Representations of black people in the Slovenian translations of Karl May’s novels
A case study

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The article discusses how black people were portrayed in the Slovenian translations of the novels Winnetou, Old Surehand and Der Schatz im Silbersee, which have all been translated into Slovenian several times; the analysis thus reveals how translation strategies have changed over the decades. The comparison shows that the strategies in translations published in the 1930s were somewhat different from those in the post-World War II period, when the Slovenian territory was part of socialist Yugoslavia; because of the unacceptability of racist views during the socialist period, some racist passages of the original texts were censored in the translations. A substantial amount of neutralization of pejorative racial terminology occurred in both pre- and post-War translations, and translators in both eras also used similar strategies for translating black people’s sociolect. The interventions in the translations have somewhat affected how the translated works can be interpreted.

L’article présente la façon dont les Noirs sont décrits dans les traductions slovènes des romans Winnetou, Old Surehand et Le Trésor du lac d’argent, tous traduits en slovène plusieurs fois. L’analyse met en lumière la façon dont les stratégies de traduction ont évolué au fil des décennies. La comparaison montre que les stratégies utilisées pour les traductions publiées dans les années 30 présentent des différences par rapport à celles des traductions parues après la Seconde Guerre mondiale, lorsque le territoire slovène faisait partie de la Yougoslavie socialiste. L’inadmissibilité des opinions racistes pendant l’ère socialiste a conduit à la censure, dans les traductions, de certains passages racistes des textes originaux. Un important travail de neutralisation de la terminologie raciale péjorative a été réalisé à la fois sur les traductions publiées avant et après la guerre. De plus, les traducteurs des deux périodes ont employé des stratégies semblables pour traduire le sociolecte des personnages noirs. Ces
interventions sur les traductions ont transformé la façon dont les œuvres traduites peuvent être interprétées.

Keywords: racism, black people, literary translation, Karl May, Winnetou, Old Surehand, Der Schatz im Silbersee, shifts, censorship, ideology

Mots-Clés: racisme, Noirs, traduction littéraire, Karl May, Winnetou, Old Surehand, Le Trésor du lac d’argent, variations, censure, idéologie

1. Introduction

Karl May (1842–1912) is one of the most popular German writers of all time; according to the Karl May Museum, nearly 100 million copies of his works have been sold in Germany alone, and his texts have been translated into 33 languages.¹ When May published his works in the last quarter of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century, the territory of what today constitutes the Republic of Slovenia was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire; German language and literature was therefore present in the everyday life of Slovenians, and many of them became acquainted with May’s works early on – his writing style had been imitated even before the first translation of a text of his was published in 1898 (Hladnik 1983, 78). Translations of May’s works continued to be published after the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1918, and he also enjoyed great popularity several decades after World War II – during the time when Slovenia was part of socialist Yugoslavia.² In an interview, Miran Hladnik stated that his whole generation read May in their younger years and that there have been attempts to de-trivialize his work because some Slovenian literary theorists and literary historians began to hold

¹. During the author’s lifetime, his works were translated into 17 languages, including Slovenian (Steinmetz 1994, 313).

². In Slovenia, May was widely read well into the 1980s; for instance, the 1983 translations of Der Schatz im Silbersee and Old Surehand were printed in 13,000 and 12,000 copies, respectively, which was an imposing number at that time and even more so today. May’s popularity was probably influenced by the fact that 11 German movies based on his novels were filmed in Yugoslavia from 1962 to 1968, with 9 of them being co-produced by the studio Jadran Film and featuring Slovenians as extras and in minor roles (“Jadran Film”). Some of the scenes were filmed in locations across Slovenia, including in Postonjska jama and on Kredarica (Jurc 2009). While in the new millennium May is not as popular as he once was, he is far from forgotten; according to data provided to the author by the Institute of Information Science IZUM for the year 2007, 8,127 individual copies of his works were borrowed from the 205 libraries which at that time were part of the COBISS library database. To put these numbers into perspective: in the same year, 31,953 copies of Dan Brown’s works and 30,818 copies of J.K. Rowling’s works were borrowed.
the view that it had a social-emancipatory function: it drew attention to the noble elements of different and distant cultures (2007).

While May undoubtedly was sympathetic towards the ‘Other’, he wrote at a time when even scientific racism was still widely acceptable, and his works contain some views which many later readers may deem unacceptable. Among the potentially problematic elements in his texts are passages which include racist views on black people, an issue with which the present article is concerned. It will establish how the Slovenian translation strategies for textual elements pertaining to black people in May’s works have evolved during a period of more than half a century (between the 1930s and the 1980s), and whether any ideological interventions can be found in the translations.

