

Censoring Sexuality – the Filtered Reception of Sexual Content in Portuguese Cinemas During the Dictatorship: The case of *Helga*

Censurar la sexualidad – la recepción filtrada de la sexualidad en los cines portugueses durante la dictadura: el caso de Helga

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Abstract: Censorship under the Portuguese *Estado Novo* (1933-1974) exerted influence on foreign films from the initial translation stage through to the final approval or rejection of a film for the cinema. The *Estado Novo* was an authoritarian State whose prudish morality and fear of uncontrolled ideas cast a wary eye on eroticism and sexuality. Scenes of kissing or nudity were cut before foreign films reached Portuguese cinemas. Sexual allusions, erotic dialogues or comments were omitted or overwritten in a more neutral tone. *Helga – vom Werden des menschlichen Lebens*, directed by Erich F. Bender in 1967, a sex-education film, was the only one of its kind shown in Portugal during the dictatorship.

Key words: censorship; subtitling; sexuality; Estado Novo; Portugal.

Resumen: La censura del *Estado Novo* portugués (1933-1974) influyó en las películas extranjeras desde la traducción inicial hasta la aprobación o rechazo final. El *Estado Novo* era un Estado autoritario, de moral prudente y de miedo a ciertas ideas incontroladas y que se desconfiara del erotismo y la sexualidad. Las escenas de besos o desnudos fueron cortadas antes de que las películas extranjeras llegaran a los cines portugueses. Alusiones sexuales, diálogos o comentarios eróticos se omitieron o se sobrescribieron en un tono más neutral. *Helga – vom Werden des menschlichen Lebens*, dirigida por Erich F. Bender en 1967, una película de educación sexual, fue la única de este tipo que se proyectó en Portugal durante la dictadura.

Palabras clave: censura; subtítulo; sexualidad; Estado Novo; Portugal.

1. INTRODUCTION

Prior to the 19th century sexuality was relatively freely expressed, however in times of industrialization, hunger and disease, sexuality took its place in the home with the family and was for reproduction, not pleasure. According to Michel Foucault (1978: 3) «silence became the rule», sexuality was restricted and repressed and where there is repression, there is power. In return, talking about sexuality is an expression of freedom or, in Foucault's words: «A person who holds forth in such language places himself to a certain extent outside the reach of power; he upsets established law; he somehow anticipates the coming freedom» (Foucault 1978: 6).

During the dictatorship in Portugal, the *Estado Novo*¹, from 1933 to 1968 governed by the dictator António de Oliveira Salazar and from 1968 to 1974, until the revolution on 25 Abril, by Marcello Caetano, censorship was used as an instrument of power to quash any calls for freedom, especially in relation to sexuality. The three options available to the censors when reviewing a film were: «*aprovado sem cortes*» (approved without cuts), «*aprovado com cortes*» (approved with cuts) and «*reprovado*» (banned). Astonishingly, against this backdrop, one German sexual education film, *Helga – vom Werden des menschlichen Lebens*², was «approved with cuts» for Portuguese audiences. As sexuality was rigorously censored under the *Estado Novo*, this discovery raises a number of questions. As part of my research, I will explore issues such as: how such a film was approved by censorship, and whether there was something different about *Helga* so this film could reach the Portuguese cinemas being the only of its genre. And from a translation studies' perspective: how was the film translated and was censorship implemented at a linguistic level? This paper will analyse the film,

1. New State.

2. Portuguese title: *Helga – O Segredo da Maternidade* [the secret of maternity], English title: *Helga – On the Origins of Human Life*.

the context of sexuality under the *Estado Novo* and the changes made to *Helga* for Portuguese audiences³.

2. HELGA IN TWO DIFFERENT CONTEXTS

The film *Helga – vom Werden des menschlichen Lebens* was directed by Erich F. Bender and premiered on 22 September 1967 in Frankfurt. The original version is 77 minutes in length and features the two main characters, Helga (Ruth Gassmann) and her husband (Eberhard Mondry). The film was exported to numerous countries, such as Japan, Algeria, the Fiji Islands and Portugal. It attracted a total of 600 million spectators to the cinemas worldwide (WDR 2007). *Helga* was commissioned by the health minister, Käte Strobel, with financial support from the German Federal Centre for Health Education⁴. The idea was to restrict the content of the film to the «relaying of scientifically grounded facts»⁵ about human reproduction. The film accompanies Helga, a young pregnant woman throughout her pregnancy, from visits to the doctor and pre-natal classes, to the birth of the baby. The film ends with the new-born baby's first bath. The film features documentary sequences explaining the biological processes in medical lectures illustrated by short animations, microscope shots and endoscopic images. Red Cross helpers had to attend the film sessions because many, particularly male spectators fainted in view of a real birth (Iken 2017, Filmdienst 2018).

