of discourses by one agent or structure over another agent or structure, aiming at filtering the stream of information from one source to another" (Billiani 2007: 3). The agent in this case is the Czechoslovak communist government working under the direct supervision of the Soviet Union, and the aim is to filter ideas that were perceived as opposing Marxist-Leninist principles. While all totalitarian governments tend to eliminate ideas that could undermine or question the regime itself, other areas that become subject to censorship can vary depending on the regime's ideological and political alignment. Mussolini's censorship in fascist Italy banned Jewish and Masonic authors as well as books with clear anti-war themes (Fabre 2007), while Spanish publishers under Franco were sometimes forced to remove elements that questioned the leading position of the Catholic Church or represented sexual behaviour outside of the patriarchal, marital, and heterosexual norm (Linder 2004; Merino-Álvarez 2016). An insight into the main areas of censorship in Czechoslovakia is offered by Josef Čermák, another former editor of the publishing house SNKLHU:

In fiction, everything that was an overt criticism of Marxism and Communism, of the socialist camp in general, was taboo. The second barrier was represented by a fairly hypocritical requirement to protect our people from the obscenity and vulgarity that were seen as a dangerous infection from the side of bourgeoisie capitalism.

(Rubáš 2012: 34)

While, as was discussed, Shakespeare's life story and working-class background made him a suitable historical figure in the eyes of the regime, his plays and poetic works are well known for their political themes and overt critique of despotic governments. *Hamlet*, a play rooted in doubts about the legitimacy of the ruling class, was banned in the Soviet Union under Stalin (Holland 1999: 334). After the ban was lifted and the play returned to Soviet theatres in Boris Pasternak's translation, the audience applauded Marcellus' line "Something is rotten in the state of Denmark" because they saw the dysfunctional Danish court as a mirror of their own totalitarian government (ibid.). Martin Hilský, one of the translators of the *Sonnets*, recalls in an interview conducted for this book a similar case he encountered when translating Shakespeare's play *Love's Labour's Lost*. While the play is widely considered apolitical by UK and US scholars, the mention of Muscovites in a masquerade scene in this play was perceived as highly controversial in Czechoslovakia, which was still occupied by troops of the Warsaw pact at the time of his translation in the 1980s.

Although the *Sonnets* are primarily a collection of love poetry, they do contain allusions to political themes that could be easily interpreted as subversive, and these did not escape the notice of the censor. Jiří Josek, another translator of the *Sonnets*, records an instance when a contestant was expelled

from a poetry competition because she chose to recite Shakespeare's Sonnet 66 (1997: 113). This deeply pessimistic poem consists of a scathing enumeration of all the signs of hypocrisy, corruption, inequality, and pretentiousness in the world around the poet, with only the love for the recipient keeping him from committing suicide. The fact that this poem is indeed easily seen as a timeless criticism of injustice is further confirmed by the following quote by Břetislav Hodek, where he refers to Vladislav's 1955 translation:

I have heard from an eyewitness that his wonderful translation of Sonnet 66 was in the fifties carved into the door of a cell in [Prague's] Pankrác prison. Tell me, can you imagine a better proof of Shakespeare's timelessness, or of the importance of poetry?

(Hodek 1995: 179)

Understandably however, the *Sonnets* with their focus on love and desire were much more likely to fall under Čermák's second censorship category which targeted obscene and vulgar themes. Interviews with translators suggest that even simple mentions of birth control and menstruation, such as in David Lodge's novel *The British Museum Is Falling Down* (1965, Czech translation 1974 by Antonín Přidal) caused considerable difficulties before the book's final approval for publication (Rubáš 2012: 206). While the *Sonnets* are rarely what we would consider sexually explicit, they do contain occasional allusions to erotic desire, such as Sonnet 129 which mentions *lust* twice and quite clearly refers to moments of post-coital shame. Depending on the reader's familiarity with Elizabethan slang, the poems are also replete with bawdy wordplay. However, although potentially suggestive elements are easily hidden within the poetic lines, their frequently repeated themes of male love would be much more difficult to conceal.

The question of whether and how same-sex love and desire were censored during the socialist era is difficult to answer, considering the overall taboo imposed over all things related to homosexuality throughout this period and the lack of any archival documents that could help to delineate the official stance of the regime on the subject. However, interviews with translators offer some interesting clues on the matter, such as Jarmila Fialová's recollection of her work on the novel *Le Repos du Guerrier* by Christiane Rochefort (*Odpočinek válečnicka*, 1971). While the novel's main plot concerns a heterosexual relationship, it involves an intimate scene between two women. In Fialová's words:

[Rochefort] talked about lesbians, and not only talked, her characters were like that. And so it really happened that six pages were discarded. [...] In that year 1972 – despite my protests – the director of *Československý spisovatel* ordered the editor-in-chief Dr Ruxová to discard them, at the very last stage of the editing process. And she really had to remove the whole part where two women got along better with each other than with their husbands.

(Rubáš 2012: 80)

Fialová's statement suggests that the communist censorship was not prepared to publish overt mentions of same-sex desire in books and resorted to the frequent method of omission instead. Another interesting example of literature with clear elements of same-sex love under communist censorship is the novel *The Well of Loneliness* by the English author Radclyffe Hall (1928), translated into Czech in 1931 by Vladimír Vondráček and later reprinted shortly after the communist coup d'état in 1948. *The Well of Loneliness*, a coming-of-age story of a woman who falls in love with other women, revolves solely around the protagonist's romantic relationships and questions about her gender identity, and as such cannot be censored by removing a few inconvenient pages. The novel was, somewhat surprisingly, reprinted in 1969, but was removed from bookstores almost immediately after its publication. The most likely explanation for this was that an editorial team decided to use the freedom of the Prague Spring period to add this title to their publication plan, and the problematic nature of the book was only grasped by the authorities once it entered the book market (Sokolová 2015: 266; see also Spišiaková 2020). This temporary oversight on the part of the communist censor confirms again that the structural policies applied to book production were not infallible, but also that books such as *The Well of Loneliness*, seeking sympathy of the heterosexual reader with the suffering of those whose love is not approved by society, were definitely not accepted by the regime. Sokolová, who conducted interviews about the lives of lesbian women during the communist regime, confirms that *The Well of Loneliness* was for most of her interviewees the only fictional book in circulation that spoke openly about same-sex desire (2015: 266–67), further contributing to the gap in general knowledge about the subject outside of the medical and sexological profession. Given this clearly negative stance towards literature with same-sex elements indicated by these examples, it would be reasonable to expect that the *Sonnets* with their strong central motive of male same-sex love would also be considered objectionable by the regime, even considering how reluctant many censors would be to alter Shakespeare's work in general. Before delving into the possible reasons for why this was not the case, let us first introduce the remaining eight translations of the *Sonnets* and the very different socio-political landscape into which they were published after the regime change in 1989.

### **Velvet Revolution, Divided Nations, and Eight More Sonnets**

As with the changes to the lives of the non-heterosexual population introduced in the previous chapter, the events of November 1989 that led to the demise of the Communist Party and the first democratic elections in Czechoslovakia's post-war history had immediate and lasting effects on the publishing industry in both countries. The two key changes that the Velvet Revolution brought were the shift from totalitarianism to democracy and from socialism to capitalism, and both of these changes fundamentally altered the way books were produced.

The new government constitutionalised freedom of speech and freedom of the press, which meant that since 1990, there are, at least in theory, no ideological constraints on the contents of publishing. The opening of the borders and the possibility to travel, to buy foreign currency, and to liaise with publishing houses in formerly inaccessible Western countries also meant a previously unimaginable broadening of possibilities for translating foreign books, as well as access to research and information that were virtually unknown before 1989. Freedom to conduct business allowed for the establishment of countless new privately owned publishing houses, many of which specialise in particular genres and audiences. The new regime also brought vast changes to the types of books published; the highly competitive free market economy limits many publishing choices to books that are commercially viable, and classics now represent a very small fraction of book production (Hrala 2002: 75). The open borders together with access to technology in the recent decades also changed the languages in which books are consumed. The generations born after 1989 who were able to learn English at school (instead of Russian like their parents), and whose language skills improve with access to internet and anglophone media, frequently choose to read books in English, bypassing the process of translation altogether. The increasingly digitalised world also changed the traditional model of book production, and all of these changes are reflected in the *Sonnets* published after 1989.

The first post-Velvet revolution translation, as well as the last one before Czechoslovakia's devolution, was the work of the Czech right-wing politician and dentist Miroslav Macek. It was published in 1992 as the second volume in the *Lyra Pragensis* hummingbird series, and later republished in 2006 and 2008. The third and final hummingbird volume was published in 1995 and was the work of Břetislav Hodek, a leading Czech authority on Shakespeare's works and a prolific translator from English. Hodek was one of the translators invited to create the collaborative *Sonnets* volume of 1976, and this 1995 translation is a finalised version of the collection. The year 1997 saw the publication of two further translations of the *Sonnets*. The first was another finalised version of the 1976 partial translation, this time from one of the only two female translators of the *Sonnets*, the Czech poet and translator Jarmila Urbánková. The second 1997 translation was the work of Martin Hilský, Professor of English Literature at Charles University in Prague. Throughout his long and prolific career, Hilský translated the whole corpus of Shakespearean works into Czech and received numerous awards, including an Order of the British Empire. His *Sonnets* were reprinted several times including versions from different publishing houses in 2003, 2004, and 2009. The 2004 version for the publishing house Atlantis counts over 400 pages and provides detailed notes on each of the sonnets in both English and Czech, together with several essays on Shakespeare's life and work. If the socialist period was dominated by Vladislav's *Sonnets*, the same can be said about Hilský's version in the post-socialist era; as a well-known Shakespearean expert he regularly appears in media and literary events, and his name is the one most commonly associated with Czech Shakespeare translations amongst the general public.

While the Slovak Shakespearean tradition is considerably smaller than the Czech one, it likewise has its major figures similar to Hilský and Vladislav. One of the most popular contemporary poets, authors, and playwrights Ľubomír Feldek is translating Shakespeare's complete works, which started with his version of the *Sonnets* in 2001. Reprinted in 2006, Feldek's *Sonnets* are the most popular and readily available version in Slovak bookstores at the time of writing. The last translation based on the collaborative work from 1976 is the work of the translator and former lecturer at Charles University Miloslav Uličný, published for the first time in 2005. Interestingly, his later reprint of this collection from 2015 is titled *Edward de Vere or William Shakespeare: Sonnets* and is published "to mark the 465 years since the birth of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, the likely author of the sonnets" (2015: 220). This version subscribes to the popular theory that the *Sonnets* were written by the Elizabethan nobleman Edward de Vere, and that William Shakespeare was the poems' recipient.

While Czech Shakespearean studies were dominated in the late 1990s and early 2000s by Hilský's complete translations of his work, his supremacy in this field has been contested in the last two decades by the former lecturer in Translation Studies at Charles University in Prague, Jiří Josek. Like Hilský, Josek undertook the colossal task of translating the complete Shakespearean corpus, and he published all of these in bilingual editions with his own publishing house named Romeo. His version of the *Sonnets* came out in 2008. The last complete Czech translation of Shakespeare's *Sonnets* as of time of writing appeared in 2010 through Amazon's self-publishing platform CreateSpace. It is the work of Václav Pinkava, son of the famous Czech author and poet Jan Křesadlo who emigrated to the UK after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. His son Václav grew up in England but after graduating from Oxford University returned to live in the Czech Republic, where he currently works as a translator.

While many of the translations published after the Velvet Revolution are in some ways indebted to previous generations, both in the way they continue earlier publishing plans and in their reuse of existing translations from the 1976 collection, they also clearly reflect the new approach to publishing of the post-revolutionary era. With the exception of the Lyra Pragensis translations, all eight versions of the collection were overseen by different publishing houses, including one owned by the translator himself and one self-published translation; this stands in contrast with the pre-revolutionary translations which were all first published in one of the three largest publishing houses (SNKLHU, Československý spisovatel, Slovenský spisovateľ). Table 2.1 provides an overview of all 15 versions of the *Sonnets* including reprints in different publishing houses, as well as the languages into which they were translated.

Given the population of the two countries – roughly 10 million Czechs and 5 million Slovaks in the 21st century – the 15 different versions of the *Sonnets* in less than a century can appear almost disproportionately high, especially as some of them were published in very quick succession. This can be partly

Table 2.1 Fifteen Full Translations of Shakespeare's Sonnets into Slovak and Czech

<i>Translators</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Publisher</i>	<i>Language</i>
Antonín Klášterský	1923	Jaroslav Šnajdr	Czech
Jan Vladislav	1955	Státní nakladatelství krásné literatury, hudby a umění	Czech
	1958	Mladá Fronta	
	1969	Československý spisovatel	
	2017	Garamond	
Stanislav Blaho	1958	Slovenský spisovateľ	Slovak
Jaroslav Vrchlický and Antonín Klášterský	1964	Státní nakladatelství krásné literatury a umění	Czech
Břetislav Hodek, Zdeněk Hron, František Hrubín, Erik Adolf Saudek, Pavel Šrut, Miloslav Uličný, and Jarmila Urbánková	1976	Československý spisovatel	Czech
Zdeněk Hron	1986	Lyra Pragensis	Czech
	2001	BB art	
Anna Sedláčková	1987	Slovenský spisovateľ	Slovak
	1989	Tatran	
	1998	Nestor	
Miroslav Macek	1992	Lyra Pragensis	Czech
	2006	Self-published	
	2008	XYZ	
Břetislav Hodek	1995	Lyra Pragensis	Czech
Jarmila Urbánková	1997	Arca JiMfa	Czech
Martin Hilský	1997	Torst	Czech
	2003	Vyšehrad	
	2004	Atlantis	
	2009	Evropský literární klub	
Ľubomír Feldek	2001	Petrus	Slovak
	2006	Ikar	
Miloslav Uličný	2005	Mladá Fronta	Czech
	2015	Nová Vlna	
Jiří Josek	2008	Romeo	Czech
Václav Z. J. Pinkava	2010	CreateSpace	Czech

ascribed to the high cultural status the *Sonnets* occupy within the two countries' consciousness as well as, paradoxically, to the difficulties associated with such a translation. Several translators mention in their foreword or afterword that the *Sonnets* were a personal challenge that they wanted to undertake as part of their professional careers or as amateur translators, and the collection's compact form together with the timelessness of its central themes make it into an appealing test of translation abilities. Above all however, the *Sonnets'* frequent retranslations are part of the lasting popularity of the author in both countries,

which started with the first translations of his plays in the 18th century and has not in any way diminished under the changing political regimes until the present day. Perhaps the best example of this lasting fondness Czechs and Slovaks hold for the bard is the tradition of Shakespearean Summer Festivals [*Letní shakespearovské slavnosti/ Letné Shakespearovské slávnosti*], which run annually for three months in both capital cities of Prague and Bratislava to the present day.

### 3 The Master Mistress of My Passion

With the *Sonnets* and their translations now situated in their spatial and temporal contexts, the next two chapters will turn towards the textual analysis of the 15 *Sonnets* translations. In order to observe how the changing conceptualisation of same-sex love and intimacy altered the perception of the *Sonnets*, the analysis will assess how the potential for a queer reading present in the poems changes in the process of translation, and whether the Czech and Slovak versions are more or less likely to be read as a collection of amorous poetry written by a man for another man. The enquiry is based on a two-step analysis of the source and target texts, and these are complemented by a study of paratextual features of the translations together with the relevant excerpts from the interviews with translators.

In this chapter, the enquiry starts by asking the following questions: To whom are the *Sonnets* dedicated? Is it a male or a female beloved? As was explained in the introduction, one of the aims of this study is to observe the changes in queer translation history over an extended period of time, and the 15 translations representing nearly every decade of the past century are the ideal canvas for such a large-scale observation. However, the size of this corpus also became one of its most challenging aspects, as with 154 poems in each of the 15 collections, it consists of 2,310 individual sonnets. The question was how to approach such a large corpus in a way that would create a manageable representation of the different translation strategies without losing sight of the finer nuances within the individual collections. It quickly became apparent that although the number of poems used in this analysis would be suitable for corpus-based and machine-assisted approaches, this was not an appropriate methodology for the type of enquiry this project hoped to conduct. The decision of whether the individual sonnets can be read as having a male or a female recipient frequently hinges on small semantic choices or contextual clues, and the unpredictability of a translated lyrical medium like poetry renders the use of a set of keywords ineffective. In addition to this, only three versions out of the 15 in the corpus are available in a digital format, and the digitisation of the rest of the corpus, including some of the fragile earliest volumes, was judged unproductive for the present project. To solve this issue and retain an overall

view of the *Sonnets* as a poetry collection, Chapter 3 focuses on a quantifying textual approach which uses the ambiguity of the original source text, as well as the linguistic differences between the source language and the target languages.

As was discussed in Chapter 2, there is a long tradition of reading Shakespeare's *Sonnets* as a tale with two narratives; the so-called Fair Youth sequence (Sonnets 1–126) that is presumed to be dedicated to a male recipient, and the Dark Lady sequence (Sonnets 127–54) written for a female addressee. One of the reasons why this division is so frequently disputed is the fact that very few of the sonnets in either of these sequences actually use gendered nouns or pronouns to confirm the gender identity of the recipient, and this is in part possible because of the grammatical features of the English language. This gender ambiguity becomes significantly more complicated once the *Sonnets* are translated into a gendered language like Czech and Slovak, and the following section will briefly highlight some of the most significant differences between them.

### Gendering Languages

Like the majority of fellow Slavic languages as well as some other Indo-European ones like German or Greek, Czech and Slovak recognise three grammatical genders: masculine, feminine, and neuter. The three genders are assigned to all nouns in these languages, and while some of them can be anticipated to a certain degree (*father* [otec] is masculine and *mother* [matka] is feminine), the great majority of the gender categories do not follow any logical pattern (girl [děvče/dívča] is neuter in both Czech and Slovak), nor do these always align between individual languages (the word *spring* is neuter in Czech [jaro] but feminine in Slovak [jar]). Nouns that define specified human beings have to reflect their gender through a choice between a masculine or a feminine form of these nouns. Therefore, *doktor* (masculine) is a general word for an unspecified medical practitioner, but when referring to one specific doctor, Slovak and Czech both distinguish between the feminine form *doktorka* and the masculine form *doktor*. As fusional languages, both Czech and Slovak use declensions and inflections to reflect the gender of nouns in adjectives, pronouns, numbers, and verbs, most commonly through the use of suffixes. It is also worth noting that the third gender, neuter, does not act as a 'gender neutral' element in the same way as the English pronoun 'they'. Neuter is commonly associated with inanimate objects, small children, or animals, and its use for adult human beings is considered inappropriate, similar to the English third-person pronoun *it*. Needless to say, this also significantly complicates self-expression for non-binary Czech and Slovak speakers, who lack the relatively simple solution of gender-neutral pronouns that are present in English.

These characteristics of the Czech and Slovak languages stand in stark contrast with the attributes of the (present-day) English language. While it would be wrong to characterise it as completely devoid of the category of grammatical

gender, it plays a significantly smaller role in syntax than in the above-mentioned languages. The most common indication of gender in English is the use of third-person pronouns she/he and her/his, aligning with the same pronouns in Czech and Slovak (*ona/on* and *jej/její/jeho*). The majority of English nouns do not belong to any grammatical gender category and most nouns can be used to denote both a male and a female person. For example, *friend* can denote both a female or a male friend and can be associated with both she or he, unlike Czech or Slovak where it is necessary to distinguish between (f.) *přítelkyně/přítelka* or (m.) *přítel/priateľ* with the appropriate declensions and inflections used throughout the rest of the text referring to this friend. The exception from this rule is a small number of English nouns that carry an implied gender and can be used as antecedents to only *he* or *she*. These typically express traditional categories of kinship, heterosexual marriage, occupation, or social ranks (*daughter/son, bride/bridegroom, actress/actor, princess/prince*), or were traditionally used to distinguish between the sex of farm animals (*hen/rooster, ewe/ram*). Together with some rarely used linguistic conventions that associate nations and ships with feminine pronouns, these are the only cases when grammatical gender plays a significant role in the English language.