The strategies for translating explicitly racist discourse, racial terminology and black characters’ sociolect in all the Slovenian translations of the novels *Old Surehand* (1930, 1965, 1983), *Winnetou* (1931, 1952/1953, 1962, 1983) and *Der Schatz im Silbersee* (1935, 1964, 1983) will be examined, since, as Pekka Kujamäki (2001, 65) notes, re-translations may show how the norms in a particular target culture have changed over time. Some of the basic concepts developed by Kitty van Leuven-Zwart (1989, 1990) in her comparative and descriptive models for analyzing literary translations will be applied in the analysis. The microstructural level (the phrase, clause and sentence level) of the source and target texts will be compared first; most of van Leuven-Zwart’s elaborate categorization of shifts (see 1990, 87) is not relevant for the present analysis; therefore, only certain categories will be referred to – in order to best suit the purpose of the study, some of the categories will be adapted, i.e. differentiated:

3. The article was written during a post-doctoral research stay at the University of Tübingen in 2015, which was made possible by a grant from the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD).

4. The second translation is only credited to Oskar Hudales, although it is, in fact, an adaptation of the translation by Catholic priest Anton Jehart published in 1931 (see Logar, Bulovec and Posavec 1954, 41).

5. In accordance with Gideon Toury’s (1980, 45) definition of translation, we included all texts presented and accepted as translations in the target culture, including texts that were not translated in full but were adapted.

6. Shifts may be defined as “changes which occur or may occur in the process of translating” (Bakker, Koster and van Leuven-Zwart 2009, 269) or as “[a]ll that appears as new with respect to the original, or fails to appear where it might have been expected” (Popović; qtd. in Bakker, Koster and van Leuven-Zwart 2009, 271).
– stylistic modulation involving register (differentiated into: neutral translation of an originally pejorative term; pejorative translation of an originally neutral term);
– syntactic-semantic modification involving grammatical classes (differentiated into: replacing the original term with a pronoun; replacing the original term with a personal name);
– deletion (differentiated into: deletion on the sentence level; deletion of the sentence; deletion of the passage);
– addition;
– radical change of meaning.

Subsequently, the possible effects of the identified shifts on the macrostructural level of the texts (characterization, plot, relationships between characters, etc.) will be addressed, and the common characteristics of the strategies used in a certain period will be considered in the light of the contemporary acceptability of racism in Slovenian society.

2. Explicitly racist discourse

The three adventure novels are set in the post-Civil War American West and feature May’s literary alter ego Old Shatterhand, his Apache blood brother Winnetou, Old Surehand, Old Firehand, Old Wabble and many other characters, including two black servants named Sam and Bob in Winnetou, a different African-American by the name of Bob in Old Surehand and an unnamed black stoker on a steamer in Der Schatz im Silbersee. Since very few ideological interventions with regard to racist discourse occurred in the three pre-World War II translations, this chapter will focus primarily on the seven post-War translations.

In Der Schatz im Silbersee, some of the passengers on the steamer – described as tramps by the third person narrator – want to trick the stoker into providing them with certain information; therefore, their leader Cornel asks him to have a drink with them. He accepts the invitation, but then exclaims: “Aber ich sehe ja keinen einzigen Schluck hier!” [But I don’t see a single drop here!] (May 2006, 36). In the 1983 translation a radical change of meaning occurs: “Toda z vami, da naj pijem? Pamoja barva, sir.” [But to drink with you? But my colour, sir.] (May/Cesar 1983, 36; see Example 1) – the issue of racism is thus pointed out.7

7. All passages in Slovenian or German were translated into English by the author of the article. When referring to a particular passage, only the translations in which shifts occur will be explicitly mentioned. All translations of a certain passage can be found in the electronic attachment,
In *Old Surehand*, Bob is taken captive and is about to be tortured at the stake; when Old Shatterhand hears of this, he is prepared to do everything in his power to save Bob. A companion of his, Old Wabble, is surprised and asks how he can react in such a way, since the captured man is only a ‘nigger’. A lengthy argument between the two ensues (519 words in the original), during which Old Wabble makes several extremely racist statements about black people, which Old Shatterhand rejects, among other things by asserting that black people are just as good as people of other colours and that some are actually better than white people (May 2000a, I–240–243). In the 1930 translation by Anton Debeljak, these passages are shortened into merely: “Staremu Wabblu, bivšemu govedarju, pa je stal črnjak domala prav tako nizko kakor kužek. Zato ni mogel brzdati jezika. Zavrnil sem ga.” [But in the old cowboy’s Old Wabble’s book a darky was as low as a pup. He therefore couldn’t keep his mouth shut. I rejected him.] (May/Debeljak 1930, I–117; see Example 2). However, Old Shatterhand later also makes a disparaging comment about black people:

> Zwar war der Neger bei mir, aber, die geistigen Schwächen seiner Rasse überhaupt nicht gerechnet, war er stets nur mit Bloody-Fox durch die Wüste geritten, hatte sich auf diesen verlassen und konnte mir also nicht die geringste Auskunft geben.

[The negro was by my side, but – not even taking into account the mental feebleness of his race – he had always ridden through the desert with Bloody-Fox and depended on him, thus he couldn’t give me any information whatsoever.]