In Portugal, the premiere of *Helga – O Segredo da Maternidade* was in Lisbon on 24 of July 1969 (SNI-IE-ECF 1969).

António Tavares, in 1972, saw *Helga*, the «scandalous film of the season»⁶, which was the title he gave to a text about his memories in 2013. He tells how he saw the film when he was only 20 years old, when it was shown to the young recruits to the Portuguese Air Base Ota, as an educational measure. He writes:

No entanto, [...] montaram um grande aparato de ambulâncias, médicos e enfermeiros prontos a entevir em qualquer altura. Lembro-me também de que a sala de cinema era patrulhada por olhares atentos a qualquer acontecimento provocado pela projecção do filme.

3. All information concerning the censorship measures as well as the subtitle lists were provided by the Portuguese National Archive (*Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo – ANTT*).

4. *Bundeszentrale für gesundheitliche Aufklärung*, founded in 1967 by Käte Strobel.

5. «*Helga [sollte sich] auf eine wissenschaftlich fundierte Faktenvermittlung [beschränken]*» (cited in Iken 2017).

6. «*O Filme Escândalo da Temporada*» (Tavares 2013).

Nevertheless, [...] an apparatus of ambulances, doctors and nurses who could intervene at any moment was provided. I also remember that the room was patrolled by attentive looks directed at any kind of incident provoked by the film (Tavares 2013).

In Germany around the year 1967, when *Helga* premiered, the first post-war generation accused their parents of repressing the National Socialist's crimes and only being interested in reconstructing the country economically, while many of the former Nazis were still in positions of power. They revolted against the conservatism of a generation still marked by national socialist ideology.

For the first time, mass media spread news, films and music on an international scale, provoking a feeling of being part of a worldwide community. What began as an expression of juvenile unease, in the later 1960s started to become political. The war in Vietnam, where more than 300.000 Vietnamese and US-Americans had died, played an important role, escalated in 1967, without an end in sight (Cohn-Bendit 2007: 15, Tagesschau 2010a).

The USA-friendly and anti-communist Shah of Persia, Mohammad Resa Pahlewi, visited Germany on 2 June 1967. During the clashes between Shah-supporters, protesters and the police, a student was hit by a police bullet. Benno Ohnesorg succumbed to his injury shortly afterwards. His death led to a radicalisation of the opposition (Tagesschau 2010b).

The publishing house Axel Springer stirred up hatred against students and left-wing-protesters, Rudi Dutschke, a spokesman of the student's protests, argued openly against these defamations. On 11 April 1968, he was victim of an assassination attempt⁷. This incident was the release for another peak of protests. The opposition considered Springer responsible for the attack, newspapers were burned and the publishing house was targeted (Tagesschau 2010b, Spiegel Online 2008, Cohn-Bendit 2007: 16).

In 1967, when housing unmarried couples was illegal, the pill was officially handed out only to married women, abortion was forbidden, homosexuality was punishable and fathers did not enter the delivery room, people searched for (sexual) liberation. Freedom, love, permissiveness, refusal and protest are some keywords that describe the young German generation's attitude to life. On 12 January 1967 the famous *Community 1*⁸ was founded, a model against the bourgeois nuclear family and a response to the conservative society. A photograph taken of seven community members, all naked, facing a wall, leaning against it as if they were being frisked by the police, with one little boy looking at the photographer, is deeply burned into the collective memory. They

7. The attempt was carried out by Josef Bachmann, who had a nationalist newspaper with him, titling: «*Stoppt den roten Rudi jetzt!*» – Stop red Rudi, now!

8. *Kommune 1*.

believed that truly free sexuality could avert fascism and rebelled against what they had experienced on their own bodies: the bourgeois and oppressive sexual morals of the 1950s and 1960s (Spiegel Online 2007).