The challenges that these linguistic differences between gendered and ungendered languages present to the translator have been well documented within the field of Translation Studies. Roman Jakobson in his seminal essay “On Linguistic Aspects of Translation” mentions the confusion of Russian children when faced with a male personification of Death in stories translated from German, due to the fact that Slavic languages gender Death as feminine (1959: 237). Grammatical gender also commonly features in Feminist Translation Studies, with Sherry Simon’s *Gender in Translation – Cultural Identity and the Politics of Transmission* being one of the first comprehensive studies on the two subjects (1996). While Jakobson describes the occasional dissonance between the gendering of nouns in various languages, and Simon points to the highly creative ways with which feminist translators accentuate the sexism inherent in some of the grammatical gendering, Shakespeare’s *Sonnets* represent a wholly different set of issues related to gender. As noted by Somacarrera (2018), poetry translation presents a very particular gendered dilemma, as the poetic form itself is frequently vague, fragmented, and lacking the contextual clues that are typical in prose writing. Shakespeare’s *Sonnets* are largely constructed as a one-sided proclamation of an unspecified *I* for an equally unspecified *you* or *thou*. When translated into a gendered language like Czech or Slovak, this ambiguity compels the translators to make a choice. The first option is to assume the identity of the recipient and effectively ‘gender’ the originally neutral sonnets by using either male or female pronouns and nouns. The second option is to try and retain that original ambiguity of the sonnets by avoiding terms and grammatical forms that would confirm the gender of the recipient, at the cost of introducing further limitations to what is already a highly restrictive form. This is particularly true when discussing sonnet translations into Czech and Slovak. Both languages have a fixed stress on the first

syllable of the prosodic word, which is naturally suited for a trochaic (stressed-unstressed) or dactylic (stressed-unstressed-unstressed) verse. Like the rest of Shakespeare's work, his *Sonnets* are written in an iamb (unstressed-stressed), forcing translators who aim to retain this foot to use creative choices such as starting the verse with a preposition or a pronoun. Nearly all of the translators in this corpus use or attempt to follow the traditional structure of the sonnet and retain the iambic foot throughout their translation, which significantly complicates the translation process. Another limitation is represented by the metre; English has a relatively high proportion of one-syllable words, which allows Shakespeare to develop a complex idea using only the 14 pentametric lines of a traditional sonnet. Czech and Slovak both have a larger proportion of longer words, which makes the task of rendering the original layers of meaning within the same space considerably more challenging. With the exception of three translators (Vladislav, Blaho, and Sedláčková), who use hexameters in their versions, all translators from the corpus adhere to the formal verse structure of the original Shakespearean sonnet. With all of these limitations inherent in the sonnet form, the additional task of avoiding the gendering of the *Sonnets* requires highly creative solutions, but also risks compromising the poems' semantic meaning by moving too far away from the context of the original. It also invites questions of why a translator decides to prioritise this particular feature of the *Sonnets*, while others do not. The following analysis will be focusing on these translation choices by quantifying how many of the translated sonnets were left neutral, and how many were ascribed a male or a female recipient.

### Gendering Sonnets

The first issue that needed to be resolved in order to facilitate this part of the analysis was the question of how to actually gender their recipient. Given the frequently mentioned ambiguity of both the collection and of the English language, particularly in its remote early 17th-century variation, it is unsurprising that there is no general consensus amongst scholars on the number of sonnets clearly dedicated to either a male or a female recipient. William Nelles in his overview of the different theories on the subject cites anything from only 25 clearly gendered sonnets to 121 male-addressed ones (2009: 131). The numbers vary widely depending on whether the poems are approached as a continuous narrative or whether their numbering is perceived as arbitrary. Another question is whether to read the sonnets as having only two recipients – one male and one female – and therefore presume that, because Sonnet 130 mentions a dark-haired mistress, all other allusions to a dark-haired recipient should be read as having this same woman in mind. Terms such as *Muse* are a frequently contested point, as they are grammatically genderless but could be seen as a traditionally female figure. Similarly, allusions to the *sun*, which was a popular wordplay on the word *son*, are by some commentators perceived as a male marker.

While each of these theories has its merits and supporters, their reliance on subjective interpretation as well as their conflicting results make them unsuitable as a basis for the analysis in this project. Instead, I have decided to use an approach that hopes to eliminate the various contested interpretations and provide a transparent tool for a comparison between the source and target texts. The basis of this classification is the following question, which was applied to all sonnets in the corpus: Would this poem be equally logically coherent if the reader imagined either a male or a female recipient? Under ‘recipient’, I mean the object of the writer’s affection, whether this person is addressed directly in second person or referred to indirectly in third person. With this system in mind, the sonnets can be divided into the following four categories:

- Neutral – sonnets that could have either a male or a female recipient (N).
- Male – sonnets that only make sense if the recipient is male (M).
- Female – sonnets that only make sense if the recipient is female (F).
- Various – sonnets that address more than one recipient (V).

This division should be seen as a strictly methodological tool for the analysis that follows and is not an attempt to add to the scholarly discussion on the subject. While acknowledging the necessary subjectivity of this approach, which is unavoidable in texts so widely open to personal interpretation, it was considered to be the most efficient method for juxtaposing the differences in gendered approaches of the translators in the 15 target texts. It is hoped that the following detailed explanation of the classification will provide the needed transparency for this methodological approach and justify some of my choices.

The following sonnets were categorised as having an unquestionably male recipient:

- All sonnets that use male pronouns to denote the addressee/recipient of affection – numbers 19, 39, 63, 67, 68, and 101.
- All sonnets that use male nouns to denote the recipient – numbers 26 (“Lord of my love”), 108 (“sweet boy”), 110 (“god in love” – as the English language offers the term “goddess”) and 126 (“my lovely boy”).
- All sonnets that do not allow for a possible female interpretation on a contextual level. These refer to the following:
  - Heterosexual marriage, as other types are considered unlikely in Elizabethan England. These include Sonnet 9 (several references to a widow left behind by the recipient) and Sonnet 82 (recipient is seen as married to the author’s muse, who is in this case explicitly female).
  - The recipient’s ability to impregnate women, including Sonnet 3 (“For where is she so fair whose unearned womb | Disdains the tillage of thy husbandry?”, 1.5–6) and Sonnet 16 (“And many maiden gardens, yet unset, | With virtuous wish would bear your living flowers” (1.6–7)).
  - Sonnet 20, where the text states that explicitly female nature fell in love with the recipient who was originally female and made him into

a man during the creation process. While the gender of the addressee shifts throughout the poem, the ‘final’ recipient whom the author addresses with a “thou” can by implication only be male.

The female-addressed sonnets were recognised as follows:

- All sonnets that refer to the recipient as *mistress* – numbers 127, 130, 153, and 154 (this excludes Sonnet 20 that begins with the address “master mistress of my passion”, l.2, for reasons stated above).
- All sonnets that use female pronouns to explicitly address the recipient – numbers 138, 139, 141, 145, and 151. This excludes Sonnet 135, where the opening line “Whoever hath her wish, thou hast thy Will” uses a female pronoun but does not refer directly to the person addressed in the sonnet.

The category ‘Various’ includes a small number of sonnets that refer to more than one person as the object of the author’s affection and are usually read as describing a love triangle. Four of these sonnets speak to an ungendered “thou” while referring to a gendered her or him in third person:

Hers by thy beauty (41. l.13)  
thou hast her (42. l.1)  
Of him, myself, and thee (133. l.7)  
thou hast both him and me (134. l.13)

The final sonnet in this group, number 144, is the only one revealing the gender of both recipients: “The better angel is a man right fair, | The worser spirit a woman coloured ill (l.3–4). All remaining sonnets were categorised as ‘Neutral’, and Table 3.1 represents the results of this gendering for the original English source text.

At this point, I would like to stress that this categorisation of the sonnets into male and female was designed to maximise the comparative potential for the specific aims of this book, but the intention is not to present this classification into male and female as the only two possible options. Part of the beauty of the *Sonnets* is their potential for a genderfluid reading, particularly of Sonnets 20 and 53 that seem to emphasise that the intended recipient’s gender goes beyond the narrow categories of male or female. Unfortunately, the current

Table 3.1 Gender Distribution in the Original English *Sonnets* Collection

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Male (M)	15
Female (F)	9
Neutral (N)	125
Various (V)	5

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enquiry does not offer sufficient scope for exploring the possibilities of this reading in the original *Sonnets* or their translations, and hence my choice of the limiting and by no means representative gender binary.

### Gendering Translations

With the methodological approach in place and with the source text categorised, we can now move onto the gendering of the 15 translations of the sonnets that constitute the main corpus for this project. As both the Czech and Slovak languages provide far fewer opportunities for gender ambiguity, this process was more straightforward than the aforementioned gendering of the original collection. The results are summarised in Table 3.2, and a detailed comparison of all 154 sonnets can be found in Appendix A.

### Various Recipients

As explained, this category includes five sonnets that mention two recipients, and that can be read as suggesting a love triangle between the author and these addressees. All translators rendered these five sonnets as referring to two persons, and as such can be largely excluded from a comparison that focuses only on the difference between a male or a female recipient. The only exception is the 1964 version which has seven sonnets that can be considered as belonging to the Various category, due to inconsistencies in the partial translation that was used as a foundation for this edition. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the 1964

Table 3.2 Gender Distribution in the Addressee of the *Sonnets* in Czech and Slovak Translation

Year	Translator/Author	Male	Female	Neutral	Various
1609	William Shakespeare	15	9	125	5
1923	Antonín Klášterský	73	19	57	5
1955	Jan Vladislav	74	19	56	5
1958	Stanislav Blaho	61	19	69	5
1964	Vrchlický-Klásterský	63	17	67	7
1976	Saudek et al.	66	21	62	5
1986	Zdeněk Hron	69	17	63	5
1987	Anna Sedláčková	77	18	54	5
1992	Miroslav Macek	25	49	75	5
1995	Břetislav Hodek	67	19	63	5
1997	Jarmila Urbánková	67	17	65	5
1997	Martin Hilský	55	17	77	5
2001	Lubomír Feldek	60	17	72	5
2005	Miloslav Uličný	67	16	66	5
2008	Jiří Josek	20	17	112	5
2010	Václav Pinkava	20	17	112	5

edition is based partly on translations from the romantic poet Jaroslav Vrchlický (Sonnets 1–107, 130, and 141–154), with the rest supplied from the previously published full translation by Antonín Klášterský. Vrchlický's partial translation was discovered posthumously in several handwritten notebooks in 1921, and while contemporary sources suggest that he planned to publish them within his lifetime (Vrchlický 1954: 149), this was never realised. Vrchlický's fame as one of the greatest names of the Czech Romantic era ensured that his *Sonnets* were published despite the occasional inconsistencies, and as a result the 1964 version contains two versions of Sonnet 34 (one male-addressed, one female-addressed), two versions of Sonnet 87 (both male-addressed), and Sonnet 96 that starts as addressed to a woman and changes to a male recipient in the couplet. Sonnets 34 and 96 were therefore considered as belonging to the Various category, as they too have multiple recipients due to this inconsistency.

### Female-Addressed Sonnets

In the traditional reading of the *Sonnets*, the Dark Lady sequence comprises of the last 28 poems, representing about one-fifth of the entire collection. The detailed analysis of the gender ratio in Appendix A shows that all translators from the corpus have largely adhered to this division, as Vrchlický's translation of Sonnets 98 and 99 can again be easily ascribed to the general inconsistencies of his unfinished translation. The final numbers of the female-addressed sonnets, ranging from Uličný's 16 to the Saudek et al. version with 21, also represent a certain consistency, both in the number of female-addressed sonnets across the versions and when compared to the original number in the source text. While there are only nine clearly female-addressed sonnets in the original collection, the aforementioned differences between the source and target languages compel translators to be more explicit about the gendering of the sonnets, and the fact that there is only a relatively small difference in the final number of female-addressed sonnets across the span of nearly nine decades suggests that this is a natural result of the linguistic disparity.

The only translator who does not seem to follow this approach is Miroslav Macek with his 1992 version of the *Sonnets* collection. In addition to 16 female-addressed sonnets in the traditional Dark Lady sequence past number 127, Macek also includes 33 sonnets with a clear female recipient in the rest of the collection. The number of male-addressed sonnets is 25, and it is worth noting that the majority of these are at the beginning of the collection in the so-called procreation sequence, in which the author persuades the recipient to consider matrimony and fatherhood.

Miroslav Macek is one of the translators who responded to my request for an interview about his 1992 translation, and he explained his choices in regard to the gender of the addressee in the following way:

I strictly adhered to only one rule: where the addressee is clear, I retained the gender of the original, in the same way as I retained the use of "you"

and “thou” [vykání a tykání], and in the case of “gender indifferent” sonnets, I proceeded based on my feelings and addressed the majority to a woman. I simply empathised with the poet and I am thoroughly convinced that I am not wrong in this.

(Macek, personal interview)

This response also echoes his words from an interview conducted for a Czech Shakespeare-themed student journal in 2008. In answer to the question of what led him to the choice of a female addressee in poems traditionally included in the Fair Youth sequence, Macek responded, “If you read the originals really carefully, you know when they are unquestionably dedicated to a man – and that is how I translated them. And when you cannot tell, I acted emotionally and dedicated them to a woman”<sup>1</sup> (Krajník 2008: 27). The following analysis of Macek’s version of the *Sonnets* will offer a closer look at his translation strategy, as well as the paratextual material that offers further interesting clues to his approach to the collection.

In line with Macek’s claim, the great majority of the sonnets in the Fair Youth sequence which he translates as having a female recipient are gender-neutral in their original version. The singularity of this decision is particularly striking when we compare his translation with the rest of the corpus, where we find several poems – notably, numbers 34, 40, 70, 72, 87, 96, 104, and 105 – which are translated as unequivocally male-addressed by all remaining translators, with the exception of Josek and Pinkava who will be considered later in this chapter. As explained, many of these sonnets compel the Czech or Slovak translators to choose between masculine and feminine forms through the grammatical structures of the poems. A good example of this is Sonnet 34, which accuses the recipient of having committed an unspecified act of betrayal towards the author in the past and is forgiven in the final couplet. While present tense does not require a choice between genders in Czech and Slovak, verbs in past tense have to agree in gender with the subject of the clause. As the entire sonnet refers to the unnamed transgression in the past tense, most translators have decided to gender the person the author refers to through the use of gendered verbs. Macek clearly determines the gender of the addressee already in the first line of the sonnet in the following way:

S.34/1, p.47

Why didst thou **promise** such a beauteous day

*Proč nádherný den jsi mi **slibovala**?*

[Why did you (**f.**)**promise** me a splendid day?]

1 Although the interview was conducted in Czech, the article was printed in an English translation. The journal does not mention the name of the translator.

The convention used throughout this book is the following: the first line indicates the number of the sonnet according to the original 1609 printing order (S.34), followed by the line number (1) and the page number (47) referring to the first edition of the translation, unless indicated otherwise. This is followed by the relevant excerpt from Shakespeare's original version, the translation in question in italics, and a back translation<sup>2</sup> into English in square brackets. The relevant sections from the excerpts are highlighted in bold (if applicable), and the grammatical gender of the relevant words is indicated with an (f.) for feminine, (m.) for masculine, or (n.) for neuter.

Through the use of a feminine conjugation of the noun *slibovat* [to promise], Macek renders the sonnet as explicitly female-addressed. Although the choice to give this sonnet a female recipient is singular when compared with the rest of the corpus, it is also understandable in the light of Macek's claim in the two interviews: based on his own feelings, he decided that the sonnet has a female recipient. However, the corpus also reveals cases where, rather than having to simply choose between a masculine or feminine grammatical form, Macek inserts a female marker without an apparent corresponding term in the original poem. An example of this is Macek's version of Sonnet 83 which opens with the lines: "I never saw that you did painting need, | And therefore to your fair no painting set" (l.1–2). Interpretations of the expression "painting" vary between commentators, as it can be understood as a metaphor for praise and flattery (Kerrigan 1986: 276; Booth 1977: 281), or the literal application of cosmetics (Mowat and Werstine 2004: 168), traditionally connected with stage performances. Macek chooses this second interpretation, and translates the third and fourth lines as follows:

S.83/3–4, p.100

I found (or thought I found) you did exceed  
The barren tender of a poet's debt;  
*vždy vycházel jsem z toho, že jste žena,*  
*co chabý rým má za marnění času.*  
[I always assumed that you were a **woman**,  
who considers a weak rhyme to be a loss of time.]

With the insertion of a female marker that did not exist in the original sonnet, Macek avoids using the imagery of a man with a painted face and suggests that the author is praising a woman's natural beauty instead. A similar strategy is apparent in Sonnet 103, where Macek inserts the term *má paní* [my lady], again without an apparent corresponding term in the original.

2 These back translations aim to render the target texts in as literal representation as possible, and were not made with any poetic considerations in mind. As such, they are in no way an accurate portrayal of the beauty and skilfulness with which these poems were translated into Czech and Slovak.

An even more interesting case is presented by those sonnets that confirm the recipient as male but are rendered as female-addressed in Macek's translation. The most remarkable is the translation of Sonnet 63, which stands out from the rest of the collection through its record use of seven masculine pronouns relating to the recipient, as well as the explicitly male noun *king*. As such, it offers a particularly interesting example within the context of this study and will be considered again in later sections. The sonnet uses one of the most frequent themes of the collection, where the author promises the recipient protection from the ravages of time through their immortalisation in his poetry. The sonnet in Macek's translation opens with the following lines:

S.63/1–2, p.78

Against **my love** shall be as I am now,  
 With time's injurious hand crushed and o'erworn;  
*Až moji milou stihne, co mě kdysi,*  
*čas krutou rukou zdrťí ji a zchladí,*  
 [When my (**f.**) **lover** will meet, what (met) me before,  
 time crushes and cools **her** with his cruel hand,]

Macek signals in the opening section that this sonnet has a female recipient by the use of the feminine noun *milá* [female lover], which will be explored in more depth in the following chapter. This is confirmed in the second line with the use of a feminine pronoun. By confirming the identity of the recipient in the opening sequence, Macek can remove the masculine pronouns from lines 3–4 while relying on the reader's assumption that the words belong to a female beloved:

S.63/3–4, p.78

When hours have drained **his** blood and filled **his** brow  
 With lines and wrinkles; when **his** youthful morn  
*až zředí krev a poznamená rysy*  
*jak brázdami, až krásné jitro mládí*  
 [when [time] dilutes blood and marks features  
 as if with furrows, when the beautiful dawn of youth,]

Using the same strategy through the body of the sonnet and by removing both the male pronouns as well as the form of address *king* in line 6, Macek finally ends the sonnet with a further affirmation of a female recipient in the couplet:

S.63/13–14, p.78

**His** beauty shall in these black lines be seen,  
 And they shall live, and **he** in them still green.  
*Když její krásu do veršů lze vplést,*  
*pak navždycky v nich mládím bude kvést.*

[If **her** beauty can be twined into verse,  
so [she] will forever bloom in youth in them.]