(May 2000a, I–317–318)

In the 1983 translation, the reference to the ‘mental feebleness’ of the black race is deleted (May/Malenšek 1983, I–222; see Example 3). Further censorship of racism was found in the 1965 translation: the comment “[...] Betty Hammer einen Mulatten heiratete, der ein sehr hübscher Kerl war und braver, als die Farbigen gewöhnlich zu sein pflegen.” [Betty Hammer married a mulatto, who is a nice looking guy and more well-behaved than coloured people normally tend to be.] (May 2000a, II–24) was translated as “[...] Betty [je] vzela nekoga mulata, ki je prav čeden dečko.” [Betty married a mulatto, who is a nice looking guy.] (May/Mrzel 1965, II–15; see Example 4).

Racist discourse features even more prominently in *Winnetou*; it is displayed by Old Shatterand, who also serves as the first-person narrator, as well as other characters, for instance his friend and mentor Sam Hawkens. When the latter is

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8. In cases where a novel is divided into several books, the roman numerals refer to a particular book.
asked whether he has no reservations about marrying an Indian woman, he replies: “Würde sogar eine Negerin heiraten, wenn sie nicht schwarz wäre.” [I’d even marry a negress, if she wasn’t black.] (May 2000b, I–367). The 1983 translation by Jože Dolenc reads: “Cel s črnko bi se poročil, če bi ne bila preveč črna.” [I’d even marry a black woman if she wasn’t too black.] (May/Dolenc 1983, II–89–90; see Example 5). Hawkens thus states that he would marry a black woman, although only a light-skinned one.

When an acquaintance of Old Shatterhand enquires whether he and his three travelling companions would be willing to take the servant Sam along on their journey, the protagonist remarks: “Es ist nicht jedermanns Sache, wochenlang mit einem Schwarzen zu reiten, der einen ganz und gar nichts angeht.” [It’s not everyman’s cup of tea to ride around for weeks with a black man that doesn’t concern one in the least.] (May 2000b, II–145). This sentence is deleted in the 1983 translation (May/Dolenc 1983, III–130; see Example 6). A further comment by Old Shatterhand about Sam reads as follows: “Dieser war zwar ein Schwarzer, stand aber an Begabung viel höher als gewöhnliche Leute seiner Farbe.” [He was black but was much more gifted than ordinary people of his colour.] (May 2000b, II–145). This sentence is also deleted in the 1983 translation (May/Dolenc 1983, III–130; see Example 7). At one point in their journey, Sam is described as ‘humbly’ standing behind his companions while they discuss a trail on the ground, and only stepping forward to give his opinion when asked to do so (May 2000b, II–161), but in the same translation the word ‘humbly’ is deleted (May/Dolenc 1983, III–143; see Example 8). The fact that Dolenc changed Sam’s name to Hektor (the Slovenian variant of the name of the Trojan hero Hector), further suggests that he tried to place this character on a more equal footing with his companions.

In several passages in Winnetou, racism against black people is also expressed by Native Americans. When the travelling party encounters a group of Comanche warriors, their leader ignores Sam: “Den Schwarzen schien er nicht zu sehen, denn der rote Mann verachtet den Neger.” [He appeared not to see the black man, since red men despise negroes.] (May 2000b, II–175). This sentence is deleted in the 1962 translation (May/Mrzel 1962, 464; see Example 9). The characters later sit down to talk with the chief; in the original, only Sam refrains from doing so: “Nur Sam blieb stehen, denn er wußte, daß er als Schwarzer sein Leben wage, wenn er den Vorzug der Häuptlinge, am Feuer zu sitzen, auch für sich in Anspruch nehme.” [Only Sam did not sit down, since he knew that as a black man he would risk his life if he took the liberty to sit down at a fire where only chiefs were allowed to sit.] (May 2000b, II–175). In the 1962 translation, only the beginning of the sentence is translated, while the reason for Sam’s failure to sit down is deleted (May/Mrzel 1962, 464; see Example 10). Accordingly, this character is not offered the calumet: “Sam wurde übergangen, denn die Pfeife wäre nie wieder an den Mund eines Indianers gekommen,
wenn ein Schwarzer daraus geraucht hätte. Doch war der Neger natürlich in unsern Friedensbund mit einbegriffen." [Sam was passed over, since no Indian would have ever put the pipe in his mouth again, if a black man had smoked out of it. But of course the negro was included in our peace alliance.] (May 2000b, II–180). The statement “Tako zelo zaničujejo rdeči črnce.“ [This is how much the red men despise the blacks.] is added between the two sentences in the 1931 translation and is retained in its 1952 adaptation (May/Jehart 1931, II–199; May/Jehart/Hudales 1952/1953, II–175), while in the 1962 translation, the first sentence is again shortened into merely “Sam je ostal ob strani.” [Sam stood to the side.] (May/Mrzel 1962, 467; see Example 11).