The fact that this film was produced in this atmosphere, commissioned by the Health Minister, can be interpreted as an effort to offer a conservative counterbalance to the people's movement. In fact, thousands of spectators assailed the cinemas to see a sober, non-erotic sexual education film. But those who had come to see *Helga* in hope of sexual permissiveness were disappointed, although they did not have long to wait. Half a year later, within four months of its release in February 1968, five million Germans had watched Oswald Kolle's two-part film *Das Wunder der Liebe* ⁹, in which practical examples from the sex life of married couples were mixed with scientific commentaries, just like in *Helga*. A new genre of pseudo-documentaries was born: German sex report films. *Intim-Report* (Joachim Mock, Rubin Sharon, Jörg van Encke, 1968), which gave its name to the genre, premiered only one month later, in March 1968. It marked the beginning of a wave of soft porn film production in Germany that continued until the late 1970s (Iken 2017, Spiegel Online 2007, Faulstich 2005: 173).

Against this backdrop and because of its success, *Helga – vom Werden des menschlichen Lebens* was followed by two more episodes: *Helga und Michael*¹⁰ (Erich F. Bender, 1968) and *Helga und die Männer – Die sexuelle Revolution*¹¹ (Erich F. Bender, 1969).

In Portugal, in September 1968, António de Oliveira Salazar was replaced by Marcello Caetano as a Prime Minister. Large sections of the population hoped the country would become more liberalised (Morais 2011: 29f).

Despite of this political change and the hope for an opening up of the country, in 1969, when the film *Helga* premiered, Portugal was fighting an ever-intensifying Colonial War, which had started in 1961. In 1969, 160.000 soldiers fought in Africa and half of the national budget was spent on the war (Reis 2009).

One of the consequences of the increasing number of recruits, accompanied by a peak in emigration between 1969 and 1971¹² (many men emigrated in order to avoid their enlistment), was a lack of workers. The remaining workers fought some successful strikes in 1969. Though, after a year of increasing power of the labour unions, in 1970, Caetano tried to contain the worker's force by issuing new decrees that would limit their recently gained autonomy again (Friedrich 2016: 295 and 305f, Pereira 2009: 504).

9. Portuguese title: *O Milagre do Amor*, English title: *The Miracle of Love*.

10. Portuguese title: *Helga e Miguel*, English title: *Michael and Helga*.

11. English title: *Helga and Men – The Sexual Revolution*.

12. 1970: approx. 1.800.000 emigrants, 8.568.703 habitants (Friedrich 2016: 371).

The students protested throughout the 1960, criticising the dictatorship and the Colonial War and demanding the democratisation of the higher education system. The 17 April 1969 is, however, considered the beginning of the student crisis. During the inauguration of the Mathematics Faculty of Coimbra, Alberto Martins, the Chair of the Students Association, was prevented from speaking. After this incident, student activists were arrested, some of them even were sent to fight in Africa, students boycotted the university and the Minister of Education and the University Director of Coimbra resigned (JPN 2008).

While the Portuguese emigrated, tourists began to discover Portugal. In 1967 two million tourists visited Portugal. In 1970 the number rose to three million. Caetano even allowed foreign investments which, together with the foreign currencies brought into the country by emigrants and tourists, contributed to balancing the high costs of the Colonial War (Lobo 2010: 94). The financial benefits also explain the apparent opening up of the country at the end of the 1960s and, in this context, as Ana Bela Morais describes, also people became more broad minded, «as they discovered what happened in the outside world, they got aware of the lack of democracy and the Portugal's backwardness»¹³ (Morais 2013b: 597).

Morality was strict, conservative and defined by the State's ideology that prescribed monogamous and heterosexual sexuality in the context of marriage for the purposes of human reproduction, thus guaranteeing the conservation of the Portuguese people. This perspective was supported by the Catholic Church, but also by medical arguments that controlling and regulating sexuality would protect society from diseases. There was, however, a significant difference in the way boys and girls were judged for their sexual behaviour. While girls had to avoid being seen as impure or indecent, boys had more freedoms and were expected to test their virility (Policarpo 2011: 49 and 51).

With a rising trend at the end of the decade, more and more bare skin was to be seen in printed media, such as advertising for feminine underwear or pictures of international and national celebrities in saucy poses wearing a bikini or lingerie (Morais 2011: 31).