Line 13 in this case is highly significant, as Macek explicitly changes the original expression “his beauty” to “her beauty” in his translation. While the ambiguity of the source material frequently leaves much space for interpretation, it is difficult to claim that this change of male to female pronouns was, as Macek asserts, a matter of personal taste in an instance where the source text remains neutral. A similar approach can be found in Sonnet 101, where Macek renders a sonnet with four masculine pronouns as female-addressed.

The final example of Macek’s translation approach towards the gender of the *Sonnets*’ recipient will be Sonnet 108, where the author addresses the recipient directly in the second person as “sweet boy”. As mentioned in Chapter 2, this expression was already subjected to alteration in one of the *Sonnets*’ earlier reprints by John Benson (1640) where it was replaced by “sweet love”, as well as by the German editor Richard Flatter who chooses “sweet joy” instead (Duncan-Jones 1997: 326). This devotional poem uses religious imagery to praise the recipient and assure them that despite their long acquaintance, the author will continue to worship them every day like a prayer. While the noun *boy* leaves little room for alternative interpretations in regard to the gender of the recipient, Macek decides to introduce the element of ambiguity into his version:

S.108/5, p.125

Nothing, **sweet boy**; but yet, like prayers divine,  
Ne, **moje láska**, proto v každé době  
[No, **my love**, therefore in every age]

With a strategy which strongly resembles Benson’s English alteration, Macek replaces “boy” with “love”, which effectively removes any indication that the recipient of the sonnet was originally male. The same approach of de-gendering male-addressed sonnets can be also seen in numbers 19 and 39.

Finally, a brief look at the paratextual material surrounding Macek’s original 1992 version. The previously described hummingbird volume is furnished with nine illustrations from Josef Novotný, six of which depict female bodies, two of which depict groups, and one consists of an image of a naked man and a woman. While the introduction from the esteemed Shakespearean scholar Zdeněk Stříbrný offers little commentary on the gender of the recipient, the translator uses an unusual method for both explaining his decisions and reasserting his own agency. Macek adds a final sonnet written by himself and dedicated to “Mr W. S.” [Panu W. S.], printed on the last page of the volume (181). The sonnet describes Macek’s translation journey, from his first meeting with the author where he failed to understand him until “the time of manhood” [čas mužnosti] brought them closer. The most interesting part of this

sonnet is line 9, where Macek acknowledges “That I translate the verses for my (f.) lover”,<sup>3</sup> recognising the significance of the changes applied throughout his translation. Another unusual feature of the volume is a second dedication of the collection (11), printed so that it faces the translated version of the original. This dedication reads:

*Všem původkyním těchto sonetů hodně štěstí, věčnost slíbenou stále živým básníkem a vše dobré přeje odvážný překladatel M. M. [To all (f)begetters of these sonnets much happiness and eternity promised by the still living poet and all the best, wishes the adventurous translator M. M.]*

The phrase “to all (female) begetters” is a direct reference to Shakespeare’s original dedication, which begins with “To the only begetter of these ensuing sonnets Mr W. H.”, and as such clearly indicates to whom this new translation is dedicated. To an observant reader, it also creates a clear sense of direction for Macek’s translation approach; while the original collection was dedicated to a Mr W. H., Macek’s version is conceived with female begetters in mind. This implication is then reflected in the strategies he applies throughout the translation.

To summarise, the analysis of the gender distribution in Macek’s translation shows an unusually high number of female-addressed sonnets within the Fair Youth sequence that are not present either in the original version or in any of the other 14 Czech and Slovak translations of the *Sonnets*. A close reading of the translation highlights two main strategies which Macek has used to frame the collection. The first of these is his decision to translate a number of sonnets in a way that implies a female recipient, which he achieves through the use of feminine nouns, pronouns, and other grammatical forms. While the majority of the original sonnets are gender-neutral, and it can be argued that Macek is merely choosing one of two viable options as this gender neutrality is difficult to achieve in the Czech language, the example of Sonnet 63 clearly shows that some of the sonnets that originally had an unequivocally male recipient are rendered with a female addressee in Macek’s translation. The second approach discernible in his version is to either conceal or alter details in some of the remaining sonnets which could suggest a romantic relationship between the author and a male recipient, as was demonstrated in Sonnet 108. Although Macek’s version retains some male-addressed sonnets, the majority of these are part of the procreation sequence, which is easily framed as advice from an older mentor aimed at a young, capricious friend. The prevalence of female-addressed sonnets throughout the Fair Youth sequence removes any possibility of reading the collection as two consecutive narratives with a distinctly male and female recipient, and the presence of female-addressed sonnets alongside gender-neutral ones suggests that these too were written with a female recipient in mind. The result of all these elements is a clear narrative framing of the

3 “Že překládám ty verše pro mou milou”, a full explanation of the term *milá* will be part of Chapter 4.

volume as a collection of predominantly heterosexual poetry, with a male poet writing amorous verses for his female beloved.

Several Shakespearean scholars and fellow translators mention Macek's translation approach and particularly his choices in regard to the gender of the recipient. Miloslav Uličný considers Macek's text to be so different from the original version that he deems it to be "more of a paraphrase than a translation" (2005: 189). Martin Hilský says in reference to Macek that "only one contemporary translator (incidentally one of the leading right-wing politicians of the country) [...] did not hesitate to change the sex of the *Sonnets*" (1997: 144). Hilský was alluding to Macek's political career in ODS (*Občanská Demokratická Strana* /Civic Democratic Party), which has been the Czech Republic's main right-wing party since the early years of democratic Czechoslovakia. Macek occupied various posts during this time, the highest-ranking position being Deputy Prime Minister between 1991 and 1992, a time coinciding with the first publication of his *Sonnets*.<sup>4</sup> However, the reimagining of the *Sonnets* as a collection dedicated to a female recipient is not a new phenomenon in the volume's history. An English reprint of the collection from an anonymous editor in 1711 assures the reader that Shakespeare wrote "all of them in Praise of his Mistress" (Stapleton 2004: 275). Dirk Delabastita finds several French and Dutch translations where "the translator makes the beloved undergo a sex-change" (1985: 121), amongst others in the highly acclaimed French version by François Victor Hugo (1857). Gideon Toury traces similar feminising strategies in Hebrew translations of the *Sonnets* and identifies them as:

an observant Jew's way of establishing a compromise between his admiration of Shakespeare and his sonnets, reflected in a strong desire – innovative in itself – to introduce them to the Hebrew reader, and the demands of the rigid cultural model laid down by the receptor culture.

(Toury 2012: 149)

Given these examples, and doubtless many other translations into thus-far unexplored languages that use the same strategy, the more surprising fact might be that only one out of the 15 Czechoslovak translations uses this approach to the *Sonnets*. As Macek confirmed in his interview, the publishing house had no direct impact on his translation choices, and while he was familiar with previous Czech translations of the *Sonnets* (versions from Vrchlický and Vladislav were mentioned), he stated quite firmly that these had in no way influenced his

4 Macek's *Sonnets* were republished in the same format for the second time in Lyra Pragensis in 1996. They became part of an anthology of the translator's work published as *Anglická poezie v překladech Miroslava Macka* (English Poetry in Miroslav Macek's Translations, 2006), and published again as a standalone piece two years later, through the publishing house XYZ (2008). The two new versions do not include any of the paratextual features from the first edition (illustrations, afterword, alternative dedication, or additional sonnet), but no changes were made to the text of the poems themselves.

translation decisions. When asked whether he would translate sections related to the gender of the recipient any differently in retrospect, Macek replied that he was “still firmly persuaded about the rightness of [his] translation in this regard” (personal interview).

Macek’s translation decisions are intriguing not only because they are an anomaly within the tradition of Czech and Slovak translations of the *Sonnets*, but also because of the timing of its publication. His version was published three years after the Velvet Revolution, as the first translation in the newly democratic republic. As was discussed in the previous chapter, while the Velvet Revolution effectively removed the political censorship that had been applied to the country’s publishing sector since the coup d’état in 1948 and brought an era of unprecedented freedom in newly established private publishing houses, it was also a time when homosexuality became a shockingly new presence in public discourse after decades of silence. These sudden changes brought shifts in the discursive dynamics of society, resembling the process identified by Foucault when “the appearance in nineteenth-century psychiatry, jurisprudence, and literature of a whole series of discourses on the species and subspecies of homosexuality [...] made possible a strong advance of social controls into this area of ‘perversity’” (1978: 101). Homosexuality was rapidly becoming visible beyond the medical sphere, broadening the discursive reach of its connotative range from a sexual act towards romantic love and displays of same-sex intimacy, and was followed by a wave of both homophobia and homophobia as theorised by Anderson (2014). While he defines homophobia as the fear of being thought gay as a result of transgressing gendered behaviour (44), I suggest that it is possible to feel a form of second-hand homophobia, that is a fear that somebody else’s sexuality could be questioned through one’s representation of their actions or feelings. The esteem with which Shakespeare’s name is held in Czech and Slovak literary circles can hardly be underestimated, and as the overview in Chapter 2 showed, many of the controversial opinions surrounding the *Sonnets* relate to whether the poems’ male recipient could be associated with the author’s own sexuality. While these implications remained unspoken throughout the socialist period, the new post-revolutionary era opened discursive spaces that allowed for a wider interpretation of the *Sonnets* and created the possibility of including Shakespeare into these new discussions about non-heterosexual desires by suggesting that he too might have had romantic and/or sexual feelings towards the male recipient of the *Sonnets*.

### **Male-Addressed and Neutral Sonnets**

We now turn to the two remaining groups: the sonnets with a clear male addressee, and the sonnets that are gender neutral and can be read as having either a male or a female recipient. Table 3.2 shows a clear trend in the great majority of the translations: while the original collection only dedicates 15 sonnets to a male recipient, most of the translations show a much higher number of these gendered poems. Disregarding for now the already discussed case of

Macek, and the three translators – Hilský, Josek, and Pinkava – that seem to depart from the overall trend and who will be considered shortly, the remaining results show remarkably similar numbers of male-addressed sonnets. From Blaho's 61 to Sedlačková's 77, the translations contain on average four to five times the number of male-addressed sonnets than the original version, which means that these collections have a similar number of ungendered poems as ones with a male recipient. The most striking result of this analysis is the fact that all of the pre-revolutionary translations use the same strategy and render the great majority of the sonnets in the Fair Youth sequence with an explicitly masculine recipient. Again, the decision to gender the *Sonnets* is not surprising in itself due to the grammatical differences inherent in the target and source languages. However, the decision has far-reaching implications for possible readings of the poems. If the *Sonnets* are read as a coherent narrative, the number of clearly male-addressed poems not only supports the traditional reading with two distinct recipients – male and female – but also strongly suggests that all of the 126 poems in the Fair Youth sequence have a male recipient, even if he is not directly confirmed in some of them. Moreover, poetry collections like the *Sonnets* are not necessarily read in a linear, cover-to-cover way expected of narrative fiction, and they lend themselves to cyclical re-readings of selected parts. The likelihood that the reader of these Czech and Slovak versions would, following this approach, randomly reach a sonnet clearly dedicated to a male recipient is considerably higher than in a similarly random reading of the English version.

Of the group of translators who have translated the *Sonnets* as a predominantly male-addressed collection, only Miloslav Uličný was available for an interview. Uličný contributed to the 1976 version and published a full translation of the poems in 2005, later reprinted in 2015 in an edition that suggests that Edward de Vere was the original author of the poems. When asked about his translation decisions in regard to the gendering of sonnets with an unspecified recipient, Uličný responded as follows:

In my opinion, the problem in a translation of the *Sonnets* is not in those sonnets that are dedicated to a friend, or in other words, the certain strange affection felt by a poet towards his companion. Homosexual relationships are no longer ostracised in our day and age, and the verses of the *Sonnets* can be in the majority of cases read without much embarrassment even by those interested parties who are only showing benevolence *pro domo*. I have translated these aspects of the *Sonnets* without any embarrassment. What I find much more interesting are the possible doubts, supported by some assumptions as well as facts, about Shakespeare's authorship, who, as is known, denied that he wrote the *Sonnets*. Lately, I consider the earl Edward de Vere to be the more likely author of the *Sonnets*.

(Uličný, personal interview)

Uličný's words confirm that he did not consider the gender of the recipient to be a controversial issue in the original collection, nor did he anticipate his

intended readership to find it so, and therefore he himself felt no need to place a particular focus on this element of the translation. In his essay published as part of his 2015 version of the *Sonnets*, Uličný compares the existing Czech translations of the *Sonnets*, focusing on elements such as metric feet, rhyming structures, and individual semantic choices of the translators, but the gender of the addressee is not commented upon at all. The linguistic properties of the Czech language which compel translators to choose a gender where English can remain vague, together with a long tradition to divide the *Sonnets* into the Fair Youth and a Dark Lady sequence, mean that, paradoxically, a translation that does not focus on the gender of the recipient such as Uličný's will result in a predominantly male-addressed collection. This stands in marked contrast to the three translators who have a significantly lower number of male-addressed sonnets, and whose work will be discussed next.

While Hilský's 1997 translation with 55 male-addressed sonnets does not seem to differ too dramatically from the rest of the discussed translations, the number of male-addressed sonnets decreases with further re-editions. Hilský's translation of the *Sonnets*, which won him the Josef Jungmann prize for best Czech translation in 1997, remains the most popular version of the collection in the post-revolutionary era, and was reprinted by the publishing houses Torst (Hilský 1997), Atlantis (2004, 2012a), and Vyšehrad (2003, 2012b). While the Vyšehrad version is printed as a more traditional, slim volume of poetry with almost no paratextual features, the Torst and Atlantis editions are part of Hilský's translation of Shakespeare's collected works, and are furnished with a wealth of paratextual features including explanatory notes accompanying each sonnet, both in English and in Czech. With more than 400 pages, the third Atlantis edition is by far the weightiest and lengthiest translation of the *Sonnets* in my collection.

Hilský addresses the gendering of the sonnets' recipient in an afterword of this third Atlantis reprint:

This translation again attempts to be faithful to Shakespeare, and where the addressee of a sonnet is decidedly a man, he remains a man also in the Czech translation. [...] This attempt is [...] frequently on the very verge of the feasible. The difference between the two languages is such that it is impossible to achieve the same level of gender ambiguity in Czech as in English. In the third edition, the Czech text of several sonnets was adjusted so that they remain ambiguous when it comes to the gender of the addressee.

(Hilský 2012a: 397)

The 12<sup>5</sup> sonnets that underwent this change in the second and third editions lower the number of male-addressed sonnets to 43 in this last edited translation (the numbers in the table in Appendix A reflect the original 1997 edition).

5 Sonnets 45, 55, 89, 90, 92, and 96 in the 2007 Atlantis version and sonnets 35, 36, 58, 71, 72, and 117 in the 2012 Atlantis version.

In an interview conducted for this book, Hilský stressed how important the question of the recipient's gender was during his translation process. He recounted how it was necessary to first 'forget' the traditional maxim about the Fair Youth and Dark Lady sequences before realising that only a small number of the original sonnets has a defined recipient and that only a handful of those is clearly dedicated to a man. He further stressed the well-known fact that 'androgyny' was a significant phenomenon in Renaissance Europe and was further emphasised in English theatre tradition where the ban on female actors until 1660 meant that Shakespeare's most celebrated female heroines were originally played by men in elaborate costumes. This, according to Hilský, is best mirrored in Shakespeare's androgynous Sonnet 20, which he described as "poetic surgery or a transplant of sex organs, performed 400 years before it became clinical practice" (Hilský, personal interview). Shakespeare addresses the recipient of this sonnet as the "master mistress of my passion" (l.2) and describes how this person has all the charms typically associated with women but none of their assumed character flaws. The sestet then moves on to explain the 'creation' of this beloved, where Nature first intended him to be a woman but then fell in love with her creation; "And by addition me of thee defeated, | By adding one thing to my purpose nothing" (l.11–12). It is not necessary to be particularly familiar with Elizabethan slang to interpret *thing* as a euphemism for male genitals in this context, and the meaning is well documented in Shakespearean glossaries (Partridge 1968: 259). The sonnet ends with a frequently quoted couplet: "But since she prick'd thee out for women's pleasure, | Mine be thy love, and thy love's use their treasure". Many commentators see this as proof of an absence of sexual attraction or contact between the author and the recipient (Ingram and Redpath 1978: 50; Rowse 1984: 43), while others question its open naivety and self-subverting language (Duncan-Jones 1997:150) or see it as a suspicious attempt on the part of the author to "hastily distance himself from an accusation he has done everything to invite" (Paterson 2010: 63). Hilský in his interview describes how his own translation of Sonnet 20 clarified two things to him; firstly, that Shakespeare was not a homosexual, as is obvious from the last lines of the poem. Secondly, that the androgyny of this 'master mistress' not only mirrors English theatre tradition, but, more importantly, the English language itself, which is much more gender-ambiguous than Czech. These considerations, together with the frequently blurred lines between the language of friendship and love in Elizabethan English, induced Hilský to retain the gender neutrality of the *Sonnets* whenever possible.

Hilský further stressed in his interview that he categorically disagreed with those rare cases where the Czech translator arbitrarily changed the gender-neutral poems so that they are all addressed to a woman, which he considered to be an unacceptable act of censorship that "distorts the meaning of the original and only serves the self-centred ideas of the translator"<sup>6</sup> (Hilský,

6 Given that there is only one Czech translation of the *Sonnets* that engages in this practice, there can be little doubt that Hilský is referring to Macek's translation discussed above.

personal interview). At the same time, Hilský stressed that while discussions about Shakespeare's sexuality are fruitless as they cannot go beyond the bounds of unfounded assumptions, the paradoxical certainty he finds in Shakespeare's work is his "radical ambivalence" towards the subject itself. Hilský cited not only the trope of crossdressing, which reappears regularly in Shakespeare's plays, but also the ensuing non-heterosexual infatuations that these plots frequently rest upon (such as Olivia in *Twelfth Night* falling in love with her new servant Cesario, who is the female Viola in disguise). Hilský also cited several "deeply ambivalent" characters, such as Antonio in *The Merchant of Venice* or (another) Antonio in *Twelfth Night*, whose devotion to their male friends is frequently interpreted from a queer perspective. Hilský concluded his response to the subject of gender ambiguity in the *Sonnets* with the following statement:

I believe that in this regard, Shakespeare was ahead of his times, and I also think that he was ahead of the times in which we all live now. He never attempted to put political labels on various forms of human love. His "great cause" [velkou politikou] was the comedy and tragedy of human love, which he perceived in all its paradoxicality and ambivalence. That, for me, is the essence of Shakespeare and the heart of his *Sonnets*.

(Hilský, personal interview)

Hilský's translation, and especially the changes made to the later editions, represent a new trend in the Czech evolution of the *Sonnets*, where gender ambiguity becomes one of the main concerns in the translation process. As Hilský himself stresses both in his interview and comments to the Atlantis edition, retaining this gender neutrality is a difficult task for a translator and frequently requires subtle changes, such as the avoidance of past tenses or adjectives (which are always gendered in Czech), or the replacement of gendered terms of endearment with gender-neutral forms (such as *láska* [love] replacing *moje milá/můj milý* [my f./m. dear]). What is perhaps the most interesting element of this translation is that it is the first time in the history of Czech and Slovak *Sonnets* that this gender ambiguity in the majority of the poems is at the forefront of the author's translation strategy. The following two examples will illustrate how this trend developed further with two translators with the highest number of gender-neutral sonnets in this corpus.