In the 1962 translation, Mrzel made further changes in certain passages referring to the different treatment of the travelling companions based on their race. For instance, when they visit the home of a caballero, it is emphasized in the narration that the latter shook hands with each of his newly arrived guests, even with the ‘negro’ (May 2000b, II–192), while the remark is deleted in the translation (May/Mrzel 1962, 475; see Example 12). The white characters later sit down with another Comanche chief, while Sam steps aside to sit down alone (May 2000b, II–226), but in Mrzel’s translation the latter part of the sentence is once again deleted (May/Mrzel 1962, 496; see Example 13); readers may thus be under the impression that this time Sam sat down with everybody else.

Later in the story, Old Shatterhand is surprised to encounter Bob, an old acquaintance of his, in the middle of the desert, and he asks himself: “Wie nun kam Bob, der alte, weißhaarige Schwarze, hierher in den Llano estacado [sic]?” [But how did Bob, the old, white-haired black end up in Llano Estacado?] (May 2000b, III–76). In the 1983 translation, Bob is not described as ‘old, white-haired’, and his name is changed to Cezar [Caesar] (May/Dolenc 1983, V–69; see Example 14), which can be seen as an effort to make him appear more dignified. When at one point, Old Shatterhand sneaks up on two men to listen in on their conversation, he comments that he chose to do so in the vicinity of Bob’s horse, because he assumed that the black man was not given a well-trained prairie horse which would give away the presence of an intruder (May 2000b, III–90), while in the 1983 translation he states that Bob was in fact given a good horse (May/Dolenc 1983, V–82; see Example 15).

Racism is also evident from the roles that the black characters are supposed or not supposed to play. For instance, after taking two of their enemies captive, Old Shatterhand and his companions form a prairie-court, and the former proposes that a character by the name of Sam Hawerfield should take on the role of sheriff. The latter declines; therefore, the protagonist suggests that Bob should be the sheriff, to which Hawerfield reacts in the following way: “Bob? Ein Schwarzer und Sheriff? Das wäre der dümme Streich, den wir in diesem Sandloche machen könnten, und so muß ich wohl ja sagen, wenn du zum Beispiel gar nicht anders willst!” [Bob? A black
man the sheriff? That would be the silliest goof that we could pull in this sandhole, and so I have to be the sheriff, if you wouldn't have it any other way.] (May 2000b, III–94). In the 1952 adaptation of Jehart’s 1931 translation, Hudales deleted this passage (May/Jehart/Hudales 1952/1953, III–109; see Example 16).

In the continuation of the story, two of the men that murdered Hawerfield’s family are captured, and Hawerfield wants to execute them himself, but Old Shatterhand tells him that this would dishonour him and that he should therefore let ‘the negro’ do the killing instead (May 2000b, III–171). In the 1962 translation, the latter part is deleted (May/Mrzel 1962, 797; see Example 17). Before Hawerfield can make up his mind, Comanche warriors attack the camp and capture everyone except Old Shatterhand and Bob. When the former discovers that the latter also managed to escape, he comments as follows: “Es war mir ein höchst wohltuendes Gefühl, wenigstens Einen [sic] außer mir noch verschont zu wissen, wenn dieser Eine auch grad der Neger war.” [It was a very nice feeling to know that at least one of us besides myself was spared, even if it was just the negro.] (May 2000b, III–176). The latter part of the sentence is deleted in the two most recent translations (May/Mrzel 1962, 800; May/Dolenc 1983, V–154; see Example 18).

When stealing the enemy horses, Old Shatterhand comments that even the horses of Native Americans apparently dislike black people:

> Allein jedoch brachte ich es wohl besser fertig als mit Hilfe des Negers, da alle indianschen Pferde einen unüberwindlichen Abscheu gegen die schwarze Rasse hegen, deren Ausdünstung den Tieren zuwider ist. Aufsteigen lassen sie den Neger, aber wenn er, vor ihnen hergehend, sie führen will, so weigern sie sich, ihm zu folgen.

In the 1931 translation there is a radical change of meaning, which portrays Native Americans as more racist than the original does: “Pa vsekakor sem sam laže opravil, ko pa če bi bil Bob poleg. Črncev namreč indijanski konji ne marajo, prav kakor jih Indijanci sami ne marajo. V sedlo sicer pusti indijanski konj črnca, za njim pa noče stopati.” [It was easier for me to do this by myself than I would have been with the negro's help because all Indian horses are extremely repulsed by the black race, since they dislike their smell. They let a negro mount them, but if he gets in front of them and tries to lead them, they refuse to follow.] (May 2000b, III–178)

In the 1931 translation there is a radical change of meaning, which portrays Native Americans as more racist than the original does: “Pa vsekakor sem sam laže opravil, ko pa če bi bil Bob poleg. Črncev namreč indijanski konji ne marajo, prav kakor jih Indijanci sami ne marajo. V sedlo sicer pusti indijanski konj črnca, za njim pa noče stopati.” [It was easier for me to do this by myself than I would have been with Bob's help because Indian horses don’t like blacks, just like the Indians don’t like them. Indian horses let a black get in the saddle, but they refuse to go behind him.] (May/Jehart 1931, III–217). This whole statement is deleted in Hudales’ 1952 adaptation (May/Jehart/ Hudales 1952/1953, III–197), while ten years later Mrzel chose to preserve only the first clause of the original text (May/Mrzel 1962, 802; see Example 19).