The only Portuguese film with clear sexual content was produced shortly before the end of the *Estado Novo*. The film, entitled *Sofia e a Educação Sexual*¹⁴ (Eduardo Geadá, 1974), was banned by censorship at the time and premiered only after the Carnation Revolution, on 1 October 1974 (Cunha 2018:546, Caminhos do Cinema Português 2018).

13. «A estas mudanças estruturais alia-se uma grande abertura das mentalidades que, ao conhecer o que se passa no mundo exterior, toma consciência da falta de democracia e do atraso português».

14. Sofia and sexual education.

3. CENSORING SEXUALITY IN THE ESTADO NOVO

Nudity, kissing, touching someone in an explicit way, even wearing transparent clothing or allusions to sexuality or eroticism were rigorously censored. «Everything that, in a close or distant view, could eventually have any contact with sex is refused and suppressed. From the “excessive lack of clothes” to homosexuality»¹⁵. This observation by Lauro António summarises quite clearly how the censors handled sexuality during the *Estado Novo*.

More films were censored because of their sexual content than due to political or religious reasons. Even when it comes to non-erotic genres, such as horror or war films, often the horrifying or violent images were not the first scenes to be cut. Also, as Ana Bela Morais observes, the censor’s activities over the years of the dictatorship’s existence did not change significantly (Morais 2011: 31ff, Morais 2013a: 192f).

Interestingly, when Marcello Caetano replaced Salazar as Prime Minister in 1968, one of his first acts, the reorganisation of the censorship board, signalled a possible break with the past¹⁶. In fact, he showed some willingness to ease the strict policies. The year 1969 is considered as the most liberal period during the *Estado Novo*. The censorship criteria became a little less strict and although they were tightened again a year later in reaction to the impasse of the Colonial War and an increasing opposition, more than a hundred films were resubmitted to the censors during Caetano’s administration (Cabrera 2013: 57, Morais 2011: 29ff, António 2001: 45).

One such example is the film *Sons and Lovers*¹⁷ (Jack Cardiff, 1960). It was first submitted for censorship in 1960 and finally approved with cuts in 1971. The plot is a complex story about a young man whose erratic and failing love life is inhibited by a manipulative and domineering mother, who emotionally stifles her son’s affection for other women. However, the censors were seemingly not bothered by this psychological analysis of a mother-son-conflict. On the contrary, they seem to appreciate the relationship and would rather criticise the son’s reaction:

O filme, embora trabalhando um tema de amor maternal e filial, apresenta, quanto mim, caso de:

- amor livre;
- continuação de uma falta grave para a qual não há a devida separação moral;

15. «Tudo quanto de perto ou de longe possa ter algum contacto com o sexo é reprovado e reprimido. Desde a “excessiva falta de roupa” até ao homossexualismo» (António 2001: 66).

16. The National Information, Popular Culture and Tourism Office (*Secretariado Nacional da Informação, Cultura Popular e Turismo – SNI*) was called, from October 1968 on, State’s Office for Information and Tourism (*Secretaria de Estado de Informação e Turismo – SEIT*).

17. Portuguese title: *Filhos e Amantes* and later: *Filhos e Apaixonadas*.

- *de adultério e ainda;*
- *problemas de ordem religiosa.*

This film, although it deals with a case of mother-son love, in my opinion is an example of:

- free love;
- continuity of bad misconduct for which there is no necessary moral distinction;
- adultery and furthermore;
- problems of religious nature (SNI-IE-ECF 1960).

Distributors also submitted some German sex report films to the censors, but were unsuccessful. The abovementioned films, *Das Wunder der Liebe, Helga und Michael* and also *Intim-Report* were banned (SNI-IE-ECF 1968a, 1970a and 1968b). In the case of *Intim-Report*, one of the censors wrote:

Trata-se de mais um filme sobre temas sexuais, pertencente à serie alemã que ultimamente nos tem sido oferecida. São postos, com a maior naturalidade, os problemas das mãis (sic!) solteiras, aborto, homossexualismo nas peisões (sic!), infrene sexualidade em ambientes juvenis, etc., tudo sem a conveniente reprovação moral.

This is another film about sexual issues that is part of a German series that has been presented to us recently. With the greatest naturalness problems of single mothers, abortion, homosexuality in passion, uninhibited sexuality in youthful ambience etc. are depicted, all without the appropriate moral disapproval (SNI-IE-ECF 1968b).