The translations by Jiří Josek (2008) and Václav Pinkava (2010) both retain only 20 male-addressed sonnets within their translations. While this number is still higher than Shakespeare's original 15, they stand in marked contrast to the rest of the collection. As was explained, in order to achieve this, the translators not only have to find highly imaginative solutions, but it also means that de-gendering the *Sonnets* is one of their translation priorities, particularly on such a large scale. While the number of male-addressed sonnets is the same in both translations, a closer analysis reveals that their approaches are similar in some respects but differ in others. As can be expected, the common point between

both translations is a largely consistent attempt to retain the ambiguity where the English version remains neutral. Their different methods for achieving this can be demonstrated in Sonnet 34, which was already considered in the section on Macek earlier in this chapter. Once again, we encounter the opening sequence of this poem which addresses the recipient in past tense, and which compels translators to use a masculine or a feminine verb conjugation. Josek's solution is as follows:

S.34/1–2, p.43

Why **didst thou promise** such a beauteous day,  
And **make me travail forth** without my cloak,  
*Věřil jsem ti, že bude krásný den,*  
*a vyšel jsem si jen tak v košili,*  
[**I believed you** that it would be a beautiful day  
**and went out** just so in a shirt,]

Josek's shift of the subject from the recipient (why didst *thou*) towards the author (*I* believed you) allows him to omit the two verbs that would otherwise have to indicate the gender of the person who sent the author on his journey. In contrast, Pinkava uses the following approach:

S.34/1–2, p.35

*Proč slib tvůj zněl, že bude pěkný den,*  
*přiměl mě vycestovat, bez pláště*  
[Why **did your promise say** that the day would be nice,  
**making me** travel forth, without a cloak]

Instead of focusing on the author as Josek does in his translation, Pinkava uses the promise itself as the object of the sentence. This allows him to place the blame for the misdeed on the promise in the second line, further avoiding the gendering of the person who made this ill-advised suggestion.

The two examples show that both translators use highly creative methods to achieve the same goal; to retain the gender ambiguity in those cases when the original collection does not disclose the gender of the recipient. Where these two translations diverge, however, is their approach to sonnets which are male-addressed in their original version. As can be seen from the detailed analysis in Appendix A, Pinkava's male-addressed sonnets are dispersed throughout the first 126 poems and he retains the male addressee in nearly all poems that have a male recipient in English. While Chapter 4 will explore another interesting feature of Pinkava's translation, particularly his paratextual comments on the *Sonnets*, his approach to the gendering of the poems is limited to a prioritisation of neutrality where the original also remains neutral.

Josek's translation, on the other hand, sometimes goes beyond this adherence to the original gendering. A close look at his translation choices in Appendix A

reveals that the great majority of his male-addressed sonnets are, as in Macek's case, in the Procreation sequence of the first 17 sonnets. Moreover, his translation also contains five sonnets from the sequence between 18 and 126 which conceal the original male addressee and render them neutral. Josek's highly elaborate approach to this task can again be demonstrated with Sonnet 63, which has seven masculine pronouns and the male marker "king". As Josek's translation had to avoid all of these in his aim to turn this sonnet into a gender-neutral one, it is worth quoting the poem in full. His translation can be divided into three sections based on the abstract concepts he is addressing.

S.63/1–4, p.73

Against my love shall be as I am now,  
 With time's injurious hand crushed and o'erworn;  
 When hours have drained **his** blood, and filled **his** brow  
 With lines and wrinkles; when **his** youthful morn

*Až **moji lásku**, moje druhé já,  
 čas krutě poznamená jako mě,  
 vezme **jí** barvu z lící, načárá  
 na čelo rýhy, stříbro na skráně.*

[As **my love**, my second self,  
 time cruelly marks as it did me,  
 takes the colour from **her** cheeks, scribbles  
 lines on the forehead, silver on temples.]

The first quatrain of the sonnet uses the opening address "my love", translated into Czech literally as *moji lásku*. This allows Josek to refer to the ungendered recipient with the feminine personal pronoun *ji* [her] in line 3, using the feminine grammatical gender of the noun *lásku*.

1.5–8

Hath travailed on to age's steepy night,  
 And all those beauties whereof now **he's king**  
 Are vanishing, or vanished out of sight,  
 Stealing away the treasure of **his** spring;

*Až úsvit mládí pohlítí tma stáří  
 a květy krásy, jimiž oplývá,  
**mu povadnou** a opadají z tváří,  
 mrtvolně sinalých už zaživa,*

[As the dawn of youth will be swallowed by the darkness of old age  
 and the blooms of beauty, with which (he/she) is filled  
**will wilt (in him)** and fall from (his/her) face,  
 deadly ashen already in life,]

Even though the original sonnet continues to refer to the beloved in third person without any further epithets while also calling him "the king of beauties",

Josek instead chooses to use another metaphor for the beloved with the word *úsvit* [dawn], which is a masculine noun in Czech. This allows Josek to refer to the recipient of the poem with a male inflection of the reflexive pronoun *wilt* [*mu povadnou*] without revealing the gender of the recipient, as this “dawn of youth” could refer to both a male or a female person. This part also shows the most marked semantic changes between the original version and the translation and demonstrates the necessary shifts in meaning caused by Josek’s prioritisation of de-gendering of the poems.

1.9–14

For such a time do I now fortify  
Against confounding age’s cruel knife,  
That he shall never cut from memory  
My sweet love’s beauty, though my lover’s life.  
**His** beauty shall in these black lines be seen,  
And they shall live, and **he** in them still green.

*já budu připravený odrazit  
ničivé útoky čepce času,  
aby mi nemohl z paměti vzít  
mou sladkou lásku, svrchovanou krásu.*

*Do těchto černých linek ukryju ji,  
at’ zůstane, jak si ji pamatují.*

[I will be ready to parry  
destructive attacks of time’s blade,  
so that he [time] won’t be able to take from my memory  
**my sweet love**, the ultimate beauty.  
Into these black lines I will **hide her**  
so that (it) stays, as I remember **her**.]

Josek’s sestet abandons the subject of dawn and returns instead to addressing the recipient with “love” [lásky] and “beauty” [krása], both of which are feminine nouns in Czech. Due to this, the final couplet can again use feminine pronouns without revealing the gender of the recipient. This change in pronouns throughout the sonnet emphasises the gender ambiguity of the translation. Given the number of male pronouns in the original text, it is difficult to perceive this as anything other than a conscious, and unquestionably skilful, measure to remove the masculine recipient from the text. A similar approach of de-gendering male-addressed sonnets can also be found in numbers 26, 39, 101, and 110.

Josek acknowledges most of these changes in his paratextual notes to the individual poems, and in the case of Sonnet 63 with only the following words: “The original reveals the gender of the recipient. The translation is more ambivalent than the original” (2008: 212). Notably, however, these comments do not accompany the sonnets directly in the text of the translation (as is the case with Pinkava or Hilský) but are located at the very back of the collection.

Unfortunately, Jiří Josek passed away suddenly in 2018 during the early stages of this book's preparation, so it was impossible to conduct an interview with him. His thoughts on the *Sonnets* are captured in the foreword to his translation, which contains biographical details of Shakespeare's life as well as an overview of the themes covered in the collection. Josek comments on the gender of the recipient in the following paragraph:

If we want to, we can read the sonnets as a story of a poet in love with his younger, perhaps high-born friend, and at the same time with a certain "dark lady" [...]. But to limit ourselves to this story while reading the collection would mean an immense deprivation. Only in the smallest number of the love sonnets in the part dedicated to the friend does the author reveal the gender of the addressee. The majority of the sonnets conceal the gender and play out only within the relationship between 'me' and 'you'. Rather than this barely identifiable, scorned and glorified beloved person, the main character of the sonnets is the poet himself and his aggravated heart.

(Josek 2008: 7)

The first significant point in Josek's summary of the *Sonnets'* themes is his emphasis on the comparatively small number of poems dedicated to a male recipient. Josek, along with Hilský, is the only translator who mentions this fact in his paratextual comments, but interestingly he does not mention the fact that there is a similarly small number of explicitly female-addressed sonnets in the remaining section. Another important factor is Josek's claim about the true theme of the *Sonnets* which clearly focuses on the author and his emotions instead of on the recipient of these feelings; something which is further reiterated in the last line of his preface:

Shakespeare's *Sonnets* is a book about love in all its forms. It does not matter too much whether it is legitimate or illegitimate love, hetero-, homo- or bisexual, tragic or comical, spiritual or physical. The important part is what love does to a person, how each of us experiences it. Shakespeare managed to express this whirlwind of emotions in a way that is truly extraordinary.

(Josek 2008: 7)

These paratextual comments create a clear narrative of the collection as a universal, timeless celebration of love rather than a unique record of the author's feelings towards real recipients. This framing is then further confirmed through Josek's translation strategy which repeatedly avoids, and sometimes removes, any indication of gender from the sonnets. This strategy of positioning love at the centre of the collection where it transcends any links to its original circumstances is a topic of frequent argument within the critical commentaries of the collection, and can be found for example in a recent academic edition of the *Sonnets* by Carl D. Atkins:

we may leave concerns about Shakespeare's sexual orientation behind and take from *The Sonnets* what is universal to all loving relationships, heterosexual, homosexual, or passionate friendship, namely, true love.

(2007: 15)

Josek's translation is the most marked example of this approach in Czech and Slovak translations to date, as his systematic approach to the gender of the recipient of the *Sonnets* brings the neutrality of the original version to the forefront. It is worth noting that the same strategy is not applied to poems addressed to a woman, as his number of female-addressed sonnets is 17 as opposed to the original 9, aligning with the remaining translations from the corpus with the exception of Macek. This means that the numbers of male- and female-addressed sonnets is very nearly the same, further stressing the careful neutrality of the collection. A similar effect in English could be achieved through a reorganisation and selection of those sonnets that avoid the gendering of the recipient, as is the case in the *Golden Treasury* edition by Francis Palgrave (1890). By carefully choosing and reordering only those sonnets that refer to love without any clear indication of the recipient towards whom they are addressed, Palgrave was able to "invite the reader to project his or her own sexuality onto the poems" (Smith 2007:20), in a way that is similar to Josek's overall approach.

Without having been able to conduct an interview with the translator himself, we can only speculate on Josek's reasons for his translation choices. Josek's profile in many ways resembles that of Martin Hilský; Josek was also a university lecturer and taught Translation Studies at Charles University in Prague, where Hilský holds a position as Professor of English. Both also undertook the monumental task of translating the entire Shakespearean corpus into Czech, which means that he too was deeply immersed in the world of Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre and was familiar with Shakespeare's penchant for plots involving gender ambiguity and crossdressing. All of these factors could have contributed to Josek's decision to bring this ambiguity to the forefront of the *Sonnets*, and to highlight it in a way not seen in any of the other translations. Given that the *Sonnets* were printed by Josek's own publishing house Romeo, it is highly unlikely that there were any editorial or other external interventions.

While the individual decisions of the translators are always numerous and impossible to identify in retrospect, it is worth considering that all three translations mentioned in this last section – Hilský, Josek, and Pinkava – published their works in the post-revolutionary era, and at a time when homosexuality was gradually losing the stigma of sexual deviance it had had during the previous regime. From Hilský's translation published in 1997, which became more and more gender neutral with each subsequent reedition, to Pinkava's 2010 translation, they were all published against the backdrop of political controversies that preceded and followed the legalisation of same-sex partnerships in March 2006. As was described in Chapter 2, the campaign accompanying these

changes was characterised by the conscious efforts of Czech gay and lesbian groups to fit into the normative frameworks of society while stressing that gay couples go through the same struggles as straight ones, frequently under slogans emphasising that love is the same for everyone. All three translators (Pinkava's comments will be further addressed in the following chapter) expressly mention in their paratext that they have no issues with the various theories of Shakespeare's sexuality, but that it is the love in all its forms, regardless of gender or sexuality, that is at the core of the collection. While some of their strategies, in particular Josek's removal of the masculine gender from sonnets that retain it in the original version, could be seen as limiting the possibility for a queer reading to some extent, all of these three translations are important examples of a new translation approach to the *Sonnets* that rejects the old tradition of the Fair Youth and Dark Lady sequences, and instead leaves the reader to decide how they want to gender the addressees of the *Sonnets*.

## 4 I Love Thee in Such Sort

In the previous chapter, we explored whether the translations of the *Sonnets* can be read as being dedicated to a male or a female recipient, or whether the gender of the addressee is left to the reader's interpretation. The following section will look at how the translations conceptualise the relationship between the writer of the *Sonnets* – whether we interpret this person as Shakespeare himself or an imaginary 'poet' – and the addressee or addressees. While, as mentioned, the collection contains sonnets that aim to persuade the recipient to marry and beget children, while others contemplate human mortality and the passage of time, the one overarching theme that unifies the whole collection is undoubtedly love; the term appears 197 times throughout the collection, both as a verb and as a noun. While this love is frequently expressed with almost hyperbolic ardour and is obviously fraught with issues like jealousy and betrayal, the actual nature of the author's relationship with the recipient or recipients is rarely established. Shakespeare uses the word "friend" to refer to the collection's recipient in seven sonnets (30, 42, 50, 104, 110, 111, and 133), and twice to refer to himself in relation to the recipient (Sonnets 32 and 82); while "lover" appears once to denote the recipient (S.63) and once to describe the author in relation to the addressee (S.32). The term "mistress" appears eight times, "master" only once; the recipient is titled "god" (S.60) once, while the author calls himself the recipient's "slave" four times (S.57 twice, 58, and 141) and "vassal", three (58, 141, and 26 as "in vassalage"). While some commentators claim that the latter epithets should be taken literally as proof of the recipient's aristocratic status (Rowse 1984: 55), all of these expressions are commonly found in courtly amorous poetry (Kerrigan 1986: 207) as well as in traditional love letters from the period (Campbell 1859: 125).

This chapter will use a close textual analysis combined with paratextual elements to examine how the translators from the corpus approached the relationship between the author and the addressees. As already established, the *Sonnets'* vagueness leaves plenty of scope for various interpretations, and this also means that small semantic choices can shift the overall reading of the collection in a significant way. The comparison will juxtapose two main translation strategies; those that support the reading of the collection as romantic poetry, particularly

in those sonnets that are by textual evidence or implication considered as male addressed, and those that reinforce a non-romantic reading based on friendship and familial bonds, or that suggest that the collection should be read as an abstract metaphor.

For the purposes of the comparison, I will use the terms ‘romantic’ and ‘non-romantic’ to describe the types of affection expressed in the *Sonnets*. As explained previously, very few of the poems make direct allusion to sexual desire, which is why terms such as ‘platonic’ that have a strong connotative link with non-physical or non-sexual attraction (as well as a not always helpful link to Plato’s scholarship) were deemed unsuitable for the purposes of this study. I also want to stress that this comparison does not wish to devalue non-romantic relationships such as friendship, or to follow the amatonormative assumption that they are invariably secondary to romantic bonds in the hierarchy of human relationships (cf. Brake 2012). However, within the context of this book, which traces how same-sex love was interpreted through translations across time, it is necessary to separate the generally accepted and unproblematic close male friendships, and the much more frequently condemned romantic love between two men.

The analysis will start with a comparison of different variations of the expression “my love” in Sonnet 101 across all 15 translations in the corpus, as it offers a particularly illustrative example of the changing approaches to the subject. The sonnet is constructed as the author’s conversation with his Muse where he accuses her of failing to give him inspiration for his poetry on the subject of the beloved who unites both truth and beauty in their person (“O truant Muse, what shall be thy amends | For thy neglect of truth in beauty dyed?” 1.1–2). The author deduces that the Muse is silent as the beloved’s qualities are beyond description (“Because he needs no praise, wilt thou be dumb?” 1.9) and the couplet vows to show the Muse how to properly immortalise the recipient (“Then do thy office, Muse: I teach thee how | To make him seem long hence as he shows now” 1.13–14). As can be seen in these examples, the sonnet also refers to the recipient in third person and with masculine pronouns. The following comparison in Table 4.1 will use line three where the author emphasises to the Muse that “Both truth and beauty on my love depends” and focuses on the expression “my love”.

As can be seen from Table 4.1, six out of the 15 translators chose the semantically closest variation on the noun “love”, which is *láska* in both Czech and Slovak (genitive case *lásky*, vocative case *lásce*). Vrchlický’s translation chooses *druh*, an archaic term that can be translated as a (male) partner or companion as well as a comrade-in-arms within a military context. Uličný’s descriptive expression “with whom feelings bind me” is easily ascribed to his need for a rhyme for *odčinit* [atone] in the first line, and roughly retains the emotional spectrum of the original sonnet. The following section will focus on the five translators who render “love” as *milý* (locative case *milém/milom*, instrumental case *milým*), starting with a brief explanation of the term’s connotative range.

Table 4.1 Sonnet 101, 1.3: Variations of the Phrase “On My Love Depends”

Year	Translator	Translation	Back translation
1923	Klásterský	s <i>milým</i> mým se spíná	Bound with my <b>(m.) lover</b>
1955	Vladislav	na <i>milém</i> závisela	Depended on <b>(m.) lover</b>
1958	Blaho	Na <i>milom</i> záleží	Depends on <b>(m.) lover</b>
1964	Vrchlický	<i>druhu mému</i> přivlastníš	Ascribe to my <b>(m.) partner</b>
1976	Saudek et.al.	Na <i>milém</i> [...] závisí	Depends on <b>(m.) lover</b>
1986	Hron	v <i>mé lásce</i> [...] mají štít	In my <b>love</b> [...] have their shield
1987	Sedláčková	závisí od <i>lásky přítelě</i>	Depends on the <b>love of a friend</b>
1992	Macek	Má krásná <i>láska</i>	My beautiful <b>love</b>
1995	Hodek	z <i>lásky</i> mě se dívá	Looks out from my <b>love</b>
1997	Urbánková	to je <i>přítel</i> náš	That is our <b>friend</b>
1997	Hilský	Má <i>láska</i> je přec obojí	My <b>love</b> is after all both
2001	Feldek	V <i>milom</i> sa [...] stretáva	In <b>(m.) lover</b> [...] come together
2005	Uličný	s <i>nímž</i> mě pojí <i>cit</i>	With whom <b>feelings</b> bind me
2008	Josek	v <i>mé lásce</i> našli	Found in my <b>love</b>
2010	Pinkava	na <i>mé lásce</i> lpí	Cling to my <b>love</b>

## The Lover

The Czech and Slovak terms (m.) *milý* and (f.) *milá* originate from the verb *milovat/milovat'*, which literally means “to love” and is used most commonly in the romantic sense of the term. *Milý* and *milá*, as derivative forms of this verb, can either function as a noun or an adjective. As an adjective, the meaning overlaps with the English “dear”, used amongst others in opening phrases of letters (“Dear William” = *Milý William*). As a noun, *milý* and *milá* is predominantly used to denote a person with whom one is in a romantic, semi-formal relationship preceding an official engagement, similar to courtship. As such, its closest English alternatives would be “lover”, or the present-day terms “boyfriend”/“girlfriend”. An important aspect of the term is its emphasis on exclusivity; *milý* and *milá* strongly suggests one particular person with whom the speaker is engaged in a romantic, monogamous, and committed relationship. *Milý* and *milá* largely disappeared from everyday Czech and Slovak as a specific description of an interpersonal bond in the last few decades, and was replaced by the modern term *přítel/přítelkyně/priateľ/priateľka* [(m.) friend/(f.) friend] which directly correspond with “boyfriend”/“girlfriend”. While the term is not used in everyday conversation anymore, it still frequently reappears in literature, folk songs, and particularly in poetry.