Old Shatterhand describes how later Bob was ignored by the Comanches: “Um ihn schien man sich gar nicht zu bekümmern; der Indianer ist gegen die schwarze
Rasse noch stolzer als der Weiße.” [They seemed to pay no heed to him; the Indians are even more prideful towards the black race than towards the white race.] (May 2000b, III–189). In the 1952 text, Hudales deleted the latter part of this sentence (May/Jehart/Hudales 1952/1953, III–209), while in 1962 Mrzel deleted the whole sentence (May/Mrzel 1962, 812; see Example 20). Shortly afterwards, Old Shatterhand brings Bob along when he sits down to negotiate with the enemy chiefs, to which their leader reacts as follows: “Aber warum befreit er den schwarzen Mann und bringt ihn mit in die Versammlung? Weiß er nicht, daß der Nigger nie sitzen darf, wenn der rote Mann dabei ist?” [But why did he free the black man and bring him along to the meeting? Does he not know that a nigger is never allowed to sit in the presence of a red man?] (May 2000b, III–198). In Hudales’ and Mrzel’s texts, the latter of the two sentences is deleted (May/Jehart/Hudales 1952/1953, III–216; May/Mrzel 1962, 817; see Example 21). In the original, Old Shatterhand replies: “Der schwarze Mann ist mein Diener.” [The black man is my servant.] (May 2000b, III–198), which Hudales changed into “moj tovariš” [my comrade] (May/Jehart/Hudales 1952/1953, III–216; see Example 22); in the first post-War Slovenian version of Winnetou, the master-servant relationship is thereby transformed into a relationship of equals.

The analysis has shown that in the pre-World War II translations explicitly racist discourse was not censored; on the contrary, in the 1931 translation of Winnetou, an anti-racist passage was once heavily shortened, and Native Americans were sometimes made out to be more racist than in the original. Translation strategies changed significantly after the War: many examples of censorship can be found in the translations.

3. Terms for black people

In order to establish the differences between the strategies for translating pejorative and neutral terms for black people, the translations of all the terms used in the three novels were compared. In order to evaluate the translation strategies, it first needed to be established how the relevant German terms were perceived when the originals were published, as well as how the Slovenian terms were perceived when the translations were published.

The English term ‘nigger’, which has been pejorative for centuries (see Kennedy 2003, 4–5; Asim 2007, 11; Hill 2008, 51), found its way into the German language, where it also has a negative connotation. In Karl May’s time, two of the most

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9. The full references for all the translations of all terms and a table with a direct comparison of the terms used in context are available in the electronic attachment listed in Footnote 7.
commonly used German terms for black people were Mohr and Neger; the former was generally used for light-skinned black people or those from northern Africa, while the latter was used for those with darker skin or those from sub-Saharan Africa (Arndt and Hamann 2012, 650; see also Arndt 2012, 654). Further common terms included the noun Farbiger and the adjective farbig, used for black people of mixed ancestry (Sow 2012a, 684), as well as the noun Schwarzer and the adjective schwarz.10

In the interwar period, when the first Slovenian translations of the novels in question were published, the most common Slovenian terms used to refer to black people were the noun zamorec or the adjective zamorski and the noun črneč or the adjective črn, which were all considered neutral. In the first decade after World War II, the former became increasingly pejorative and began to be used less frequently, while črneč and črn remained the standard terms until the 1980s.11 The most frequently used derogatory Slovenian term for black people has traditionally been črnuh, while other derogatory terms include črnokožec, zamurc, črnuhar, črnavs, črnogelj, črnjak, etc. (see Trupej 2014b, 636–639; Trupej 2015, 121). The term nigger / niger cannot be found in the Dictionary of Standard Slovenian Language [Slovar slovenskega knjižnega jezika], and although this term was occasionally used in print, it cannot be presumed that the majority of Slovenians was familiar with it or its connotations.

The following German terms for black people can be found in the three novels: Nigger, Neger, Schwarzer / schwarz, Mulatte, Farbiger / farbig and Quadroon. As Tables 1, 2 and 3 show, in all the translations shifts occurred frequently. Racial terms were often either deleted on the sentence level (DSL) or were deleted as part of whole sentences (DS) and passages (DP). Radical changes of meaning (RCM) and replacing racial terms with the characters’ personal names (PN) also occurred quite frequently, while only a few times were racial terms replaced with pronouns. Race is thus somewhat less visible in all the translations.

