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## ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF SERBIAN LITERATURE

**Abstract:** In a cultural exchange, two countries are almost never equal partners. The smaller a country, the more likely that it will find itself at a disadvantage. The smaller nations are hardly major players. Their literatures rarely receive mass popularity but remain known mostly to a handful of specialists in the field. This paper examines the history of English translation of Serbian literature. Only since the 19th century has there been a steady increase in translation from Serbian into English. At several time periods, the existing political climate and the favorable public opinion created the right conditions for Serbian literary works to be selected for translation into English. In 1961, the Serbian and Yugoslav cultures received the biggest boost when Ivo Andrić was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature. Even after the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s the writers who had gained the reputation and whose works had been translated into English remained in print consistently enough to be used in college courses which is the main method of promoting such works. The paper concludes that Serbia, even though a small nation, fared considerably better than its neighbors.

**Keywords:** English translation, Serbian literature, history of translation, selection, cultural exchange, promotion.

The great poet Petar Petrović Njegoš, the Prince Bishop of Montenegro, wrote in 1847: “Iz grmena velikoga lafu izać trudno nije, / U velikim narodima geniju se gnjezdo vije” which translates into English as: “From a large bush it is not difficult to see a lion come forth/The nest of geniuses is built only among great nations” (Njegoš 1989: 2). In fact, not only is the culture of bigger and more powerful nations more likely to beget great men in art and literature

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than that of smaller nations, but numerically bigger and smaller cultures face rather different problems in promoting or exporting their cultures and in receiving the cultures of others. Cultural ties between nations depend on political ties, and the impetus to translate the literature of a country into the language of another country is often subject to a political timetable, changes in national relations, public opinion and/or propaganda.

In a cultural exchange, two countries are almost never equal partners. The smaller and/or poorer a nation, the more likely that it will find itself at a disadvantage in such an exchange. When the partner in a cultural exchange is the United States, the most powerful country in the world, the power gap is enormous. In the opinion of Lawrence Venuti, the culture of the United States is “aggressively monolingual and unreceptive to the foreign” (1995: 15). Very few translations become best sellers in the United States are likely to be reprinted or bring profit to their publishers. More importantly, few translations are published at all in the United States. Out of all the books published, only 2% to 4% represent translations (*Ibid*, 57). Competition to publish translations in the U.S. is fierce. Translations simply do not have market value in the United States. As a rule, foreign literatures receive a more favorable reception in European countries and are translated more there. Of all the books published in France, 8-12% are translations, in Germany 14%, a higher percentage in Italy, and even higher in East Central Europe (*Ibid*, 27).

There are some indications that this is changing, even though very slightly. According to a *Publishers Weekly*, of all the books translated worldwide, only 6% are translated from other languages into English. By contrast, almost 50% are translated from English into other languages.<sup>1</sup>

Even though they have rather turbulent histories, the small nations of the Balkans have hardly been major actors in world events. One cannot speak of the importance of their literatures for world literature. Their literatures never received mass popularity but remained known mostly to a handful of specialists in the field. This essay briefly summarizes how literature from Serbia and to some extent from former Yugoslavia has fared in the United States and England.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *New York Times Book Review*, 32 Oct. 26<sup>th</sup>, 2003.

<sup>2</sup> In addition to using the terms Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian, Slovene and Macedonian literatures, the term Yugoslav literature will be used as an umbrella term for all these literatures together.

Prior to the 20th century, the Yugoslav literature has been translated sparingly. Only since the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> c. there has been a steady increase in translation, both in number and quality.

According to Vasa D. Mihailovich, the first translation from a South Slavic literary dialect occurred in 1593, when Thomas Lodge, British poet and dramatist, translated four sonnets written by Ludovico Pasquale, a poet from the Bay of Kotor (Mihailovich 1984: iv). We do not have any further information on why Lodge chose to translate Pasquale's poetry. An educated guess would be, that like many Britons at the time, Lodge was interested in the Italian Renaissance.

The awakening of Western European interest in the literature of the South Slavs occurred during the Romantic Movement, which extolled the folk genius and oral folk literature. In the 1790s, Sir Walter Scott used Goethe's German translation to translate "Hazanaginica" (The Wife of Hasan Aga), a popular South Slavic ballad.

Interest in Serbian and South Slavic oral literature – heroic songs, folk stories, lyric or women songs and proverbs – grew enormously when Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, Serbian language reformer and scholar, moved to Vienna, Austria in 1813. His work attracted the attention of Jernej Kopitar, a learned Slovene, the censor of Slavic publications at the Austrian court. At his urging, Karadžić began to collect Serbian oral literature. Soon he became acquainted with the leading scholars of the time, including the brothers Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, Johan Wolfgang von Goethe, the philologist Joseph Dobrovsky and others. Karadžić became well known in Western Europe and soon volumes of translated Serbian and South Slavic oral literature became available in English and other European languages.