The relationship between brother, sister and the sister's lover is the stumbling block in the drama *In Search of Gregory*¹⁸ (Peter Wood, 1969), yet the brother's affection for his sister is ambivalent. The censors approved the film with one cut, but pointed out that it was «a difficult piece, in which a certain sense of incest occurs»¹⁹ (SNI-IE-ECF 1970b).

These comments attest to the censor's moral disapproval and reveal some of the main (sexual) issues that were censored during the *Estado Novo*: unmarried mothers, abortion, homosexuality, juvenile sex, free love, adultery, incest and even religious conflicts.

18. Portuguese title: *Convite ao Pecado*.

19. «É uma obra difícil, na qual se passa um certo sentido de incesto».

4. THE CENSORING OF *HELGA*

Before paying all the import taxes, a film could be submitted for preliminary analysis. This happened when the distributor was unsure whether a film would be approved by the censors in a regular censorship session. Paying for the preliminary analysis was cheaper than importing a film which might later be banned (Pieper 2018: 158).

Helga was first submitted for pre-censoring on 1 January 1969. As usual, the distributor *Filmes Lusomundo S.A.R.L* would submit a copy of the film, the plot, the credits and a subtitle list. One of the main concerns in the extensive censorship process was proving that the film was not erotic at all, but rather educational and scientific. In order to avoid feared «undesired reactions»²⁰, the commission put forward an exceptional regulation of two different sessions: one for an audience aged 21 years upwards, and another one for an audience aged 17 years upwards, in special sessions. In order to approve this exception, the State's Secretary even issued a decree-law concerning *Helga*. Finally, the film was approved under the following conditions:

- a) *Eliminar a cena do filho e da mãe nua;*
 - b) *Locução e diálogo em língua portuguesa;*
 - c) *Alterar o texto correspondente às legendas 74, 75, 92 e 93;*
 - d) *Apresentação de um subtítulo;*
 - e) *Em toda a publicidade constará sempre a indicação de que se trata de um filme educativo, de carácter documental e cientificamente elaborado;*
 - f) *Aviso junto das bilheteiras de que o filme não é recomendável para as pessoas impressionáveis.*
- a) Eliminate the scene with the son and the naked mother;
 - b) Narration and dialogues in Portuguese language;
 - c) Alter the text corresponding to the subtitles 74, 75, 92 and 93;
 - d) Presentation of an additional title;
 - e) All advertising must state that it is an educational film, of documental character and scientifically elaborated²¹;
 - f) A notice at the ticket offices that the film is not recommended for sensitive people (SNI-IE-ECF 1969).

On 18 April 1969 *Filme Lusomundo* proposed to use the additional title *O Segredo da Maternidade*²², which was accepted on April 23. Three months later, on July 15, the

20. «*Reacções indesejáveis*» (SNI-IE-ECF 1969).

21. Underlined by the censors.

22. The secret of Maternity.

distributor submitted the film for a regular censorship session, probably having carried out all censor's instructions formulated after the preliminary analysis.

As the above-cited conditions state, the film had to be narrated in Portuguese, which was quite unusual in Portugal, where films traditionally are subtitled²³. The Portuguese version of *Helga* is no longer available, so the subtitle list, which probably is not the final wording, serves as a basis for this analysis. In spite of this, one can be sure that any final version relied on these subtitles, since the censors worked with them and used them as a basis for their comments, instructions and initial approval.

The following examples were selected according to relevance and illustrate how the three possible censorship measures, cuts, omissions and manipulation, were used in this special film.

4.1. Cuts

Example 1

On the instructions of the censors, the scene of the naked mother and her son was cut. It contains the following dialogue:

Original spoken text	Translation	Portuguese subtitle 56c-56e
<i>Sowas wie ich hast du da nicht.</i>	You don't have anything like me there.	<i>Tu não tens uma coisa que eu tenho.</i>
<i>Du meinst einen kleinen Penis? Natürlich nicht.</i>	You mean a small penis? Of course not.	<i>Claro que não.</i>
<i>Das haben nur kleine Jungen und große Männer.</i>	Only little boys and grown men have that.	<i>Isso só têm os rapazes pequenos e os homens feitos.</i>

It must have been the dialogue, the fact that the boy points to his naked mother or even the word «penis» that made the censors to take action, since another sequence where *Helga* is naked in the shower did not raise any objections.