Apart from the term Nigger, all the German racial terms were neutral at the time of publication of the originals, and the corresponding Slovenian racial terms were also neutral at the time of publication of the translations – the only exceptions can be found in two translations of Old Surehand: in the 1930 translation, Debeljak translated Schwarzer as črnjak once, while for the same term Mimi Malenšek used

10. Today, using Schwarzer or schwarz is perceived as the most politically correct way of referring to black people in German (Sow 2012b, 608), while all the other aforementioned terms have become pejorative; Susan Arndt (2012, 653) even branded Neger as the ‘N-word’ of the German language.

11. Towards the end of the 20th century, temnopolt became the most politically correct term, although črneč is still perceived as quite acceptable and is often used (Trupej 2014b, 640).
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zamorec twice in her 1983 translation, and she also used zamorec for the term Neger once. However, the translations of the racial slur Nigger deserve more attention.

In Winnetou, the term Nigger appears 28 times and was retained in its original form 21 times in the first translation by Jehart (1931). This translator also deleted the term on the sentence level four times, used črnec once, a personal name once instead of the term and on one occasion radically changed the meaning into suženj.

In a footnote, Hudales later once again explained the meaning of the term, but opted for the term zamorec this time.

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12. When the term appears in the text for the first time, the neutral Slovenian term črnec is used to explain its meaning, and this explanation is preserved in Hudales’ adaptation of Jehart’s translation (May/Jehart 1931, III–98; May/Jehart/Hudales 1952/1953, III–87). In a footnote, Hudales later once again explained the meaning of the term, but opted for the term zamorec this time (May/Jehart/Hudales 1952/1953, III–244).
### Table 2. Terms for black people in the Slovenian translations of *Old Surehand*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original term</th>
<th>May/May – Debeljak 1930</th>
<th>May/May – Mrzel 1965</th>
<th>May/May – Malenšek 1983</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nigger (15×)</strong></td>
<td>3×črnogelj</td>
<td>12×niger</td>
<td>12×črnuh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1×črnuh</td>
<td>3×črnce</td>
<td>1×zamorec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1×RCM</td>
<td></td>
<td>1×DS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1×DSL</td>
<td></td>
<td>1×DP</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1×DS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8×DP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neger (54×)</strong></td>
<td>23×zamorec</td>
<td>49×črnec</td>
<td>44×črnec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6×črnce</td>
<td>2×PN</td>
<td>1×zamorec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2×DSL</td>
<td>1×RCM</td>
<td>1×PN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4×DS</td>
<td>2×DSL</td>
<td>3×DS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19×DP</td>
<td></td>
<td>5×DP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Schwarzer/ schwarz (15×)</strong></td>
<td>5×črnc/-ec</td>
<td>13×črnc/-ec</td>
<td>9×črnc/-ec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1×črnjak</td>
<td>2×DSL</td>
<td>2×zamorec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2×DS</td>
<td></td>
<td>2×DS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7×DP</td>
<td></td>
<td>2×DP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Farbiger/farbig (4×)</strong></td>
<td>1×RCM</td>
<td>2×temnopol</td>
<td>3×RCM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3×DP</td>
<td>1×RCM</td>
<td>1×DP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1×DSL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mulatte (2×)</strong></td>
<td>2×DP</td>
<td>2×mulat</td>
<td>2×DP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3. Terms for black people in the Slovenian translations of *Der Schatz im Silbersee*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original term</th>
<th>May/May – N.N. 1935</th>
<th>May/May – Mrzel 1964</th>
<th>May/May – Cesar 1983</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nigger (4×)</strong></td>
<td>4×nigger</td>
<td>3×črnc</td>
<td>3×nigger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1×nigger</td>
<td></td>
<td>1×črnc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neger (14×)</strong></td>
<td>11×črnc/-ec</td>
<td>11×črnc</td>
<td>12×črnc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1×pronoun</td>
<td>1×pronoun</td>
<td>1×pronoun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1×DSL</td>
<td>1×RCM</td>
<td>1×DS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1×DS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Schwarzer/ schwarz (6×)</strong></td>
<td>4×črnc/-ec</td>
<td>5×črnc/-ec</td>
<td>5×črnc/-ec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1×RCM</td>
<td>1×DS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1×DSL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
representations of black people in the Slovenian translations of Karl May's novels

[slave]. While Hudales (1952/1953) made no changes in the latter seven instances, he only retained Nigger six times, instead deleting it on the sentence level 18 times altogether and once deleting the whole sentence in which the original term appears. Mrzel (1962) deleted the same sentence, opted to retain the original term 22 times and used the neutral term črnec five times. In the most recent translation, Dolenc (1983) translated Nigger as črnec 14 times and as the pejorative term zamorec three times, changed the meaning of the original term four times to ubogi [poor] and in seven instances deleted the slur on the sentence level.

In Old Surehand, the term Nigger is used 15 times. In Debeljak's 1930 translation, the derogatory terms črnogelj and črnuh were used three times and once, respectively; in one instance there occurred a radical change of meaning, once the original term was deleted on the sentence level; on one occasion the sentence and eight times the passage in which the term appears was deleted. Mrzel (1965) used the term niger 12 times and črnec three times, while Malenšek (1983) translated Nigger as črnuh 12 times and as zamorec in one instance; once she deleted the sentence and also once the passage in which the original term appears.