Considering this context and the emphasis on an exclusive, romantic relationship, it is surprising to find the noun in a high number of pre-revolutionary sonnets in the Fair Youth sequence, and most commonly in the unequivocally

masculine form *milý*. Returning to the examples in Sonnet 101 in Table 4.1, it is clear that the choice to render “my love” with this expression was popular amongst translators, with five of them using the term in their translations. The comparison also helps to illustrate that this choice was not enforced by the lack of other options, as several other translators choose the term *láska*, literally meaning “love”, which has the same number of identically stressed syllables. This is the semantically closest alternative in both Czech and Slovak, and one which retains the gender ambiguity, as it can be used as a term of endearment for both male and female recipients. Given the prevalence of *milý*, it can be reasonably assumed that these translators considered the term to be a suitable translation of the English expression “my love”, and that the noun was used in order to replicate the emotional impact of the source text. However, while *milý* most commonly replaces “love” and similar terms of endearments, the use of the expression in pre-revolutionary *Sonnets* goes beyond this logical substitution. In several cases, *milý* is inserted seemingly in an arbitrary way with no obvious counterpart in the original sonnet, and with no other purpose than to fulfil the formal requirements of the poem. A compelling example of this phenomenon can be found in translations of Sonnet 78, where the author complains that he has celebrated the recipient in his poems so often that many other poets have copied his efforts and are now describing them with their own poetry. The original version of the first four lines is as follows:

S.78/1–4

So oft have I invoked thee for my **Muse**,  
 And found such fair assistance in my **verse**,  
 As every alien pen hath got my **use**,  
 And under thee their poesy **disperse**.

Following the typical Elizabethan sonnet structure, the ABAB scheme rhymes “Muse” with “use” and “verse” with “disperse”. Vladislav’s 1955 Czech version of the poem renders the first and third line in the following way (106):

*Tolikrát vzýval jsem tě jako Musu, milý,*  
*že také ostatní to po mně učinili*  
 [So often did I worship you as a Muse, (m.) lover,  
 that others too have acted in the same way]

In order to find a rhyme for the verb *učinili* (past plural form of *učinít*, to act or to undertake) at the end of line 3, Vladislav inserts the noun *milý* into the first line of the sonnet, without an apparent counterpart in the original poem. Blaho in his 1958 Slovak translation of the sonnet uses the same approach but with lines 2 and 4 (86):

*piesne mi posilu z prameňov tvojich pili,*  
*pod tvojou ochranou spievajú ďalej, milý.*

my songs **drank** strength from your springs,  
 under your protection they sing on, **(m.) lover.**

Blaho's version is using the metaphor of a well of inspiration from which the author's songs derive strength and his translation ends line 2 with the verb *pili* (past plural form of the verb *pit'* [to drink]). *Milý* in line 4 is then added to create the requisite rhyme. It is important to note that the original sonnet does not refer to the recipient with any terms of endearment ("my love", "beloved") nor with any other expression that would necessitate the insertion of the term *milý*, either directly or as a substitution for another instance where such an expression had to be left out. The sonnet is written addressing the recipient in second person, and as such does not disclose either the gender of this recipient, nor their relationship towards the author. Both Blaho and Vladislav confirm the male gender and the romantic feelings towards this recipient with the use of *milý* in their translation seemingly only to create a rhyme, an approach which stands in a marked contrast with Josek, Hilský, and Pinkava, who avoid the gendering of sonnets whenever possible, as well as Urbánková whose work will be discussed below.

Amongst the pre-revolutionary *Sonnets*, the only translation devoid of the terms *milý* and *milá* is Hron's 1986 version, which can be ascribed to the fact that they were slowly growing out of daily use. Interestingly, the expression returns in Macek's 1992 version, where he avoids the masculine form *milý* altogether but instead uses the feminine form *milá* throughout his translation. As described in the previous chapter, Macek renders a number of the gender-neutral poems as female addressed, and he uses *milá* several times for this purpose. In some cases (S.64), this is to replace the term "my love" as seen above; in others, *milá* replaces the noun "friend" (S.50) or is inserted without an apparent counterpart (S.44 and 78). Perhaps most tellingly, Macek uses this term in his own additional sonnet where he describes his intention to dedicate the translation to his *milá*, as mentioned in Chapter 3.

After Macek, the terms *milý* and *milá* appear only very occasionally in translations of the *Sonnets*, with the notable exception of Feldek's 2001 translation. As can be seen in the comparison of Sonnet 101 above, Feldek uses *milý* to render the expression "my love", and the term is also repeated several times throughout the corpus without an apparent English counterpart. *Milý* and *milá* also frequently appear in Feldek's translation of Shakespeare's nearly complete dramatic works which were published between the years 2001 and 2013. His version of Shakespeare's most famous romantic tragedy *Romeo and Juliet* uses the term 13 times, eight times in its feminine form *milá* and five times in masculine form *milý* (Feldek 2009). Feldek's approach to Shakespeare is unique amongst the 15 translations in this corpus through his attempts to make him seem less as an icon of high-brow education, and more as a playwright and poet whose work is rooted in the informal language of everyday discourse. Although it was not possible to contact Feldek for the purposes of an interview, he explains this aim in one of his paratextual comments:

Shakespeare is an educated poet and a number of his allusions appear scholarly – but those allusions were in their time and in certain circles part of daily conversation. The use of the colloquial also always means some sort of return to old sayings, to elemental observations, to natural folk wisdom and humour.

(Feldek 2006: 197)

The use of the term *milý* fits Feldek's aim to embed Shakespeare in vernacular language as well as to create a direct connection with Slovak folklore, as most contemporary readers will recognise the terms primarily from traditional songs and poetry.

While the reasons translators choose to use the term *milý* vary through history, the choice always carries interesting implications for the connotative range of the poems. Whereas expressions such as *láska* can apply to a number of different types of strong affection and could potentially be ascribed to non-romantic feelings, *milý* is used exclusively in an amorous context. Moreover, the term also suggests a certain degree of officiality and commitment; traditionally, one does not have more than one *milý* at a given time. This helps to support a narrative where the whole male-addressed part of the sonnet collection is dedicated to one established male beloved, instead of an array of unconnected poems about love in a more general sense. The prevalence of this term particularly in the pre-revolutionary collections seems to suggest that the translators and editorial teams consciously support the reading of the *Sonnets* as being at least partially a narrative of romantic love between two men. However, as the description of Czechoslovak book production and the state-approved approach to non-normative sexual behaviour during the socialist era showed, it is extremely unlikely that the *Sonnets* would have passed through the censorial control if this romantic love between men was in any way associated with homosexuality, at least within the official understanding of the term. Eric Anderson offers an interesting parallel on this subject in his comparison of the different perceptions of male intimacy during the American Civil War and during the last decades of the 20th century, which were marked in the United States by widespread homophobia and homophobia (2014: 41–2). In the 1980s, Anderson and his students considered the fact that Abraham Lincoln had shared his bed for the four years of the war with a male friend to be a proof of the future president's homosexuality. While he acknowledges, in retrospect, the presentism inherent in this statement, the story contains an interesting juxtaposition of the way male closeness was viewed at these different points in history. Why was the simple act of bed sharing seen so differently in the two periods, and why did Lincoln's contemporaries not perceive the seemingly obvious connection between two men sharing a bed and same-sex intercourse? Anderson explains the discrepancy as follows: "Were men not equally as homophobic in Lincoln's era? The answer to this is, in short, yes, but they also did not readily believe that one could be gay" (2014: 42). Similarly,

socialist discursive structures in Czechoslovakia strongly emphasised the ‘otherness’ of homosexuality, presenting it as a phenomenon which only applied to anti-social individuals who lived on the outskirts of the society and were never acknowledged as being part of it (Kolářová 2013: 413). Within these discursive structures, it was unthinkable to associate Shakespeare the great bard of the English language with homosexuality, regardless of whether or not he wrote ardent love poems for his *milý*. However, once it was acknowledged that anybody – including respected historical figures such as Shakespeare or Lincoln – could potentially be part of a queer past, their historical conduct was viewed in a wholly new light. Let us now look at this question from the opposite perspective, where this new perception of what it meant to be gay or straight helped to tip the scales in the translations of the *Sonnets* towards friendship rather than romantic love. For this purpose, we will once again return to the comparison of translations in Sonnet 101.

### The Friend

As Table 4.1 shows, two translators from the corpus, Sedlačková and Urbánková, decided to translate the original English expression “my love” with the noun “friend”. Beginning with Anna Sedlačková’s 1987 translation, the original line “on my love depends” changes from nominalised “love” as a term of address to the description of a feeling, which is then ascribed to a male “friend” (*priateľ*, genitive case *priateľa*). The choice to combine both the term “love” and “friend” is a good example of Sedlačková’s overall approach to the *Sonnets* and symptomatic of her conceptualisation of the relationship between the author and the recipient. Firstly, it is useful to point out that Sedlačková’s version has 77 male-addressed sonnets, the highest number in the whole corpus, implying an absence of any attempt to retain the gender ambiguity of the original collection and supporting a reading of the *Sonnets* where the great majority of the poems are ascribed to a male recipient. Secondly, a close textual analysis of Sedlačková’s poems reveals an interesting phenomenon; on the one hand, there is a significantly high use of the noun “friend” and its derivatives, while on the other, she uses the term *milý* with roughly the same frequency.

Sedlačková’s use of “friend” appears most commonly in its vocative form *priateľu*, used as a term of address when speaking directly to the recipient in second person (S.15, 20, 33, 40, 52, 82), as a familiar expression “dear friend” [*priateľ milý*, with *milý* used as an adjective] in Sonnets 80 and 89, or to denote this recipient in third person, as in Sonnet 101 above. The term “friendship” (*priateľstvo*) is used four times to describe the relationship between the author and the male recipient (S.49, 92, 102, 103), and three sonnets use the noun “friend” to describe the author himself, in relation to the recipient (S.32, 37, 38). Most of these expressions do not directly replace a term of address, such as “my love”, and appear to be inserted primarily to create a specific rhyme or metric structure. To contextualise this decision within the corpus, this

emphasis on the friendship element in the relationship between the author and the recipient cannot be detected in any of the other translations, with the exception of Urbánková discussed later in this chapter. While the term *přítel/priateľ* appears occasionally in other versions, it serves almost exclusively as a translation of the original term “friend”, and there is no obvious tendency to introduce this expression into the text for the purposes of poetic structure or to replace other terms of endearment. However, Sedlačková’s translation also follows in the tradition of the pre-revolutionary *Sonnets* with her frequent and sometimes arbitrary use of the term *milý*. This appears in Sonnets 19, 25, 63, 89, 99, 100, 111, 112, and 121 where it replaces the terms “my love”, and in Sonnet 105 where it is used to translate the noun “beloved”. As is the case with other pre-revolutionary translators, the term *milý* also appears without an apparently obvious corresponding term; in Sonnets 24, 36, 57, 67, 72, and 102 it serves the purpose of creating a rhyme, whereas in Sonnets 27, 20, 46, 71, and 88, it seems to be only used as a semantic filler to achieve her chosen metric structure (a dactylic hexameter in this case).

Sedlačková’s approach to the relationship between the author and the recipient creates a curious dissonance between the committed, romantic relationship supported by the term *milý* on the one hand, and her frequent emphasis on the non-romantic part of this relationship through the use of *priateľ*. This dissonance is perhaps best illustrated in her translation of Sonnet 102, where the poet claims that his lack of praise for the recipient is due to his fear of sounding repetitive. Prior to the following excerpt, the sonnet uses the noun “love” two times, both of which are translated directly as *láska* by Sedlačková, and one verb “love”, directly translated with the corresponding Slovak verb *ľúbiť* (l.2). Let us now look at lines 6 and 7 which contain further qualifiers of the relationship between the author and the recipient:

S.102, l.5–6, p.235<sup>1</sup>

Our love was new, and then but in the spring,  
 When I was wont to greet it with my lays,  
*Dostal si do vienka veľa slov básnika,*  
*keď' nášmu priateľstvu dala jar svieže tóny.*  
 [You were gifted many of the poet’s words,  
 when spring gave fresh tones to our **friendship**.]

“Lays” in this case means songs or poems (Mowat and Werstine 2004: 208). Despite using the nouns and verb “love” three times in the preceding parts, Sedlačková decides to replace the fourth reference to love as the description of their relationship with the noun “friendship”. The sonnet continues by likening the author to a nightingale who sings in spring but ceases in summer as more common birds begin to rival its song. Instead of naming the bird,

1 Page numbers refer to the 1998 version published by *Nestor*.

the poem uses an allusion to the classical Ovidian myth of Philomel who was turned into a nightingale, hence using female pronouns for the bird. The couplet ends with the following line:

l.13

Therefore, like her, I sometime hold my tongue,

*Preto s tým vtáčaťom zamlknem aj ja, milý,*

[Therefore with the (diminutive) bird I will too fall silent, **(m.) lover.**]

While closely following the original semantics of the line, Sedlačková inserts the noun *milý* at the end of it in order to achieve a rhyme in the couplet with the verb *nerušili* [did not disturb]. As this example illustrates, Sedlačková's use of both "friend" and *milý* seems inconsistent and does not create a coherent picture of the type of relationship connecting the author and the recipient in the Fair Youth sequence. While, of course, the reasons for these choices are difficult to ascertain in retrospect as Sedlačková was not available for an interview and there is no paratextual or epitextual material associated with the translator, the timing of this publication and its position within the wider societal changes that took place is once again compelling. Sedlačková's translation was published for the first time in 1987, just two years prior to the Velvet Revolution and the widespread changes associated with it. As such, it can be viewed as a transitional piece between the older tradition of Czech and Slovak translators who used *milý* without finding any apparent reason for not supporting this romantic reading of the *Sonnets*, and the following group of translators who show a much more diverse approach to the subject.

### From Lovers to Friends

As the analysis from the previous chapter shows, Urbánková's translation with 63 male-addressed sonnets does not prioritise gender ambiguity of the Fair Youth sequence in any significant way. Her *Sonnets* are interesting for the present enquiry for two reasons; firstly, they show a strong tendency to remove or replace the romantic affection in the Fair Youth sequence, as will be shown shortly. Secondly, her 1997 version is based on a partial translation from 1976, and the changes between these two versions offer a compelling insight into the shifts in the way the *Sonnets* were perceived.

The most noticeable method with which Urbánková introduces subtle changes to the *Sonnets* is the addition of friendship-related terminology. Her 1997 version uses the term "friend" [přítel] 15 times to refer to the recipient (Sonnets 19, 30, 36, 39, 40, 42, 49, 50, 63, 76, 101, 105, 110, 111, and 133), together with a reference to "friendship" [přátelství] in Sonnet 29 and "friendly emotion" [přátelský cit] in Sonnet 89. The author is referred to as the recipient's "friend" in Sonnet 82. While this approach seems similar to Sedlačková's translation, it is also necessary to stress that Urbánková's choices are far less arbitrary and instead seem to deliberately replace terms that can be

read as symptomatic of romantic love. This is best illustrated by her version of Sonnet 19, which juxtaposes the passage of time against the eternal and unchanging qualities of the addressee. The author challenges Time to destroy all conventional symbols of strength (“blunt thou the lion’s paws”, l.1) and longevity (“burn the long-lived Phoenix”, l.4), but in the sestet forbids it to commit the “one most heinous crime” (l.8), that is to touch the beauty of the recipient, who is referred to as “my love” twice (lines 10 and 14). The sonnet is also significant because it marks the beginning of the Fair Youth sequence, following the procreation sonnets; as Paterson notes, “for all the earlier *intimations* of love, this is the first time *my love* is used so unequivocally. [...] Previously his feelings could have been read – wilfully read but read nonetheless – as mere admiration” (2010: 59, emphases in original). In Urbánková’s translation, the lines in which the author refers to the recipient as “my love” are rendered as follows:

S.19/10, p.43

O carve not with thy hours **my love's** fair brow,  
*rozbrázdít mramor čela **přítelova**,*  
 [furrow the marble of **friend's** forehead]

l.14

**My love** shall in my verse ever live young.  
*v mých básních **přítel** neztratí své mládí.*  
 [in my poems **friend** will not lose his youth.]

Unlike Sedlačková’s approach in Sonnet 102 which mixes themes of love with friendship, Urbánková’s translation is thematically unified to create an image of the author appealing on behalf of his close friend, instead of positioning him in the role of a lover praising the object of his affection. Further examples of this approach include Sonnet 39, where the expression “thoughts of love” (l.11) is rendered as *vzpomínka na přítele* [memory of a friend]; Sonnet 76 where “sweet love” becomes *příteli* [friend in vocative]; Sonnet 29 where “sweet love” becomes *přátelství* [friendship], and Sonnet 40 where “love’s wrong” becomes *přítelovu pychu* [friend’s pride in the genitive]. “Friend” is also added without an apparent counterpart in Sonnets 36 and 49, as are “friendship” in Sonnet 88 and “friendly feeling” [přátelský cit] in Sonnet 89.

In addition to replacing allusions to love with friendship, Urbánková’s 1997 version also repeatedly removes some of these keywords without replacing them with any corresponding expressions. “Love” as a term of address disappears from Sonnets 22 and 82, “sweet love” is removed from Sonnet 79, and “love” as a verb is removed from the identical couplets of Sonnets 36 and 96. Another strategy that is repeated throughout Urbánková’s translation is the rendering of terms related to love with expressions that have a decidedly lower emotional intensity. In Sonnet 23, where the author is about to express the “ceremony of love’s rite” (l.6), which will make most anglophone readers think

of marriage vows, is rendered as *svůj cit* [my feeling] in Urbánková's translation. The noun "lover" from Sonnet 32 line 4, referring to the author of the poem in relation to the recipient, becomes *kdo tě měl tak rád* [(the one) who liked you so much]. The subtle contextual difference related to this expression is another pattern detectable throughout this translation. The Czech language has two options for expressing the English verb "love": *milovat* and *mít rád*. While *mít rád* has a similar connotative scope to the English "to like" and can be used for expressing a range of emotions including affection for friends, family members, or romantic partners, *milovat* is a decidedly stronger emotion which is used predominantly in a romantic context. It is also worth noting that the reflexive form *milovat se* in the sense of "love each other" is used similarly to the English expression "to make love" as a euphemism for sexual intercourse. While *milovat* can potentially have a sexual connotation, *mít rád* is wholly devoid of this implication. Both pre- and post-revolutionary translations of the *Sonnets* use *milovat* frequently as a direct translation of the English verb "to love", which makes Urbánková's choice to use *mít rád* repeatedly throughout her corpus an unusual decision. *Mít rád* appears in her *Sonnets* 72, 73, 115 (twice in lines 2 and 9), and 117.

The combination of both of these approaches – replacing love with friendship and removing allusions to love altogether or lessening the verb's impact – is best illustrated with Sonnet 63, which was discussed in the previous chapter. The sonnet's frequent use of masculine pronouns and nouns make for an interesting study of approaches that either change this gender to female (Macek) or render it as neutral (Josek). In contrast, Urbánková retains the male gender of the recipient, but subtly alters his relationship with the author, starting with the opening line:

S.63/1, p.131  
 Against **my love** shall be as I am now,  
*Až přítel mého věku dožije*  
 [When **friend** lives until my (current) age]

This shift is further confirmed at the beginning of the sestet where the second mention of a "friend" is added. In this instance, it does not replace any immediately apparent section of the original sonnet:

1.9  
 For such a time do I now fortify  
*ač neuchráním život příteli,*  
 [although I will not save the life of (my) **friend**]

Lastly, in line 12, Urbánková removes both the expression "sweet love" and the word "lover" used here to describe the recipient of the sonnet and his relationship with the author:

1.12

My sweet **love's** beauty, though my **lover's** life.  
*a přenesl ju do budoucích časů:*  
 [and brought it into future times:]

As with Macek's and Josek's examples, the changes introduced by Urbánková are subtle but systematic enough to be considered deliberate. The translation creates a clear connotative shift in the reading of the poem, which in turn helps to frame it within a wider narrative of friendship instead of romantic love.

