

# **Cense one nation and censor the other : censorship in translation during the German empire**

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## **Abstract**

The relationship between translation and censorship in Germany during the First World War has already been partly investigated, albeit not as thoroughly as during the thirties and forties of the 20th century. Case studies have been published about both textual and extratextual factors determining these forms of censorship. Until now less attention has been paid to the determining role of the preceding decades. During the German Empire (das Deutsche Kaiserreich) authorities have created new literary and ideological patterns based upon explicit and implicit nationalist criteria. Translation policy and translation practice were very much influenced by this paradoxical relationship with nationalism, since the act of translation inevitably contains the transfer of nationally determined symbols, norms, values and images. In this presentation, I refer to some findings of 'imagology' or image studies illustrating that translation during the German Empire sometimes was (ab)used for identity-forming and image-building reasons. Quite a lot of examples of censorship in translation were a direct consequence of the inter-cultural transfer of national images, positive as well as negative stereotypes, and of the construction of identity through translation. In a concluding part, I compare my findings about this kind of censorship with some of the existing publications about the identity-forming power of translation in other countries and cultures.