In Der Schatz im Silbersee, the term Nigger is used four times. It was consistently retained in its original form in the first anonymous translation (1935), but only once in the translation by Mrzel (1964), who instead opted for the neutral črnec. In the most recent translation by Justi Cesar (1983), nigger was used three times and črnec once.

Several examples from the texts illustrate that Karl May was well aware of the different connotations of the terms he used. In Winnetou, this is perhaps best evident from the following sentence: “Dieser Schwarze, der grad wie ein Nigger aus-sieht, ist ein Advokat aus – aus – aus, wo die Feuerländer wohnen.” [This black, who looks exactly like a nigger, is a lawyer from … from … from the Fire Land.] (May 2000b, III–231). While in the first three translations, the terms črn or črnec and nigger are used (May/Jehart 1931, III–274; May/Jehart/Hudales 1952/1953, III–249; May/Mrzel 1962, 838), in the most recent translation črnec and zamorec are employed (May/Dolenc 1983, V–201).

13. Jehart also used the term nigger six times in passages where it is not used in the original; thus, the term appears in his translation 27 times altogether (see Examples 23 to 28).

14. Instead of referring to himself as Nigger Bob, the character refers to himself as ubogi Bob [poor Bob].

15. Debeljak also once used this derogatory term for the personal pronoun er [he] (May 2000a, I–286; May/Debeljak 1930, I–134; see Example 29).

16. In all examples bold print is used by the author of the article for emphasis.
In Old Surehand, the distinction between the terms Neger and Nigger is also evident on several occasions. When Old Wabble exclaims “Ein Schwarzer, ein Nigger!” [A black, a nigger!], Old Shatterhand replies with “Nigger? Neger wollt Ihr wohl sagen, Mr. Cutter?” [Nigger? You probably meant to say negro!] (May 2000a, I–240). In the first translation, the whole conversation that includes this sentence is deleted (May/Debeljak 1930, I–117); in the second translation the terms črnec and niger are used (May/Mrzel 1965, 138), while in the most recent translation, pejorative terms are employed both times: zamorec and črnuh (May/Malenšek 1983, I–169). Later, Old Shatterhand again corrects Old Wabble: “‘Ist der Nigger da?’ ‘Der Neger, wollt Ihr wohl sagen!’” [‘Is the nigger there?’ ‘You probably meant to say negro!’] (May 2000a, I–258). Debeljak again omitted this exchange (May/Debeljak 1930, I–124), Mrzel used črnec and niger (May/Mrzel 1965, 148), while Malenšek opted for črnec and črnuh (May/Malenšek 1983, I–181). After being thus reprimanded twice, Old Wabble shortly afterwards corrects himself: “Welches Euer Nigger, wollte sagen Neger, reiten soll.” [Which your nigger, I meant to say negro, is supposed to ride.] (May 2000a, I–264). Debeljak once more avoided having to address the different connotations of the original terms: “[V]ašemu ljubemu Bobu nismo pripeljali konja s seboj.” [We didn’t bring a horse for your dear Bob.] (May/Debeljak 1930, I–126–127), while the other two translators used the same terms as in the previous example (May/Mrzel 1965, 152; May/Malenšek 1983, I–185). Because of shifts like the above, the meaning of certain translated passages changes somewhat.

4. Black characters’ sociolect

Most black characters in May’s novels speak a grammatically incorrect version of the German language, for which using the infinitive forms of verbs is especially characteristic. This is true for the black characters in Winnetou, where the following statement indirectly refers to their way of speaking: “Der Ausdrucksweise nach war es ein Neger, welcher diese Fragen stellte.” [Judging from the way he expressed himself, the one asking these questions was a negro.] (May 2000b, II–93). In his translation, Jehart added an explanation:


[The man at the door was black. We did not see him, but we knew this from the way he spoke. Black people in America have their own way of speaking European languages, be it English, French, Spanish or any other language. They are completely at odds with verbs.] (May/Jehart 1931, II–104)
Hudales retained this explanation (May/Jehart/Hudales 1952/1953, II–90; see Example 30). A similar addition can be found in the continuation of the story. In the original, after being rescued by Old Shatterhand and asked whether he felt better now, Bob replies: “Besser, sehr besser, oh, ganz besser.” [Better, very better, oh, completely better.] (May 2000b, III–76). Jehart’s translation reads: “‘Bolje, zelo bolje, o, čisto zelo bolje!’ je pravil v svoji čudni angleščini. Črnci se ne morejo navaditi na evropske jezike, po svoje postavljajo besede in z glagolom so popolnoma skregani.” ['Better, very better, oh, completely better', he said in his strange English. Black people cannot get used to European languages, they place words in their own way and are completely at odds with verbs.] (May/Jehart 1931, III–98). Again, Hudales did not change the text (May/Jehart/Hudales 1952/1953, III–87), while the other two translators also used grammatically incorrect structures, but made no additions (May/Mrzel 1962, 737; May/Dolenc 1983, V–70; see Example 31).