One last compelling element of Urbánková's version, and one that is particularly interesting within a wider historical context of *Sonnets* translations, are the changes between her 1976 and 1997 editions. As described in Chapter 2, the 1976 version of the *Sonnets* was a collaborative effort of seven translators, each of whom translated a portion of the whole collection. Four of these translators used these partial translations to later publish their own full version of the *Sonnets*: Hron (1986), Hodek (1995), Urbánková (1997), and Uličný (2005). Hodek is the only translator who used 12 of his sonnets from the 1976 collection without any changes. While both Hron and Uličný revised some of their translations, the changes rarely introduce any significant alterations to the semantic meaning of the *Sonnets* and were mainly intended to amend or perfect the metric structure or rhyme.

In contrast, Urbánková's 1997 full translation of the *Sonnets*, which uses 42 sonnets from the 1976 version, introduces subtle changes that have a significant impact on how the readers will interpret the relationship between the author and the male recipient. Sonnet 101 compared in Table 4.1 (p. 77) once again serves as an illustration of this point, as this poem was contributed to the collaborative collection by Urbánková. In the 1976 version she renders the phrase "on my love depends" as [*n*]a milém závisí [depends on (m.) lover], using the expression *milý* discussed above, and indicating that the author and the recipient are in a close, romantic relationship. For her 1997 version, Urbánková changed the line to *to je přítel náš* [that is our friend], replacing the element of romantic love with the image of a friend. While it could be argued that this is part of her attempt to update the language of the poem by removing the now archaic-sounding term *milý*, it was equally possible to replace it with the semantically closer *láska* [love] without any further changes being necessary. Similar shifts on a larger scale can be found in Urbánková's two versions of Sonnet 105, which opens with the appeal to "Let not my love be call'd idolatry", and then paradoxically proceeds to glorify the beloved in a way that markedly resembles religious worship. This is one of the few sonnets where the recipient is identified by the author as "my beloved" in line 2. Urbánková's renditions of the line are as follows:

S.105/2

Nor **my beloved** as an idol show,

The 1976 version (Saudek et al. 1976: 117):

*ani, že idolem je pro mne milý,*  
[nor, that **(m.) lover** is an idol to me,]

The 1997 version (Urbánková 1997: 215):

*a že mým idolem je přítel milý,*  
[and that my idol is my **dear friend**,]

The revised 1997 version retains the expression *milý* presumably to preserve the rhyme but changes the originally nominalised form (which indicated a male lover) into an adjective form which now defines the noun “friend”. As was explained at the beginning of this chapter, this use of *milý* is closest to the English adjective “dear”. While it implies some degree of affection, it completely loses the association with a romantic relationship. The same approach is then repeated in line 5, where the author describes the qualities of his beloved:

1.5  
Kind is **my love** today, tomorrow kind,

The 1976 version (Saudek et al. 1976: 117):

*Můj milý je tak dobrý, dnes a stále,*  
[**My (m.) lover** is so good, today and always]

The 1997 version (Urbánková 1997: 215):

*Můj přítel je tak dobrý, denně, stále,*  
[**My friend** is so good, daily, always]

With the same approach as applied in line 2, Urbánková removes the expression *milý* in favour of “friend”, suggesting a conscious strategy in this updated reading of the *Sonnets*. Further revisions made in the 1997 version that have an impact on the romantic reading of the collection include Sonnet 122, where the original line 12 *památník vroucí lásky v srdci mám* [a memory of **ardent love** I have in (my) heart] becomes *zápisník o tobě v mém nitru mám* [a notebook **about you** I have inside of me], referring to the gift from the author to the recipient mentioned earlier in the sonnet but losing the emotional charge of the original line. Another interesting change can be found in Sonnet 108 and the reference to a “sweet boy”, discussed in the analysis of Miroslav Macek’s translation. While the 1976 version translates the expression literally as *milý hochu* [dear boy], the revised 1997 version leaves out the address completely. While Macek’s approach can be seen as an attempt to remove the masculine

gender from the sonnet, this is most likely not the case in Urbánková's translation as there are no other signs of removing the masculine gender from the Fair Youth sequence. Instead, it could be seen as an attempt to omit a potentially controversial subject of a young (and possibly underage) lover in what is one of the most passionately worded poems in the collection.

A close textual analysis of Urbánková's 1997 *Sonnets* shows that her translation is unique amongst the 15 versions in its systematic and repeated emphasis on friendship as opposed to romantic attraction between the author and the male recipient of the *Sonnets*. There are no obvious attempts in the Dark Lady sequence to interpret the relationship with the female recipient in a less romantic and/or sexual way, and no suggestions that their bond should be read as mere friendship. Unfortunately, Jarmila Urbánková passed away in the year 2000, and she did not leave a comparably rich corpus of extratextual material related to her translation of the *Sonnets* as some of the other translators mentioned in this book (with the exception of a brief commentary mentioned below), which means that we can only guess her reasons for these decisions.

Although Urbánková's translation strategy is singular within the Czech and Slovak translations, it is again not uncommon in the translation history of the *Sonnets* in other parts of the world. Dirk Delabastita calls this type of approach an attempt "to 'spiritualize' and 'platonize' the relationship between the poet and the young man" (1985: 119) and identifies this method in several existing versions of the *Sonnets*, amongst others in a German translation by Karl Kraus (1933). All of these translation strategies could be, in turn, seen as part of a wider historical approach to the *Sonnets* that reappears regularly throughout the four centuries of their history. This reading typically relies on the claim that "love" itself had a much wider connotative range in Elizabethan England than our current understanding of it (Vilikovský 2014: 109), and that the intimate and passionate language found in the Fair Youth sequence was part of common discourse between male friends and is therefore excluded from "paederasty in any lurid sense" (Ingram and Redpath 1978: xi). This specific form of relationship, characterised as a "profound and at times agitated friendship, which involved a certain physical and quasi-sexual fascination" (ibid.), is described as an almost foreign phenomenon in our current Western perception as it is "very different from any modern concept of love or friendship between men" (Atkins 2007: 14). This line of interpretation is also frequently accompanied by a strong emphasis being placed on the sexual and erotic undertones in the Dark Lady sequence where Shakespeare "was utterly infatuated with the dark young woman, driven 'frantic-mad' by her, as a strongly sexed heterosexual well might be" (Rowse 1984: xiii), underlining further the difference between an erotic heterosexual relationship and pure, spiritual same-sex bonding. While usually unspoken, these arguments aim to reassure the reader that the *Sonnets* describe emotions that are wholly unconnected to homosexual (or pan/bisexual) desire.

However, this insistence on the past existence of a deep, loving, but exclusively spiritual male bonding experience which disappeared with modernity, and which has no relation to homosexuality as we understand it now, has long

been questioned by queer theorists. Instead, they suggest the “potential unbroomness of a continuum between homosocial and homosexual”, as hypothesised by Sedgwick (1985: 1), where love between men remains unchanged but is differently conceptualised under shifting political and ideological motivations. While many of the cited critics take pains to separate the devotion of the author to the male recipient from the present-day conceptualisation of same-sex relationships, others claim that this male bonding is part of the history of what we now understand as homosexuality. This was first proposed in Duberman, Vicinus, and Chauncey’s publication *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past* (1989) where the authors suggest the following:

Same-sex genital sexuality, love and friendship, gender non-conformity, and a certain aesthetic or political perspective are all considered to have some (often ambiguous and always contested) relationship to that complex of attributes we today designate as homosexuality.

(8)

This idea was further developed by one of the pioneers of queer historiography, David Halperin. In his paper (2000) and later book *How to do the History of Homosexuality* (2002), Halperin proposes a “modified constructionist approach to the history of sexuality by readily acknowledging the existence of trans-historical continuities but reframing them within a genealogical analysis of (homo)sexuality itself” (2000: 90). He suggests that the core issue in a historical continuum for (male) homosexuality lies in the fact that, from a 21st-century Western perspective, the word is an umbrella term for a number of different concepts that had varying connotations and meanings through history and across cultures. Instead of historicising male homosexuality as a homogenous entity, Halperin proposes separate histories of four different “prehomosexual elements”, which are all now part of the modern conceptualisation of male homosexuality. These elements are effeminacy, active sodomy or paederasty, passive sodomy or inversion, and male love and friendship. The last category is particularly relevant to the present enquiry, as it questions the claims about the intrinsic difference between the historical love expressed in the *Sonnets* and the romantic love experienced in a present-day homosexual relationship. Halperin states that:

the friendship tradition provided socially empowered men with an established discursive venue in which to express, without social reproach, sentiments of passionate and mutual love for one another, and such passionate, mutual love between persons of the same sex is an important component of what we now call homosexuality.

(2000: 101)

According to Halperin, the historical tradition of male love and friendship can be divided into two types. The first, represented primarily by heroic duos like

Achilles and Patroclus, Gilgamesh and Enkidu, or Heracles and Iolaus, includes a distinctively hierarchical structure with a “striking pattern of asymmetry” (Halperin 2000: 99) usually manifested as a hero and his less-gifted sidekick who often meets a tragic end. As Halperin points out, at different points in history, these duos were seen as sexual partners, or as friends or comrades-in-arms. In the male-dominated world, “hierarchy itself is hot: it is indissociably bound up with at least the potential for erotic signification. Hence disparities of power between male intimates take on an immediate and inescapable aura of eroticism” (ibid.). The *Sonnets* offer several examples of such an uneven relationship which lead many readers to assume that they were written for a recipient who was of a much higher social status than the author himself. Examples of these expressions of complete servitude and dependence on the male recipient include Sonnets 26 (“Lord of my love, to whom in vassalage” l.1) or 57 (“Being your slave what should I do but tend” l.1).

The second type of friendship that Halperin describes is, in contrast, based on equality and mutuality, and is often accompanied by metaphors describing the two men merging into one. The Bible provides an early example of this phenomenon in the story of David and Jonathan, where “the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul” (Samuel 1 18:1, King James Bible translation). Examples of this type of relationship, with two men joined for life in a bond based on equality, can be found in a variety of contexts across history: from medieval knights buried in shared tombs with rites usually reserved for married couples (Bray 2003), and the heroic friendships of Restoration drama (Haggerty 1999), to the lifelong devotion forged in Victorian boys-only public schools (Mangan and Walvin 1987), and to the deep bonds created between soldiers in the trenches of the First World War (Lilly 1993). The *Sonnets*, too, repeatedly refer to the mutuality and oneness of the author and the male addressee, such as in numbers 36 (“Let me confess that we two must be twain, | Although our undivided loves are one” l.1–2), or 42 (“But here's the joy, my friend and I are one” l.13).

As Halperin and other queer theorists suggest, love between men has existed throughout history; what changes is the label that our different temporal and spatial realms apply to this type of bond. Regardless of what emotions Shakespeare had in mind when he wrote about love for the Fair Youth, it is the readers’ perception of male love that will ultimately determine how their relationship is conceptualised with each new interpretation, and these differences become particularly noticeable when we look at the example of Urbánková’s *Sonnets*. Like her fellow translators during the socialist period, her 1976 translation abounds with ardent expressions of love for a clearly male recipient, using vocabulary strongly associated with romantic affection and devoid of any visible attempts to diminish the emotional impact of the *Sonnets*. These align with the contemporary idealisation of male comradeship which was promoted throughout the former Eastern Bloc and illustrated through countless images of political leaders, war heroes, and blood brothers whose bond was stronger than death – and their heterosexual relationships. In a society “organised along

homosocial lines” (Hekma 2007: 9), these relationships, together with the male love expressed in the *Sonnets*, would be seen as a simple act of male bonding. The image of homosexuality permitted by the socialist regime focused solely on sexual activity and never on romantic feelings, which is why allusions to men loving other men were not seen as related to homosexuality.

This is further supported by the paratextual material added to the 1976 version, which was written by Urbánková on behalf of all the translators that contributed to this collaborative volume. This afterword comments on the male recipient of the *Sonnets* in the following way:

Surely the least understandable part for today’s reader is the fervent celebration of the beautiful young friend, that we would rather see as dedicated to a woman. [...] There is, however, no hint anywhere of a sick passion – it is only the desire for a strange, unconditional comradeship that every human strives for in the depths of their soul, and an artist particularly so.

(172)

The wording is similar to other paratextual comments on the subject of same-sex affection in *Sonnets* translations from the socialist era, which all emphasise that there is “nothing unnatural” about the poet’s attraction to the young man (Blaho 1958: 117), that it has “nothing in common with physical passion” (Vladislav 1955: 13), and that it is “not necessary to suspect the poet of any unnatural inclinations” (Vrchlický and Klášterský 1964). The obliqueness of the language highlights the taboo surrounding the subject of homosexuality, but also demonstrates the clear division the translators, editors, and society at large saw between the purely spiritual male bonding that they read in the *Sonnets*, and sexual attraction between men. Although paratextual features such as forewords and afterwords were frequently used to add party-approved explanations that were frequently tinged with propaganda, and although many readers were fully aware of their arbitrary function, the wording nonetheless reveals how the publishers chose to treat the potentially controversial issue of same-sex love for both their censors and their readers.<sup>2</sup>

However, with the new post-revolutionary era, the influx of new information on gender and sexuality, and with the sudden visibility of gays and lesbians within the Czechoslovak and later Czech and Slovak society inevitably brought changes to the way the Fair Youth sequence of the *Sonnets* was understood. Love between men, previously a domain limited to spiritual comradeship and heroic bonding, could suddenly be also seen as symptomatic of romantic affection between partners in a homosexual relationship, and in turn, so could the *Sonnets*. If in 1976 Urbánková perceived the collection as describing the strictly non-sexual homosocial affection between men described

2 For a comprehensive discussion of paratextual features in pre-revolutionary *Sonnets* translations see Spišiaková (2018).

by some literary critics, her translation for the post-1989 era appears perfectly logical. Her use of friendship-related vocabulary and her mellowing of the passionate language of love in the *Sonnets* lessens the chances of the collection being seen as an expression of romantic love and suggests that it should be read as a celebration of close male friendship instead. At the time of the 1997 publication, Urbánková was a highly esteemed literary translator and her version was published by a small, private publishing house, making it unlikely that these decisions were the result of editorial pressures or other external agents. I propose that the changes were part of Urbánková's attempt to represent the *Sonnets* to the post-revolutionary audience in the same way as they were read by her and the majority of readers prior to 1989 and maintain the continuum of intimate male friendships that were clearly distinct from the modern umbrella conceptualisation of homosexuality.

### **Gods and Children**

This chapter has thus far looked at various strategies of the Czech and Slovak translators that move the collections' interpretative potential towards either the romantic or to the friendship based. However, one translator from the corpus of 15 introduces a wholly different interpretation of the relationship between the author and the male recipient, and he achieves this through the use of paratextual comments rather than through a translation strategy applied to the poems themselves. Václav Pinkava's version of the *Sonnets* was already introduced in Chapter 3, where the analysis highlighted his close adherence to the gendering patterns of the original collection. We will now consider Pinkava's translation on a textual level and analyse his narrative framing of the collection through his use of paratext.

Pinkava's 2010 version stands out from the rest of the collection in several ways: firstly, it was self-published through Amazon's platform Create Space which afforded the translator greater creative choice than a traditional collaboration with a publishing house. This version also retains a strong presence of the translator's voice and claims to differ from all the other Czech and Slovak versions preceding it through an innovative and original approach to the *Sonnets*. In his afterword, Pinkava explains that he translated the poems directly from the original 1609 text, as opposed to one of the countless modern edited versions, and that he deliberately avoids the sediments of scholarly analysis and academic disputes generated over the 400 years of the collection's existence. The *Sonnets* are presented as a fresh and innovative version suited for the 21st century and Pinkava emphasises that it is "unbiased, devoid of prejudice, editorial or interpretative layers and coatings" and that the translation "iconoclastically questions existing interpretations" (157). This alternative reading of the *Sonnets* is not only reflected in his translation strategies but is also visible in the in-text comments that appear attached to individual sonnets throughout the collection. While several translators in this corpus include short remarks on selected poems in the afterword of their volumes (Klásterský, Feldek, Vladislav,

Josek, and both collaborative editions), the only other translator who includes comments directly in the text of the *Sonnets* is Martin Hilský in his Atlantis edition (2004). As mentioned in Chapter 3, Hilský's version is aimed at academic and highly specialised audiences, and his comments printed as footnotes after each poem serve primarily as short summaries of the prevailing theoretical views on the meaning of individual sonnets. In contrast, Pinkava's comments accompany only about one-third of the poems, and, in line with the aim of the collection stated in the paratext, they are personal glosses on the individual themes rather than summaries of existing scholarship. An interesting aspect of these comments is their positioning within the typesetting of the edition; each page of Pinkava's version offers the Czech translation, faced by its English source text printed in the original 1609 spelling, and the comments are placed above these two versions, suggesting to the reader that they should be read prior to the poems themselves.

The themes of these comments can be divided into the following categories: remarks on formal aspects of the *Sonnets*, including some of the rhythmical or metrical irregularities and possible formal changes imposed on the poems by the publishers (S.1, 77, 99, 116, 138, 144, 146, 152), remarks on the instances of interesting wordplay, some of which Pinkava renders into Czech (S.7, 8, 23, 33, 111, 128, 130, 135, 136, 137, 143, 145, 150, 154), and Pinkava's opinion on the meaning of individual sonnets. Some of these comments (83, 121) express the translator's personal preference, while others (39, 44, 45, 87, 109, 110, 123, 129, 134, 151) offer more generalised comments on the themes that run through the *Sonnets*. For example, number 44 (45) is accompanied by a comment *živly: voda a země* [elements: water and earth], bringing attention to the motifs of sea and land mentioned in the sonnet. The rest of these comments represent the translator's suggestions on the interpretative possibilities of the sonnets, frequently focusing on the type of relationship described in them and as such relevant to the present enquiry. They can be divided into the following two categories: mythological or metaphorical explanations, and familial relationships.

The first category can be illustrated by Pinkava's comment attached to Sonnet 104. The theme of the ceaseless passage of time is expressed in this poem through the reassurance that the recipient will never be viewed as old in the eyes of the author, and that the three years of their mutual acquaintance did not alter their beauty ("Three April perfumes in three hot Junes burned, | Since first I saw you fresh, which yet art green" 1.7–8). The poem addresses the recipient as "fair friend", compelling Czech translators to choose between the feminine *přítelkyně* and the masculine *přítel*, or to replace the expression with a gender-neutral one. 13 out of the 15 translations, including Pinkava's, choose to use the masculine noun *přítel*; Miroslav Macek chooses the feminine noun *drahá* [(f.) dear], while Josek uses the gender-neutral *láska* [love, vocative case]. Pinkava's sonnet is accompanied by the following comment:

*s přesvědčením, že osloveným je abstrakce tříleté lásky, Amor*

[with the persuasion that the addressee is the abstract form of three years' worth of love, Amor]

Pinkava's interpretation removes the focus of the sonnet from the male addressee described by the author as unchangingly beautiful in his own eyes and applies it instead to the mythological god Amor as the personification of love. This interpretation is supported by Pinkava's semantic choice in his translation of the first line:

S.104/1, p.105

To me, **fair friend**, you never can be old;

*Můj nestárnoucí **plavý přítel***

[My ageless fair-haired friend]

While all other translators from this corpus either leave out the adjective "fair" or translate it into its archaic meaning of beautiful (*příteli krásný*, Klášterský 1923), Pinkava chooses the second meaning of the word and renders the friend 'fair-haired', further supporting the traditional golden-haired image of the Roman god of love. Pinkava's textual and paratextual strategy offers an alternative understanding of a poem dedicated to a male friend through a shift in perspective, where the personified Amor becomes a metaphor for three years' worth of a relationship between two unspecified and, most importantly, ungendered lovers.