23. In light of an illiteracy rate of around 20% in 1969 (Friedrich 2016: 371), this decision would guarantee that a larger audience had access to the film.

Example 2:

Apart from this cut, ordered by the censors, another scene was significantly shortened. Since there is no mention of this omission in the censors' documents, it can be concluded that it was the film distributor who cut out the beginning and end of the scene even before it was submitted for pre-censorship.

This scene begins with a lecture by a doctor on abortion, birth regulation and various methods of contraception. After an explanation of the temperature method, the doctor states that the contraceptive pill is the only safe form of birth control. He argues: «we must leave it up to the parents to decide whether, when and how many children they want»²⁴. The section on abortion, birth control and the promotion of the pill is missing. Only the description of the temperature method remained in the film. One can only assume that in light of increased emigration and the effects of the Colonial War, which both reduced the Portuguese population, the most insecure contraceptive method was recommended deliberately.

4.2. Omission of subtitles

The simple omission of subtitles was a commonly used measure in censored films in Portugal. The images, sound and speech of the original film were kept, but subtitles were removed. This intervention was quite obvious and audiences would occasionally express their discontent in the cinemas (Pieper 2018: 171).

In the case of *Helga*, the omitted sentences were already absent in the subtitle list submitted to the censorship authority, which means that they were not deleted by the censors but were an act of self-censorship by the translator.

24. «Aber gerade darum müssen wir den Eltern die freie Entscheidung überlassen, ob, wann und wie viele Kinder sie haben wollen».

Example 1

The following example is a scene with a toddler running naked outside:

Original spoken text	Translation	Portuguese subtitle 69	Translation subtitle
<i>Sie freuen sich ihrer Nacktheit und haben ein gesundes Körpergefühl.</i>	They enjoy their nakedness and have a healthy body feeling.	<i>Alegam-se com a própria nudez e sentem-se saudáveis.</i>	They enjoy their own nakedness and feel healthy.
<i>Den Erwachsenen ist es durch die Tabus, die eine Reihe von Generationen vor uns aufgerichtet hat, verloren gegangen.</i>	Adults have lost it through the taboos, raised by a number of generations before us.	#	#

A sceptical statement about taboos and a lack of physical freedom and the implicit (German) ideology of a free and uninhibited «body feeling» might have been too closely associated with the pursuit of freedom.

Example 2

The second example is a dialogue between two women working in an office. One of them is crying because she was fired due to her pregnancy:

Original spoken text	Translation	Portuguese subtitle 395-400	Translation subtitle
<i>Was ist denn mit dir los, Irmgard?</i>	What's the matter with you, Irmgard?	<i>Que tens tu?</i>	What's the matter with you?
<i>Er hat mir gekündigt.</i>	He quit me.	<i>Fui despedida.</i>	I've been dismissed.
<i>Was, dir? Ausgerechnet dir?</i>	What, you? You of all people?	<i>Não pode ser!</i>	That cannot be!
<i>Weil ich ein Kind bekomme.</i>	Because I am having a child.	<i>Mas pode. Porque vou ter um filho.</i>	Yes, it can be. Because I am having a child.
<i>Unsinn. Das darf er doch gar nicht.</i>	Nonsense. He is not allowed to do that!	#	#

Original spoken text	Translation	Portuguese subtitle 395-400	Translation subtitle
<i>Er hat aber.</i>	But he has.	#	#
<i>Dann hat er keine Ahnung. Da muss ich sofort zu ihm.</i>	Then he has no idea. I have to go to him immediately.	<i>Vou já falar com o teu patrão.</i>	I'll talk to your boss right away.
<i>Ach...</i>	Oh...	<i>Deixa lá!</i>	Let it be!

A typical censored issue during the *Estado Novo* was any kind of questioning the hierarchy or criticising a superior's decision, which was softened here by omitting part of the dialogue. At the end, the pregnant woman even begs her colleague not to talk to her boss (a case of manipulation, see below).

4.3. Manipulation

The most complex and, at the same time, the most inconspicuous measure of censorship is the manipulation of the subtitles at a linguistic level. The distinguishing factor between translation, mistakes and manipulation is the intention behind a variance or invariance in the translation's meaning in comparison to the source text. In the case of a translation, the aim is invariance. In the case of a mistake, invariance is required, but not achieved, whereas a manipulation means that the target text is modified intentionally (Pieper 2018: 173f).