The popularity of Serbia after WWI further propelled the interest in Serbian culture. Serbia came out of the war victorious, and the heroism and suffering of its people was admired all around the world. Its heroic songs, which extolled the glorious past and kept the national spirit and hope for the future alive, were held in high esteem. Existing volumes of folk songs and tales were reprinted and new ones published.

The scholarship of Milman Parry and Albert Bates Lord in the 1930s and the establishment of formulaic literature as a separate discipline generated an additional increase in interest in South Slavic oral poetry. Parry and Lord edited and published several volumes of heroic songs from 1953 until 1980.

In the last 200 years, over one hundred volumes of oral literature in English translation, mostly heroic ballads, have been published in London

and New York, not to mention thousands and thousands of songs, tales and proverbs which appeared in other collections, journals and periodicals. An incomplete list of the oldest editions include: *National Songs of Serbia* by Owen Meredith Lytton, Edward Robert Bulwer Lytton (1861, 1917, 1918), *Serbian Folk Lore: Popular Tales* (1874, 1899, 1968), *Servia and Servians*, ed. by Chedo Mijatovich (1908, 1911, 1915, 1913, 1914), *Heroic Ballads of Serbia*, ed. by George Rapall Noyes and Leonard Bacon (1913), *Hero Tales and Legends of the Serbians*, ed. by Woislav M. Petrovich (1914, 1936), *National Proverbs: Serbia*, ed. by Amy Turner (1915), *Serbian Folk Songs, Fairy Tales and Proverbs*, ed. by Maximilian A. Muegge (1916), *Serbian Ballads* ed. by Robert William Seton-Watson (1916), *Serbian Fairy Tales*, ed. by Elodie Lawton Mijatowich (1917, 1918), *Serbian Songs and Poems*, ed. by James William Wiles (1917, 1918), *Tales of Serbian Life*, ed. by Ellen Chives Davis (1919), *Kosovo: Heroic Songs of the Serbs*, ed. by Helen Rootham (1920, 1979), *Yugo-Slav Stories*, ed. by Pavle Popović (1921), *Servian Popular Poetry*, ed. by John Bowring (1927), *Yugoslav Proverbs*, ed. by Louis Adamić (1923, 1924), *Ballads of Marko Kraljević*, ed. by D. H. Low (1922, 1968), *Yugo-Slav Folk Songs*, ed. by Julia Chatterton (1930), *Marko, the King's Son, Hero of the Serbs*, ed. Clarence A. Manning and O. Muriel Fuller (1932), *The Revolt of the Serbs Against the Turks. Translation of the Serbian Ballads of the Period*, ed. by Walter Angus Morison (1942), *The Poetry of Freedom*, ed. by William Rose Benet and Norman Cousins (1949), *Serbo-Croatian Folk Songs*, ed. by Bela Bartok and Albert Bates Lord (1951), etc.

More recently, there have been over ten new volumes of Yugoslav oral poetry or folk tales translated into English in this country and in England including: *Serbian Folk Poetry: Ancient Legends, Romantic Songs* ed. by Zora Devrnja Zimmerman (1986), *Kosovo Songs* ed. by John Matthias and Vladeta Vučković (1987), *Nine Majic Pea-Hens and Other Serbian Folk Tales*, ed. John Adlar (1988), *Serbian Poetry from the Beginning to the Present*, ed. by Milne Halton and Vasa D. Mihailovich (1988), *The Moon in the Well: Macedonian Folk Tales* (1988), *Kosovo: the Song of the Serbs*, ed. by Dan Mrkich, Ottawa, Canada (1989), *Serbo-Croat Heroic Poem: Epics from Bihac, Cazin and Kulen Vakuf* ed. David Bynum (1993), *Immanent Art Form*, ed. John Foley (1991), *Flashes from Serbian Folk Literature*, ed. T.M. Vučković (1992), *A Green Pine: An Anthology of Love Poems*, ed. by E.D. Goy (1990), *Red Knight: Serbian Women's Songs*, ed. by Toma Longinović (1992), *Songs of the Serbian people*, ed. by Milne Halton and Vasa D. Mihailovich (1997), *The Serbian Epic Ballads*, ed. by Geoffrey Lock (1997), *Songs of Serbia* translated by Kosara Gavrilović (2002), etc.