Pinkava applies the same strategy on Sonnets 26 where he adds "perhaps what is meant is Eros" [*třeba je míněn Eros*]; in Sonnet 53, he is "persuaded that the described [one] is Amor" [*s přesvědčením, že popisovaným je Amor*]; Sonnet 55 refers to "Amor again, in lovers' eyes" [*zas Amor, v očích milenců*]; and he approaches Sonnet 126 "with a heretical persuasion, that this sonnet is a capricious digression, the (m.)described [one] is the Moon" [*s kacířským přesvědčením, že tento sonet je rozvernou odbočkou, popisovaným je Měsíc*]. In most cases, the suggestion that the sonnets should be read as addressed to the Roman god of Love or other anthropomorphised beings is presented as an alternative to a decidedly romantic relationship between the author and the recipient, who is also confirmed as male in Sonnets 26 and 126.

The second type of comment with which Pinkava reframes the relationship described in the *Sonnets* focuses on familial relationships, most commonly the bond between parents and children. Perhaps the most striking example of this approach can be seen in Sonnet 108, already mentioned in Macek's and Urbánková's versions and their various takes on the expression "sweet boy" in line 5. The expression in Pinkava's translation is rendered literally (*chlapče sladký*, sweet boy); however, he accompanies the sonnet with the following comment:

*no není tohle vztah otce k synovi, kterého pokřtil a obškakoval, pročpak by ne?*

[now isn't this the relationship between a father and his son, whom he baptised and fussed over, whyever not?]

The sonnet is constructed as a rhetorical question where the author asks how to find innovative ways to glorify the recipient (“What’s new to speak, what new to register, | That may express my love, or thy dear merit?” l.3–4), and answers that despite the seeming repetition, “I must each day say o’er the very same, | Counting no old thing old; thou mine, I thine” (l.6–7). Pinkava suggests that this rhetoric could also be consolidated with the relationship of a father and his son, which he further supports by his translation choices directly in the text of the sonnet:

S.108/8, p.109

Even as when first I **hallowed** thy fair name:

*Jak když ti jméno šel jsem **posvěcovat***

[As when I went to **consecrate** your name]

While several commentators agree that this line echoes the text of the Lord’s Prayer (Kerrigan 1986: 321; Mowat and Werstine 2004: 222) and is an expression of the author’s devotion towards the recipient, Pinkava decides to shift the focus from the worshipping of a lover towards the act of consecration, and through that creates the image of a father who goes to baptise his newborn son.

Similar suggestions to interpret the affection in the sonnets in the light of paternal or maternal affection can be found in Sonnet 21, where Pinkava suggests that the author could be Aemilia Bassano Lanyer in the position of a mother, who is one of the frequent candidates for the Dark Lady of the collection (Green 2006; Smith 2007). In Sonnet 32, he detects “the theme of offspring conceived out of love” [*téma o potomku počatém z lásky*]; the traditional wordplay on the word “sun” in Sonnet 34 offers the suggestion that the poem refers to the betrayal of a son instead of a lover, as presumed by the remaining translators. Sonnet 37 becomes “an almost laconic confession of a relationship of a father to his son, who is growing up in a better society” [*až lapidární vyznání vztahu otce k synovi, který vyrůstá v lepší společnosti*]; in Sonnet 42, which in traditional readings describes a love triangle between the author, the Fair Youth, and the Dark Lady, Pinkava suggests that “this is a description of a relationship between a father, a mother and their son, a [breastfeeding] baby” [*jde o popis vztahu mezi otcem, matkou a jejich synem, kojencem*]. Lastly, Sonnet 20 seems to combine both the metaphorical and familial explanations, as Pinkava views it “with the heretical persuasion, that the described [person] is a little son, with a face [taking] after his mother, or Amor” [*s kacírským přesvědčením, že popisovaným je malý synáček, s tváří po mamince, nebo Amor*].

With repeated references to heresy, Pinkava consciously questions and doubts what he perceives as the sanctified corpus of Shakespearean studies. Although some of his suggestions might seem far-fetched, and others, like Sonnets 108 or 42, might come uncomfortably close to an incestuous relationship for some readers, they help to maintain his claims of originality, as none of the other translators in the corpus make similar suggestions about these possible interpretations of the sonnets. This decision certainly aligns with Pinkava’s

objective to view the *Sonnets* in a new light and offers an entirely new spin on the collection, as further emphasised in his paratext:

Shakespeare does not have to be understood as homosexual or bisexual, (although why not), when some sonnets could relate to the relationship between a father and a son, perhaps illegitimate, kept secret, so that his dad wouldn't harm him by claiming him for his own without using a code.

(Pinkava 2010: 159)

While not directly opposing the view that the *Sonnets* are an expression of same-sex desire, Pinkava's comment also suggests that these traditional controversies could become wholly irrelevant if viewed from the alternative perspectives of mythological or familial interpretations. His emphasis on the irrelevance of Shakespeare's sexuality also resembles Josek's and Hilský's comments in the previous section, and it is worth emphasising that these three translators are the only ones who attempt to follow the original gendering of the *Sonnets* as closely as possible. As can be seen from Appendix A, Pinkava's version follows the gendering in the original collection with perhaps the greatest attention to the original choices, and almost all of his male-addressed sonnets are male-addressed also in English. If Josek and Hilský's translations suggest that the love in the *Sonnets* can be interpreted in many different ways by de-emphasising the traditional presence of the male addressee in their translations, Pinkava goes one step further and combines the same approach with additional suggestions of how the *Sonnets* could be read in narratives that focus on other kinds of love and admiration.

Pinkava was asked about his translation of the *Sonnets* in the last of the four interviews conducted for this book, and he offered the following commentary on the subject of his paratextual features:

I have attempted not to bring anything about the [gender of the] addressees into the translation itself, but I admit that the comments were meant to inject some scepticism in the readers, as antibodies against the infection of conventional interpretations, towards uncertainty and the reopening of the question of what the author wanted to say and about whom. If today's conventional reading says that a sonnet is addressed to a fair-haired youth, an objection that it could be addressed to a son, a god of love, to the moon etc. could be surprising; but it is not an attempt to exclude traditional explanations, only to express that these too are hypotheses.

(Pinkava, personal interview)

While Pinkava's attempts to find interpretations outside of the traditional narratives of the Fair Youth and Dark Lady sequences are unique within the corpus of the 15 translations, it is not a novel concept in the four centuries of Shakespearean studies. Numerous scholars have proposed theories about alternative readings of the collection and many of those focus specifically on

moving the attention away from the central theme of same-sex love. Katherine Wilson (1974) claims that the *Sonnets* were written as a parody of contemporary poetry, where the male recipient is simply a humorous subversion of traditionally female-addressed poems. Margareta de Grazia suggests that the real ‘scandal’ of the *Sonnets* at the time of their publication was not the young man, but the Dark Lady, frequently described in erotically suggestive language or possibly hinting at an extra-marital relationship (1993). While Pinkava’s suggestions of familial and abstract concepts are original in their focus, they are part of a much wider endeavour to look beyond the traditional controversy of Shakespeare’s possible relationship with a male beloved, which in many ways overshadows other qualities and historical contexts of the collection.

Above all, however, Pinkava’s interview confirms what is of course a truism in Translation Studies; namely, that every translation, no matter how strongly supported by comprehensive research or how painstakingly closely it follows the original, expresses to some extent the translator’s own reading of the text:

I truly do not find that an x number of sonnets is addressed to a fair-haired “him” as opposed to a dark-haired “her”, and in Sonnet 144 “The better angell is a man right faire: The worfer fspirit a woman collour’d il.”, I see allegorical characters of love.

(Pinkava, personal interview)

Pinkava’s is the most recent Czech or Slovak translation of the *Sonnets* thus far and represents an interesting insight into the possible future of the translated *Sonnets*. In a market saturated with so many translations, including several highly popular versions that synthesise centuries of Shakespearean scholarship with extensive research on Elizabethan slang, it is not surprising to find a version of the *Sonnets* which aims to go back to their roots and to question many of the assumptions and frameworks that inevitably surround this famous poetry collection. In a narrative that has followed the history of the collection through nearly a century of translations, we have now reached a point where reading the *Sonnets* as a collection of amorous poetry from one man to another is seen as too iconoclastic and outdated, and where the translator consciously uses paratextual features to question these assumptions and offers a range of other interpretations of the poems.

# Conclusion

Although Pinkava's *Sonnets* are the last complete translation of the collection at the time of writing this book, it is not the most recent published version. In 2017, the publishing house Garamond reprinted Jan Vladislav's 1955 translation of the *Sonnets*, the one that I found in a second-hand book shop and that first sparked my interest in the collection. This re-edition of a translation more than 60 years after its first publication highlights more than any other version of the *Sonnets* that these various translations coexist, sometimes literally sharing shelf space in bookstores and libraries (and in my case, living rooms). However, as this book has shown, each of the translations also reflects to some degree the time and place in and for which they were translated. The concluding part will reassemble the 15 translations back into their chronological order and consider them in this broader historical context. Both parts of the analysis suggest that the comparison of the different approaches to translating the *Sonnets* is most revealing if we view them as two groups divided by the revolutionary year 1989, and that is how this last section will be framed.

The most striking feature of the seven pre-revolutionary translations is the overall homogeneity of their approach towards the subject of same-sex affection in the *Sonnets*. No matter if the translators were Czech or Slovak, whether they were professional translators or amateurs who simply viewed the *Sonnets* as a compelling linguistic, poetic, and literary challenge, whether they worked in the interwar period, the first years of the communist rule in Czechoslovakia, in the depth of the post-1968 normalisation period, or in the regime's last decade in the 1980s, all the translators are remarkably consistent in one point; their work shows no intention of altering, obscuring, or removing the possibility of reading the *Sonnets* as a collection of emotionally charged poems about love from a man to another man. The analysis of the translated sonnets based on the gender of the recipient in Table 3.2 (p. 56) shows consistently high numbers of clearly male-addressed poems, ranging from 61 to 77 sonnets that can only be read with a male addressee in mind, and there are also no female-addressed sonnets in the Fair Youth sequence with the negligible exception of Vrchlický's unfinished version. At the same time, the affection described in the poems is as strong as in the source text, and none of the translations show any attempts at either diminishing or modifying this affection into

more friendship- or family-based feelings; even Sedlačková's slightly eclectic approach, which frequently uses the noun *friend*, negates any attempt to shift the interpretative potential towards the non-romantic with her equally frequent use of the noun *milý*. The consistent use of this expression throughout the pre-revolutionary translations is perhaps the most tangible evidence of this lack of any attempt to diminish the romantic intensity of the *Sonnets*, as its repetition throughout the Fair Youth sequence creates a clear narrative of a male author writing poems for his male beloved within the framework of a committed and exclusive relationship. The pre-revolutionary *Sonnets*, covering the four decades of communist rule and going back to the interwar period when homosexuality was still a criminal offence, all unquestionably celebrate love between two men.

This unity of the pre-1989 corpus is in a sharp contrast with the post-socialist translations of the *Sonnets* and their varied, and in many ways unique approaches to the subject of same-sex love. This study has revealed striking differences in the gender of the addressee; while some translators – Hodek, Urbánková, Feldek, and Uličný – seem to have continued in the tradition of pre-revolutionary *Sonnets* with 60–67 clearly male-addressed poems, other translators chose a different path. Josek's and Pinkava's versions both retain the gender neutrality of the Fair Youth sequence even at the cost of prioritising this aspect of the translation over other elements, reducing the number of male-addressed sonnets to just 20 in both cases. Hilský's 1997 version has 55 male-addressed sonnets, but this was revised down to 43 in 2012. Lastly, Macek departs from the traditional division into the Fair Youth and Dark Lady sequences completely and includes 49 female-addressed sonnets and 25 male-addressed ones within the full collection of 154 poems. Together with his paratext, this supports his framing of the collection as a coherent narrative with a female beloved at its centre.

This diversity in approaches is further emphasised through the second part of the analysis in Chapter 4. While the majority of the translators acknowledge the centrality of the theme of romantic love in the collection, and Feldek's version harks back to the narrative of a male lover from the pre-revolutionary *Sonnets* with his use of the now archaic term *milý*, other translators take a different view of this relationship. Urbánková's 1997 version systematically replaces allusions to romantic love with mentions of friendship, which become particularly striking when seen as retrospective revisions imposed on her 1976 translations. Pinkava uses paratextual comments to create a wholly original interpretation of the *Sonnets* which suggests themes of parental love or metaphors of Greek mythology as an alternative to the traditional reading with a male and female recipient. Within a time span of less than 20 years, Czech and Slovak readers were able to read a translation where the Fair Youth sequence was dedicated to a woman, but also one with almost no indication of the gender of the addressee; a translation that suggests that the *Sonnets* concern friendship or familial relationships, as well as several translations that leave the desire for the male recipient intact.

While this juxtaposition between the two historical periods necessarily simplifies some of the complexities of the translations, as shown by the ambiguous example of Sedláčková's 1987 version, the results illustrate the main point of this book, that the history of queer translations does not always follow predictable patterns that associate restrictive regimes with the censorship of homoerotic elements. In order to interpret these translation choices, it is necessary to see them in the wider context of the economic, political, and societal changes the target cultures were undergoing at the time of their publication. The Fair Youth sequence of the *Sonnets* uses highly abstract language to speak of the strongest possible feelings of love but makes no overt mention of sexual desire between the author and the male beloved. It is not difficult to imagine how this type of narrative could easily find its place in a culture that glorified and promoted strong male bonds and that did not recognise male love as symptomatic of homosexual desire. The Czech and Slovak *Sonnets* published before the year 1989 not only replicate the deep infatuation of the author in their translation, but often amplify the message with the use of nouns and verbs frequently connected to romantic relationships. In a society which did not recognise that two men can have romantic feelings for each other, these expressions would naturally have been perceived as the highest possible forms of male bonding. The *Sonnets* show no signs of the censorial interventions present in other literary works with same-sex elements from this period precisely because the link between the unwanted element of homosexuality and strong affection between persons of the same sex was blurred, if not erased completely.

Of course, this is not to say that they were interpreted as such by all readers of the collection; indeed, it is probable that many non-heterosexual readers of the *Sonnets* in this time period recognised their own feelings in Shakespeare's text, and it is particularly intriguing to imagine that the apparent blindness of the regime to this issue enabled some readers to find the representation they could not find elsewhere. As Halperin stresses in his paper that analyses Foucault's *History of Sexuality*, the changing perception of same-sex desire that Foucault describes applies to overarching power structures, and not to individuals living in particular time periods (Halperin 1998: 99–100). The structural forces of the regime also make it nearly impossible to deduce what the translators themselves thought about their work, as most of the pre-revolutionary translators cannot be asked about their choices at the time of writing and their *Sonnets* are characterised by a relative absence of the translator. With the exception of Urbánková's short afterword to the 1976 collection, all the other translations published during the socialist era are equipped with formulaic paratexts, usually written by a literary critic, whose role was to make sure that the collection was presented to the readers in a way that would comply with the ideological aims of the regime. Inevitably, these forewords and afterwords stress the importance of Shakespeare as a champion of working-class literature and include a small, oblique note assuring the reader that the poet's affection for the male recipient is not in any way connected to 'unnatural' desires. This unwillingness

to address the issue of male love so plainly depicted in the *Sonnets* was paradoxically creating the space for the “obscure areas of tolerance” for same-sex affection mentioned by Foucault (1978: 101). Just as the reticence of a school to pronounce the word *lesbians* allowed a same-sex couple to live together in a shared household, as recorded by Sokolová (2015: 237), so did the reluctance of the regime to connect Shakespeare’s *Sonnets* with male homosexuality ensure that some of the greatest poems in Anglophone literature that celebrate male love found their way into nearly every household in the republic.

These conclusions can then be extended to the post-revolutionary *Sonnets* translated for the rapidly changing Czechoslovak society following the fall of the Iron Curtain. All of the translators working after 1989 would have been aware of the fact that the affection in the *Sonnets* could no longer be hidden under the blanket of the unspoken, as had been the case during the previous regime, and that it would be interpreted in the light of the newly visible presence of gay and lesbian relationships. It is all the more fascinating to see the variety and creativity with which each of these translators approached their task in bringing the *Sonnets* to this new audience. While some continued in the footsteps of their predecessors and even reused pre-revolutionary translations without any significant changes, others decided to alter, adjust, or reinvent. One of the most interesting trends in the post-revolutionary translations is the de-gendering of the poems in Hilský’s, Pinkava’s, and Josek’s versions of the collection. As this study has highlighted, these changes required considerable linguistic dexterity and a certain prioritisation of this element in the poems during the process of translation. While all the translators emphasise that this decision was part of an attempt to bring Shakespeare’s original words closer to their Czech readers, it is also significant that these translations appeared against the backdrop of legislative changes that culminated in the recognition of civil partnerships, and the associated campaigns that emphasised that romantic affection and intimacy – not necessarily just of a sexual nature – can exist between two men or two women. Interestingly, Miroslav Macek’s version, which assigns a female recipient to a number of originally neutral or male-addressed *Sonnets*, was also published at this time, reflecting the differences in both personal reading of the *Sonnets* and in the wider opinions in society on the subject of same-sex love. The shift in the readings of the *Sonnets* in the two eras is perhaps best illustrated by the differences between the two translations by Jarmila Urbánková. The often-unambiguous language of love that was seen as wholly acceptable in 1976 could no longer be perceived as an expression of devoted male friendship in 1997, and the translator felt that the translation had to be altered for the new post-communist society. Halperin mentions this uneasiness with which male love in human history is often viewed in the present day:

It is difficult for us moderns, with our heavily psychologistic model of the human personality, of conscious and unconscious desire, and our heightened sensitivity to anything that might seem to contravene the

strict protocols of heterosexual masculinity, to avoid reading into such passionate expressions of male love a suggestion of “homoeroticism” at the very least, if not of “latent homosexuality”—formulations that often act as a cover for our own perplexity about how to interpret the evidence before us.

(2000: 101)

The Czech Republic and Slovakia in their post-1989 incarnations certainly belong to the “moderns” that Halperin describes, and it is plausible to suggest that it was partly this heightened sensitivity to non-normative masculine behaviour that caused translators and publishers in this new era to read the *Sonnets* with a degree of perplexity not present in the work of translators operating under the communist regime. Whether it was an attempt to protect Shakespeare’s name from any association with the newly visible gay and lesbian communities, steer the attention away from the gendered male love towards more universal feelings, or an attempt to reinterpret the relationship between the author and the recipient along the lines of an idealised friendship which used to be expressed with language we now view as symptomatic of romantic love, it is clear that some of the translators wished to alter their versions of the *Sonnets* compared with their predecessors and contemporaries.

The post-revolutionary era also brought unprecedented opportunities for the translators to speak directly to their readers and to embed their preferred narrative framework in their translations. Almost all of the post-revolutionary versions include paratextual material written directly by the translators where they explain the motives and reasons for their translation choices and offer comments on the possible interpretations of the poems, something that is only present in Klášterský’s very first 1923 translation and a short note from Urbánková in the 1976 version among the pre-1989 translations. It is also necessary to point out that the translators were working in an increasingly globalised world saturated with a quantity of information which would have been unimaginable to their predecessors. Not only could they access the full breadth of four centuries of Shakespearean scholarship from all over the world while working on their translations, but they were also aware that their readers had the same information at their disposal. Previous generations had grown up with very limited possibilities for learning English, not to speak of the highly elaborate Renaissance version of it, and as such, the Czech and Slovak translations of the *Sonnets* available on the socialist market were the only way that the vast majority of the population could access the collection. While it could be argued that these readers also had access to dictionaries in public libraries, these tended to be outdated and in short supply (Rubáš 2012: 201). In contrast, present-day readers are not only much more likely to be proficient in English but can freely access simplified versions of the *Sonnets* or look up any unfamiliar Elizabethan slang word online, if they choose. While of course, not every reader of the *Sonnets* is interested in such a demanding exercise and many will

prefer to simply enjoy the translated versions as poetic experiences in their own right, the source text is no longer the domain of a few chosen gatekeepers who interpret Shakespeare's words for everyone else.