As cited above, the censors of *Helga* gave instructions for changes to four subtitles, but they did not propose any alternative wording. Since the object of this analysis is not the final translation of the film, but the subtitle list submitted for the first censorship session, the outcome of these alterations cannot be analysed. There are, however, other clear deviations from the source text, without a censor's comment, performed by the translators as an act of self-censoring.

Example 1

Throughout the film, some expressions were systematically avoided and overwritten, such as the statement that the parents «failed»²⁵ in their education, which was

25. «Versagen».

translated as they «refused to answer»²⁶ certain questions from their children. Also the expression «they are sexually mature»²⁷ was translated by the term «puberty»²⁸, which avoided the allusion to the potentially sexually active adolescents. In the following example, one of the censors underlined the word «penis» and wrote an alternative translation above:

Original spoken text	Translation	Portuguese subtitle 128	Translation subtitle
<i>Im Glied oder Penis liegen die Schwellkörper.</i>	The erectile tissue lies in the penis or limb.	<i>No pénis, existe o corpo cavernoso.</i>	The penis contains erectile tissue.
		Censor's alteration	Translation censor's alteration
		<i>No órgão sexual masculino...</i>	In the male sexual organ...

Example 2

In the following scene, the narrator talks about the relative sexual uninhibitedness in Europe until the end of the 19th century when sexuality became a taboo and sexual education impossible. He continues:

Original spoken text	Translation	Portuguese subtitle 75-81	Translation subtitle
<i>Wir brauchen uns nicht einzubilden das sei alles aus und vorbei.</i>	We don't need to imagine that this is all done and dusted.	<i>Mas não julgue que foi sempre assim.</i>	But don't think it's always been that way.
<i>Wir wollen auch nicht leugnen, dass wir in dieser Beziehung Probleme haben.</i>	We also don't want to deny that we have problems in this respect.	<i>Não queremos mentir a respeito destes problemas.</i>	We don't want to lie about these problems.

26. «Negam a responder».

27. «Sie sind geschlechtsreif».

28. «Puberdade».

Original spoken text	Translation	Portuguese subtitle 75-81	Translation subtitle
<i>Sie sind da, in reichlichem Maße.</i>	They are there, to a great extent.	<i>As coisas são o que são e como são.</i>	Things are as they are.
<i>Denn auch ein Pendelschlag in der Gegenrichtung wäre nicht natürlich und erträglich.</i>	Because even a pendulum that swings in the opposite direction would not be natural and bearable.	<i>Apresentá-las ao contrário não é natural nem admissível.</i>	To present them as the opposite is neither natural nor acceptable.
#	#	<i>São assuntos honestos e correctos.</i>	They are honest and correct issues.
#	#	<i>Vamos tratar deles.</i>	Let's tackle them.

This example shows how the original message can be manipulated in translation. The German wording states that society still has problems with taboos and prudishness, but also highlights that total sexual uninhibitedness is not natural. The translation, on the other hand, becomes clouded in generalisations, claiming that it was not always like that, that things are as they are and that we cannot tell it is the other way round. And to underline these vague statements, the translator even took the measure of a multiplication²⁹, which is as meaningless and unspecific as the preceding subtitles.

29. Due to the fact that the translation has to be shortened and reduced in order to be readable in the given time a subtitle appears on screen, multiplications generally are quite rare in subtitling.

Example 3

A bit later, he says:

Original spoken text	Translation	Portuguese subtitle 86	Translation subtitle
<i>Ein einmaliges sogenanntes Aufklärungsgespräch in späteren Jahren kann eine systematische Erziehung nicht ersetzen.</i>	A one-off so-called facts of life talk in later years cannot replace systematic education.	<i>Nestes últimos anos, estes assuntos são objecto de ensino sistemático.</i>	In the last few years, these matters have been the subject of systematic teaching.

Instead of criticising the common «facts of life talk» proposing systematic education, the subtitles state the opposite of the original text: that education is already done systematically.