Apart from oral literature, in the period between the two world wars, translations from Yugoslav literature into English were few and far in between. The country, Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes until 1929 and Yugoslavia since 1929, was plagued by troubles at home. The work that received the most attention during that time was *Gorski vjenac*, translated as *The Mountain Wreath* or *Mountain Laurel*, an epic narrative written by Petar Petrović Njegoš in 1847. It was translated into English in 1930. It took James W. Wyles over fifteen years to do it. Since that time, three additional translations were published in the 1980's, the latest translated by Vasa D. Mihailovich in 1986. *Gorski vjenac* is a very difficult work to translate, and it remains a challenge for future translators.

After WWII, Yugoslavia enjoyed great popularity because of its heroic struggle against fascism. In 1949, Tito's break with Stalin sparked renewed interest, and throughout the 1960s, Yugoslavia continued on the road toward liberalization and economic reforms. Social realism never took hold in Yugoslavia to the extent that it did in the other Eastern European countries. Yugoslavs were allowed to travel and had access to Western European and American literatures. Soon their literature more or less caught up with the Western European trends. Yugoslav culture profited because of the political swing toward Yugoslavia. By 1958, the number of U.S. universities offering Serbo-Croatian swelled to 52; with the new students came the need for new translations of Yugoslav literature.

Yugoslav literature received its biggest boost when Ivo Andrić won the Nobel prize for literature in 1961 for his novel *The Bridge on the Drina* (already published in English translation in 1959). The success of Ivo Andrić was very important for literature in Serbo-Croatian and after 1961, not only all of Andrić's works but also works by many other Yugoslav writers were published in English translation, including works by Miroslav Krleža, Miodrag Bulatović, Oskar Davičo, Mihailo Lalić, Dragoslav Mihailović, Borislav Pekić and others. This interest was sustained throughout the 1970s and 1980s, and translations of Yugoslav writers appeared fairly regularly.

A handful of translators and scholars have done an excellent job in promoting Yugoslav literatures since that time. For a complete list of translations the reader is referred to *The Comprehensive Bibliography of Yugoslav Literature in English 1593-1980* by Vasa D. Mihailovich published in 1984, and to three *Supplements* by the same author published by Slavica Publishers in 1988, 1992 and 1999.

In many cases, the works of Yugoslav writers became well known in Western Europe first, primarily in France, before they were published in the United States. This was the case of Danilo Kiš, Miloš Crnjanski, Aleksandar Tišma, Mirko Kovač and Milorad Pavić.

When in the 1990s Yugoslavia started to disintegrate, a new shift in politics and popular opinion occurred toward the former Yugoslav republics – now independent states of Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and of course Yugoslavia, consisting of Serbia and Montenegro. The trend established in the 1970s and the 1980s nevertheless continued uninterrupted, and literary works in English translation from the former Yugoslav republics continue to appear.

Many books and stories dealing with the recent civil wars in the former Yugoslavia were published in the 1990s largely for their contents, such as *We Are All Dead*, by Hamza Brkić, Sarajevo 1994, *Sarajevo at the End of the World* by Gojko Berić, Sarajevo 1994, *Sarajevo War Stories*, and others. Some rather well known writers tried to seize the moment and easily found publishers for works which had the same message as the one projected by media in the West. For example, Slavenka Drakulić's *As If I Am Not There: A Novel about Balkans, 1999/2000*, an account of alleged Bosnian rapes, is artistically inferior to her earlier work *Holograms of Fear*.

Generally, while the political climate and favorable public opinion in the 1960s and the 1970s created the right conditions for Yugoslav literary works to be selected for translation, once that was done, the popularity and the interest in a work depended exclusively on its aesthetic values.

The bias toward information and away from artistic value, which often was the criterion for selecting Soviet writers and their works for translation into English, was rarely a factor in the translation of Yugoslav writers. The writing of Milovan Djilas, the famous Yugoslav dissident, and *A Tomb for Boris Davidovich*, a short novel by Kiš in which the author exposes two evils of the XXth century, fascism and communism, are exceptions. Also, in the 1990s, *Bosnian Story* by Ivo Andrić became required reading for all NATO forces in Bosnia because of its content.

In general, writers who had gained a reputation prior to the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s remained available in print regardless of their ethnic background and their reception remained favorable. The situation may have been different elsewhere. In France, for example, the novel *Migrations* by Miloš Crnjanski was awarded the prize of the best book of the year in 1986,

to be removed from the shelves in the 1990s simply because its author was a Serb.<sup>3</sup>

A respectable number of Yugoslav prose writers who were selected for translation in the last four decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century remain available in print today. While they may not be best sellers or known to the larger public, many of them can be found in a good university book store or on Amazon.com.