Above all, what the author hopes to have demonstrated with this book is that no critical enquiry into the translations of texts with queer elements can be complete without a prior examination of how same-sex love and desire were conceptualised in the given target culture, and how these have in turn developed on their individual queer axes. While this study focuses on an example of same-sex love between men, this principle is equally applicable to texts with elements of female love and desire. This work joins several collections on censorship in translation that challenge simplified binaries between the censored and the uncensored (Billiani 2007; Chuilleanáin, Cuilleánáin, and Parris 2009) and that suggest that the lines between the two are in reality much more nuanced and complicated than is generally assumed. It is also important to point out that the very act of translation presents its own possibilities for avoiding some of the attention of the censors; as suggested by Francesca Billiani, "a text to be translated allows translators a greater degree of paradoxically productive freedom" (2007: 4). An example of this can be seen in Brian Baer's study of censorship of queer texts in Soviet Russia (2011) where he identifies the phenomenon of *productive censorship*. This permitted translators to encode homoerotic subtexts into their works that could be decoded by attentive readers but that remained invisible (or could deliberately be ignored) by the censors, and which allowed translators to publish queer content that would otherwise have been inaccessible. I suggest that in the case of the Czech and Slovak *Sonnets*, it was possible to publish poems celebrating romantic love between two men simply because the overarching conceptualisation of homosexuality did not include romantic love as one of its 'symptoms'. These results also further emphasise the need to recognise the singular position of Central European countries of the former Eastern Bloc and challenge a simplified binary categorisation of power relations along the lines of the colonial and the colonised. As Kulpa, Mizelińska, and Stasińska point out, Central and Eastern European countries are "seen as geographically close enough to become incorporated into the universal, invisible Europeaness, but, paradoxically, sufficiently far away to be discursively framed as a cultural Other" (2012: 117). This work hopes to contribute to a heightened visibility of this frequently neglected area of Translation Studies and fill some of the blank spaces in Czechoslovakia's literary history.

Finally, the results can lead to interesting conclusions for research in Translation Studies outside of overtly or covertly queer texts in Central and Eastern European countries. The links between ideology, censorship, and translation need to be examined from angles that are perhaps not obvious at first sight, and the allegedly stable concepts and delineations that are imposed on human experiences and identities have to be questioned and re-examined. Queer theory is a powerful methodological tool that not only challenges the traditional definitions of gender and desire, but also destabilises the norms,

binaries, and categories that are present in all structures of our societies. Its inclusion in the field of historical Translation Studies can further widen the possibilities for critical insight into the factors that influence the translation process, as well as help to explain how translations are perceived within their respective temporal and spatial contexts. This work encourages further examination into some of the traditional structures within the field of Translation Studies and invites researchers to look at translations through an unconventional, non-normative, *queer* lens.

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# Appendix A

The rows represent individual sonnets, numbered in the order they appear in the original 1609 edition. The columns list first the source text (WS) and then the 15 target texts in chronological order by their first publication date from left to right, each indicated by the initials of the translators as follows:

AK – Antonín Klášterský, 1923

JV – Jan Vladislav, 1955

SB – Stanislav Blaho, 1958

JV – Jaroslav Vrchlický and Antonín Klášterský, 1964

EAS – Erik Adolf Saudek, Břetislav Hodek, Zdeněk Hron, František Hrubín,  
Pavel Šrut, Miloslav Uličný, and Jarmila Urbánková, 1976

ZH – Zdeněk Hron, 1986

AS – Anna Sedláčková, 1987

MM – Miroslav Macek, 1992

BH – Břetislav Hodek, 1995

JU – Jarmila Urbánková, 1997

MH – Martin Hilský, 1997

LF – Ľubomír Feldek, 2001

MU – Miloslav Uličný, 2005

JJ – Jiří Josek, 2008

VP – Václav Pinkava, 2010

The results are marked as follows:

N – Neutral, sonnets that could have either a male or a female recipient

M – Male, sonnets that only make sense if the recipient is male

F – Female, sonnets that only make sense if the recipient is female

V – Various, sonnets that address more than one recipient



21	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	M	Z	Z	Z	M	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	M	Z	V	V	
22	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	V	V
23	Z	M	Z	Z	Z	M	Z	Z	Z	Z	M	Z	Z	M	M	M	M	Z	M	M	M	V	V	
24	Z	M	Z	Z	Z	M	Z	M	Z	M	Z	M	M	M	M	M	Z	Z	Z	M	M	V	V	
25	Z	M	Z	Z	Z	M	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	M	M	M	Z	Z	Z	M	M	V	V	
26	M	M	Z	Z	Z	M	Z	M	Z	M	Z	Z	Z	M	M	M	Z	M	M	M	M	V	V	
27	M	M	Z	Z	Z	M	Z	Z	Z	Z	M	Z	Z	M	M	M	Z	M	M	M	M	V	V	
28	M	M	Z	Z	Z	M	Z	Z	Z	Z	M	M	Z	M	M	M	Z	M	M	M	M	V	V	
29	M	M	Z	Z	Z	M	Z	Z	Z	Z	M	M	Z	M	M	M	M	Z	M	M	M	V	V	
30	Z	M	Z	Z	Z	M	Z	Z	Z	Z	M	Z	Z	F	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	F	M	V	V	
31	Z	M	Z	Z	M	M	M	M	Z	M	M	Z	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	V	V	
32	M	M	Z	Z	Z	M	Z	M	Z	M	M	Z	Z	M	M	M	Z	M	M	M	M	V	V	
33	M	M	Z	Z	Z	M	Z	M	M	M	Z	Z	Z	M	M	M	Z	Z	M	M	M	V	V	
34	F	M	Z	Z	Z	M	Z	Z	Z	M	Z	Z	Z	V	Z	M	Z	M	M	M	M	V	V	
35	Z	M	Z	M	Z	M	Z	Z	Z	M	Z	M	M	M	M	M	Z	M	M	M	M	V	V	
36	Z	M	Z	Z	M	M	Z	Z	Z	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	Z	M	M	M	M	V	V	
37	Z	M	Z	M	Z	M	Z	M	Z	M	M	M	Z	M	M	M	Z	M	M	M	M	V	V	
38	Z	M	Z	Z	Z	M	Z	M	Z	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	Z	M	M	M	M	V	V	
39	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	M	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	M	Z	Z	Z	V	V	
40	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	M	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	M	Z	Z	Z	V	V	
41	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	M	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	M	Z	Z	Z	V	V	
42	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	M	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	M	Z	Z	Z	V	V	

(Continued)

Table A.1 Continued

	WS	AK	JV	ST	VK	EAS	ZH	AS	MM	BH	JU	MH	LF	MU	JJ	VP
43	N	M	N	N	N	N	M	N	N	N	N	M	N	N	N	Z
44	N	N	N	M	N	N	N	M	F	N	N	N	N	M	N	Z
45	N	M	N	N	N	N	M	N	F	M	N	N	N	M	N	Z
46	N	N	N	N	N	M	N	N	F	M	N	N	N	N	N	Z
47	N	N	M	M	N	M	N	M	F	M	M	M	M	M	N	Z
48	N	M	M	M	M	M	M	N	F	M	M	M	N	M	N	Z
49	N	M	M	M	N	N	N	N	N	M	M	M	M	N	N	Z
50	N	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	F	M	M	M	M	N	N	Z
51	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Z
52	N	M	N	N	M	N	M	M	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Z
53	N	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M
54	N	N	M	N	N	N	M	N	N	M	N	N	N	N	N	M
55	N	N	N	N	M	M	M	N	N	N	N	M	M	N	N	N
56	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
57	N	M	M	M	N	M	M	N	F	M	M	M	M	M	N	M
58	N	M	M	M	M	M	M	N	F	M	M	M	M	N	N	N
59	N	N	M	N	N	N	M	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
60	N	N	M	N	N	N	N	N	M	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
61	N	M	N	N	M	N	M	N	F	N	M	N	N	N	N	N
62	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	M	N	N	M	N	N
63	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	F	M	M	M	M	M	N	M



Table A.1 Continued

	WS	AK	JV	ST	VK	EAS	ZH	AS	MM	BH	JU	MH	LF	MU	JJ	VP
86	N	N	M	N	N	M	M	N	N	M	N	N	N	M	N	Z
87	N	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	F	M	M	M	M	M	N	Z
88	N	M	M	M	M	N	N	M	F	M	N	N	N	Z	N	Z
89	N	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	N	M	M	M	M	M	N	Z
90	N	N	N	N	M	M	M	M	N	N	N	N	N	M	N	Z
91	N	N	N	N	M	M	M	N	N	M	N	N	N	Z	N	Z
92	N	N	M	M	M	M	M	M	F	M	M	M	N	M	N	Z
93	N	M	N	N	N	N	M	M	N	M	M	N	N	N	N	Z
94	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Z	N	Z
95	N	M	M	N	M	N	M	N	N	M	N	M	M	M	N	Z
96	N	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	F	M	M	M	M	M	N	Z
97	N	N	N	N	N	M	N	M	N	N	M	N	N	M	N	Z
98	N	N	N	N	N	N	M	M	N	N	M	N	N	M	N	Z
99	N	M	M	N	F	M	N	M	F	M	M	N	N	N	N	Z
100	N	M	N	N	M	N	N	M	N	M	M	N	N	N	N	Z
101	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	F	M	M	M	M	M	N	M
102	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Z
103	N	N	M	N	N	N	N	M	F	N	N	N	N	N	N	Z
104	N	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	F	M	M	M	M	M	N	M
105	N	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	F	M	M	M	M	M	N	M
106	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	M	F	N	N	N	N	N	N	Z

107	Z	M	Z	M	M	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	M	F	Z	Z
108	Z	M	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	M	F	Z	Z
109	Z	M	Z	M	M	M	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	M	Z	M	Z	M	Z	M	Z	M	F	Z	Z
110	Z	M	Z	M	Z	M	Z	Z	Z	Z	M	Z	Z	M	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	M	F	Z	Z
111	Z	M	Z	M	M	Z	Z	M	Z	Z	M	Z	M	M	Z	M	Z	Z	Z	Z	M	F	F	Z
112	Z	M	Z	M	M	Z	Z	M	Z	Z	M	Z	M	M	Z	M	Z	Z	Z	Z	M	F	F	Z
113	Z	M	Z	M	M	Z	Z	M	Z	Z	M	Z	M	M	Z	M	Z	Z	Z	Z	M	F	F	Z
114	Z	M	Z	M	M	Z	Z	M	Z	Z	M	Z	M	M	Z	M	Z	Z	Z	Z	M	F	F	Z
115	Z	M	Z	M	M	Z	Z	M	Z	Z	M	Z	M	M	Z	M	Z	Z	Z	Z	M	F	F	Z
116	Z	M	Z	M	M	Z	Z	M	Z	Z	M	Z	M	M	Z	M	Z	Z	Z	Z	M	F	F	Z
117	Z	M	Z	M	M	Z	Z	M	Z	Z	M	Z	M	M	Z	M	Z	Z	Z	Z	M	F	F	Z
118	Z	M	Z	M	M	Z	Z	M	Z	Z	M	Z	M	M	Z	M	Z	Z	Z	Z	M	F	F	Z
119	Z	M	Z	M	M	Z	Z	M	Z	Z	M	Z	M	M	Z	M	Z	Z	Z	Z	M	F	F	Z
120	Z	M	Z	M	M	Z	Z	M	Z	Z	M	Z	M	M	Z	M	Z	Z	Z	Z	M	F	F	Z
121	Z	M	Z	M	M	Z	Z	M	Z	Z	M	Z	M	M	Z	M	Z	Z	Z	Z	M	F	F	Z
122	Z	M	Z	M	M	Z	Z	M	Z	Z	M	Z	M	M	Z	M	Z	Z	Z	Z	M	F	F	Z
123	Z	M	Z	M	M	Z	Z	M	Z	Z	M	Z	M	M	Z	M	Z	Z	Z	Z	M	F	F	Z
124	Z	M	Z	M	M	Z	Z	M	Z	Z	M	Z	M	M	Z	M	Z	Z	Z	Z	M	F	F	Z
125	Z	M	Z	M	M	Z	Z	M	Z	Z	M	Z	M	M	Z	M	Z	Z	Z	Z	M	F	F	Z
126	Z	M	Z	M	M	Z	Z	M	Z	Z	M	Z	M	M	Z	M	Z	Z	Z	Z	M	F	F	Z
127	Z	M	Z	M	M	Z	Z	M	Z	Z	M	Z	M	M	Z	M	Z	Z	Z	Z	M	F	F	Z
128	Z	M	Z	M	M	Z	Z	M	Z	Z	M	Z	M	M	Z	M	Z	Z	Z	Z	M	F	F	Z
129	Z	M	Z	M	M	Z	Z	M	Z	Z	M	Z	M	M	Z	M	Z	Z	Z	Z	M	F	F	Z

(Continued)

*Table A.1* Continued

	WS	AK	JV	ST	VK	EAS	ZH	AS	MM	BH	JU	MH	LF	MU	JJ	VP
130	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
131	N	F	F	F	F	F	N	F	F	F	F	N	F	F	F	F
132	N	F	F	F	F	F	N	N	N	F	F	F	N	N	F	N
133	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V
134	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V
135	N	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	N	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
136	N	F	F	F	F	F	F	N	N	F	N	N	F	N	F	F
137	N	M	N	F	M	F	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	F	F	N
138	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
139	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	N	F	F
140	N	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
141	F	F	F	F	N	F	F	F	F	F	F	N	F	F	N	F
142	N	F	F	F	M	F	N	F	N	F	F	N	N	F	F	N
143	N	F	N	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	M	F	N	N	F	F
144	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V
145	F	F	F	F	N	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
146	N	N	N	N	N	F	N	N	N	N	F	N	F	N	N	N
147	N	F	F	F	N	F	N	F	F	N	N	F	F	F	N	N
148	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	F	F	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
149	N	F	F	F	F	N	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	N	F	F



# Index

- AIDS crisis 21, 23  
*A Lover's Complaint* 28  
Anderson, E. 23, 64, 80  
*Astrophil and Stella* (Sidney) 29  
*As You Like It* 29, 31  
Auden, W. H. 32  
Austria 15; Austro-Hungarian Empire 11, 13
- Baer, B. J. 2, 5–6, 37, 42, 103  
Benson, J. 31, 61  
Billiani, F. 43, 103  
Blaho, S. 9, 37, **48**, 53, **56**, 65, **77–79**, 91  
Bray, A. 33, 90
- censorship 2, 6, 36, 42, 67, 100, 103; productive 6, 103; in socialist Czechoslovakia 42–45  
Chauncey, G. 2, 13  
Czechoslovak secret service 16
- de Grazia, M. 97  
Delabastita, D. 63, 88  
de Vere, E. 47, 65  
Duberman, M. B. 2, 13  
Duncan-Jones, K. 28n1–29, 31, 61, 67
- Fanel, J. 14  
Feldek, E. 7, 9, 38, 47, **56**, **77**, 79–80, 93, 99  
Foucault, M. 2, 21–22, 64, 100–101  
French (translation of Sonnets) 63  
Freund, K. 16
- German (translation of Sonnets) 61, 88  
grammatical gender 8, 51–52, 59, 70
- Hall, R. 17, 45  
Halperin, D. 2, 89–90, 100–102
- Hamlet* 28, 43  
Hekma, G. 18, 91  
Henry VIII 32  
Hilský, M. 7, 9, 43, 46–**48**, **56**, 63, 65–68, 71–73, **77**, 79, 93, 96, 99, 101  
Hirschfield, M. 14  
Hodek, B. 37–38, 44, 46, **48**, **56**, **77**, 86, 99  
homohysteria 23, 64, 80  
homophobia 4, 22–24, 31, 64, 80  
homosexuality decriminalisation 14–15, 32  
Hron, Z. 7, 38, **48**, **56**, **77**, 79, 86  
Hrubín, F. 38, **48**  
Hungary 6, 13; *see also* Austria
- Ibson, J. 20, 23
- James VI/I 33  
Jelínek, F. 14  
Josek, J. 9, 43, 47–**48**, **56**, 58, 65, 68–74, **77**, 79, 85–86, 93, 96, 99, 101
- Klásterský, A. 35, 38, **48**, **56–57**, **77**, 91, 93–94  
Kosofsky Sedgwick, E. 2, 6, 89
- Lanyer, A. B. 95  
Lincoln, A. 80  
Lorenková, V. 14, 17, 21–23  
*Love's Labour's Lost* 43
- Macbeth* 28  
Macek, M. 7, 9, 46, **48**, **56–64**, 67, 69, 70, 73, **77**, 79, 85–87, 93–94, 99, 101  
*Merchant of Venice, The* 5, 31, 68  
metaphor 2, 59, 69, 71, 76, 90, 93–95, 99  
Michelangelo 35–36  
mythology 2, 93–94, 96, 99
- Normalisation period 37–40, 98

- Othello* 28, 33
- paratext 2, 5, 7, 9–10, 42, **48**, 58, 61, 63n4, 66, 69, 71–72, 74–75, 79, 83, 91–94, 96–97, 99–102
- Partridge, E. 32, 67
- Pinkava, V. 7n7, 47–**48**, **56**, 58, 65, 68–69, 71, 73, **77**, 79, 92–97, 99
- Portugal 6, 40
- Prague Spring 36, 38, 45
- queer temporality 27
- Romeo and Juliet* 29, 79
- Rubáš, S. 2, 35, 39–44, 102
- Saudek, E. A. 38, **48**, **56–57**, **77**, 87
- Schindler, F. 15–17, 20
- Sedlačková, A. 7n4, 9, 38, **48**, 53, **56**, 65, **77**, 81–84, 99, 100
- sexology 11, 14, 16–18, 45
- SOHO (Sdružení organizací homosexuálních občanů) 21
- Sokolová, V. 16–18, 20–24, 26, 45, 101
- Sonnets*: dedication 30, 62, 63; metric structure 29, 37, 53, 66, 81–82, 86, 93; procreation sequence 29, 57, 62, 70, 84
- Spain 6, 40, 43
- Šrut, P. 38, **48**
- StB/ŠtB *see* Czechoslovak secret service
- Thorpe, T. 30
- Toury, G. 2, 63
- transgender 5, 11, 13
- Troilus and Cressida* 31
- Twelfth Night* 31, 68
- Uličný, M. 7, 35, 37–38, 47–**48**, **56–57**, 63, 65–66, 76–**77**, 86, 99
- Urbánková, J. 38, 46, **48**, **56**, **77**, 79, 81–88, 90–92, 94, 99–102
- Velvet Revolution 3, 11, 16, 21–23, 37, 40, 45–47, 64, 83
- Vicinus, M. 2, 13
- Vilikovský, J. 9, 35, 37, 88
- Vladislav, J. 1n1, 35n4, 37, 41, 44, 46–**48**, 53, **56**, 63, **77–79**, 91, 93, 98
- Vrchlický, J. 9, 37–38, **48**, **56–57**, 63, **77**, 91
- Well of Loneliness*, *The* (Hall) 17, 45
- Wilde, O. 31