Example 4

In the following scene, a nurse explains how a woman's body changes during pregnancy and what a woman can do or should avoid and that some discomfort or pain is part of pregnancy:

Original spoken text	Translation	Portuguese subtitle 336-341	Translation subtitle
<i>Aber über alle Begleiterscheinungen werden Sie leicht hinwegkommen,</i>	But you will easily overcome all the side effects,	<i>Mas todos estes sintomas se tornam bem leves quando a mulher...</i>	But all these symptoms become very mild when the woman...
<i>wenn Sie daran denken,</i>	when you think about,	<i>Pensem nisto!...</i>	Think about it!...
<i>dass Sie einem Kind das Leben schenken werden.</i>	that you will give life to a child.	<i>...sabe que vai dar vida a um filho.</i>	... knows that she is going to give birth to a child (son).
<i>Dann wird es Ihnen auch leicht fallen, Ihre Lebensweise auf diese Aufgabe einzustellen.</i>	Then it will also be easy for you to adjust your lifestyle to this task.	<i>Não lhe custa, é próprio dela meter-se nestes trabalhos.</i>	It's effortless, it's in her nature to do these tasks.

Original spoken text	Translation	Portuguese subtitle 336-341	Translation subtitle
<i>Eine gesunde Frau kann im Allgemeinen in dieser Zeit ruhig ihrem Beruf nachgehen.</i>	Generally, a healthy woman can pursue her profession without problems during this time.	<i>Uma mulher saudável pode entregar-se calmamente às suas ocupações.</i>	A healthy woman can calmly indulge in her pastimes.
<i>Auch ihre häusliche Pflicht kann sie erfüllen.</i>	She can also fulfil her domestic duty.	<i>Pode mesmo fazer a lida da casa.</i>	She can indeed do housekeeping.

Apart from the fact that the women are not addressed directly, as is the case in the original («you» vs. «she»), this scene sheds light on the traditional role of women under the *Estado Novo*. Portuguese woman had no «lifestyle», but it was «in her nature» to do her tasks, unless it is not very clear to which tasks are being referred. Also, Portuguese woman had no profession, but «pastimes», which are specified as «housekeeping», in the following subtitle.

5. CONCLUSION

Helga was an exceptional film under the *Estado Novo*. Hardly any other films with a clear sexual content reached the cinemas, since sexuality was the most censored topic. The censorship documents are unusually extensive (164 pages) and there are repeated references to the need to avoid «incidents of bad taste»³⁰ in the cinemas, or it is reported that there were none. In any case the screenings for under 21-year-olds were carefully monitored and the Portuguese cinemas were obliged to mention that the film was educational, documental and scientific. In fact, *Helga* is not an erotic film.

The instructions from the censors included only one cut. The images of a real birth, which led to many spectators, especially male ones, passing out, were left in the film. The film is however not only informative but also appellative. It appeals to the parents that they should sexually educate their children at an early age, states that society should find its way back to an unconstrained approach to sexuality and criticises the common (non-existent) sexual education. The appellative (and ideological) component was systematically dampened. The German original spreads the image of a supposedly modern woman, of self-determined choices in terms of abortion, birth

30. «*Incidentes de mau gosto*» (SNI-IE-ECF 1969).

control and family planning, even promoting the contraception pill. The Portuguese version rows back to a more traditional role understanding and less autonomy.

The sober objectivity of medical terms such as «ovulation», «endometrium» or «erectile tissue» was maintained in the translation. If, however, there were two options, then the more objective (and scientific) one was preferred, rather than one that might somehow seem erotic. Apart from a relatively large number of omissions, which cannot always be clearly interpreted as such, because information can be reduced or condensed in subtitling for reasons of space, it is remarkable that the translator worked with such caution. One can assume that he/she did not want to give the censors any reason to interfere with or even ban the film. In the end, only four subtitles were rejected by the censors, but a number of statements were manipulated during the translation process. By using all available censorship measures (cuts, omissions and manipulation), censors, distributors and translators worked towards to keep this film within the ideological framework of the *Estado Novo*.

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Film

HELGA – vom Werden des menschlichen Lebens. 1967. Directed by Erich F. Bender. Copy provided by Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek, courtesy of Praesens-Film AG.

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Abbreviations

SNI-IE-ECF = *Secretariado Nacional da Informação, Cultura Popular e Turismo – Inspeção dos Espectáculos – Exame e Classificação de Filmes* [National Information, Popular Culture and Tourism Office – Film and Theatre Inspectorate – Analysis and Classification of Films].

ANTT = *Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo* [Portuguese National Archive].