In *Old Surehand*, Bob expresses himself in the same manner as the black characters in *Winnetou*, and his discourse was translated similarly by all the translators. The situation is different in *Der Schatz im Silbersee*; the black stoker speaks grammatically correct language, which in the original is explicitly pointed out by the third person narrator: “Er sprach sein Englisch wie ein Weißer.” [He spoke his English like a white man.] (May 2006, 36). All three translators deleted this sentence from the text (May/NN. 1935, 53; May/Mrzel 1964, 25; May/Cesar 1983, 36; see Example 1), and in the translations this character speaks in a grammatically correct manner.

5. **Conclusion**

We have established that pre-World War II strategies for translating explicitly racist discourse about black people were considerably different from post-War strategies. However, this does not hold true in the case of strategies for translating black characters’ sociolect, since grammatically incorrect discourse can be found in both pre- and post-War translations, by which the somewhat comical characterization of black people is preserved. Pejorative terms for black people were only partially preserved in translations from both eras; racial slurs were neutralized more frequently in post-War translations: for instance, Oskar Hudales retained less than a third of the instances of *Nigger* when adapting Anton Jehart’s translation of *Winnetou*, and when translating the same novel, Jože Dolenc used a pejorative term for the term *Nigger* in only three out of 28 instances – and he did not opt for one of the most severe ones. Even neutral racial terms were frequently deleted in the translations. The strategies differed most substantially as far as translating explicitly racist discourse is concerned. In pre-War translations, such discourse mostly remained
intact; the most prominent exception occurs in *Old Surehand*, with the deletion of the argument between Old Shatterhand and Old Wabble, during which the former rejects the latter’s racist views. However, since this passage actually points out the unacceptability of racism, its exclusion from the text cannot be compared to the frequent deletions which occurred in the post-War translations; while in none of them are all the explicitly racist passages censored, a substantial amount of racist discourse *is* omitted when expressed both by negative and positive characters, especially in *Winnetou*.

The analysis has further confirmed the findings of the previous research about translating racist discourse about black people from English to Slovenian (see Trupej 2012; 2014a; 2015). While prior to the establishment of a socialist system in Slovenia, expressing racist views was not unacceptable, this changed after World War II (see Trupej 2014a, 90–92), and thus racist elements in translated literature were frequently censored – even before the outset of the modern African-American Civil Rights Movement in the United States of America in 1954, which brought about more awareness regarding the issue of racism around the world, and prior to Yugoslavia’s involvement in the formation of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1961, which opposed racism. The ideological interventions in the translations were probably self-censorship, since the totalitarian grip on art began to loosen in the early 1950s; in 1952, the Agitprop was dissolved in Yugoslavia (Pirjevec 2011, 338–339).

Marijan Dović notes the following:

> After meticulous library and bookstore purges and total preventive control of the “agitprop” apparatus, the new rulers were later content with (less obvious) control over the nationalized cultural institutions, in which a communist majority had been installed. The system, based on non-transparent interventions that thus created an atmosphere of dread and self-censorship, functioned almost perfectly: the retroactive (suppressive) measures only had to be applied in exceptional cases. (2008, 163)

The fact that pejorative terms for black people were partially neutralized in translations from both eras was probably somewhat influenced by the traditional demand for the use of standard language in literature (Hladnik 1983, 61), since the Slovenian language has long been considered as a cornerstone of Slovenian national identity (Jerman 1993, 13; Poniž 2002, 86).

As a testament to the assertion that “[l]anguage is as much a means to express ideas and establish communication as it is a means to hinder the dissemination of certain ideas, thoughts and ideologies” (Ghazizadeh and Mardani 2012, 99), there are several effects that the aforementioned translation strategies have on the macrostructural level of the texts. The deletion of certain passages that point out the unacceptability of racism and of using racist terms contributes to the anti-racist...
message being sometimes lost in the pre-War translations. Because of the shifts, some of the positive, as well as some of the negative characters in the post-War translations appear less racist, and thus their characterization is more positive in the Slovenian versions of the works. Furthermore, owing to certain shifts, the black characters are more equal to the white characters in the translations than they are in the originals. It can thus be concluded that, given the ideological interventions, Slovenian readers experienced the works in question somewhat differently than the readers of the originals.

References


Representations of black people in the Slovenian translations of Karl May's novels


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Janko Trupej graduated in translation and interpreting from the University of Maribor (2009), and holds a Ph.D. in translation studies from the University of Ljubljana (2013). After completing his doctoral studies, he received a grant to conduct post-doctoral research at the University of Tubingen. In 2016, he began teaching English and American literature at the University of Maribor. His main research interests include literary translation, racist discourse, reception theory and audio-visual translation.