For example, from Serbian literature one can find the following writers and their works in English translation: seven volumes of prose by Ivo Andrić (*The Bridge on the Drina*, *Bosnian Chronicle*, *The Woman from Sarajevo*, *The Damned Yard*, *The Pasha's Concubine*, *The Vizier's Elephant*, *Conversation with Goya* and *Signs by the Roadside*), some in more than one translation, as well as Andrić's Ph.D. dissertation *The Development of Spiritual Life in Bosnia Under the Influence of Turkish Rule*; five prose works by Danilo Kiš (*A Tomb for Boris Davidovich*, *Garden*, *Ashes*, *Hourglass*, *The Encyclopedia of the Dead*, *Early Sorrows*), four novels by Milorad Pavić (*The Dictionary of the Khazars*, *Landscape Painted with Tea*, *The Inner Side of the Wind*, *The Last Love in Constantinople*), three novels each by Meša Selimović (*Death and the Derish*, *The Fortress*, *The Island*), Miodrag Bulatović (*The Red Cockerel*, *A Hero on a Donkey*, *The War was Better*); two novels and a collection of short stories by David Albahari (*Tsing*, *Bait*, *Words are Something Else*); two novels each by Dragoslav Mihailović (*When the Pumpkins Blossomed*, *Petria Wreath*), Grozdana Olujić (*An Excursion to Heaven*, 1962, *Wild Seed*, 1974), Aleksandar Tišma (*The Use of Men*, *Capo*), Borislav Pekić (*The Time of Miracles*, *The Houses of Belgrade*), Slobodan Selenić (*Premeditated Murder*, *Fathers and Forefathers*); one novel each by Dobrica Ćosić the four volume novel *The Time of Death*, Svetlana Velmar-Janković (*Dungeon*), Branimir Šćepanović (*Mouth Full of Earth*), Miloš Crnjanski (*Migrations*), Bora Ćosić (*My Family's Role in the World Revolution*), Aleksandar Petrović (*Between Two Iron Curtains*, 1975), Mihailo Lalić (*The Wailing Mountain*), Zoran Živković (*Time Gifts*) and Vladimir Arsenijević (*In the Hull*), etc.

From Croatian literature the following works are available: five prose works by Dubravka Ugrešić (*Fording the Stream of Consciousness*, *In the Jaws of Life and Other Stories*, *Have a Nice Day*, *The Culture of Lies*, *The Museum of Unconditional Surrender*); two novels and a collection of short stories by Miroslav Krleža (*The Return of Philip Latinovitz*, *On the Edge of Reason*, *The Cricket Beneath the Waterfalls and Other Stories*), one novel each by

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<sup>3</sup> I owe this information to Dr. Nina Živančević a Serbia author who lives in France.

Vjekoslav Kaleb (*Glorious Dust*), Antun Šoljan (*A Brief Excursion and Other Stories*), Slobodan Novak (*Gold, Frankinsense and Myrrh*), Ivan Slamnig (*The Birthday*) and many books by Slavenka Drakulć (*Holograms of Fear, Marble Skin, The Taste of Man, How to Survive Communism and Even Laughed, Balkan Express, Café Europa, As If I am Not There*).

From Slovene literature, only the following are available: two novels by Drago Jančar (*Mocking Desire* and *Northern Light*) and one novel by Ciril Kosmač (*A Day In Spring*).

Stories and/or fragments of longer works by Yugoslav writers were also published in journals and anthologies what is too numerous to quote. Again, Mihailovich's *Bibliography* gives detailed information of these translations until 1995.

In addition, English translations of works by the writers quoted here as well as many others have been published in Serbia and other successor states of the former Yugoslavia. However, these translations rarely, if ever, make it into the canon, even when they have been translated by the same translators as that the Western publishers use.

From the 1960s until today a number of anthologies of short stories and/or fragments of larger works have been published in the English translation, such as: *The Death of a Simple Giant and Other Modern Yugoslav Stories*, ed. by Branko Lenski (1965), *Yugoslav Short Stories* ed. by Svetozar Koljević (1966), *An Anthology of Yugoslav Short Stories*, ed. A. Stipčević (1969), *The New Writing in Yugoslavia*, ed. by Bernard Johnson (1970), *An Anthology of Medieval Serbian Literature*, Slavica (1978), *Modern Yugoslav Satire*, ed. by Branko Mikšinovich (1979), *Yugoslav Fantastic Literature*, ed. Branko Mikasinovich and Dragan Milivojević (1991), *The Day Tito Died: Contemporary Slovenian Short Stories* (1993), *The Big Horse and Other Stories of Modern Macedonia*, ed. Milne Halton (19?), *Balkan Blues: Writing Out of Yugoslavia*, ed. by Joanna Labor (1995), *Prince of Fire: An Anthology of Contemporary Serbian Short Stories*, ed. by Radmila J. Gorup and Nadežda Obradović (1998). Also there are several anthologies of Yugoslav literatures in English: *Introduction to Yugoslav Literature* (1973) and *White Stones and Fir Tree: An Anthology of Slavic Literatures* (1977), both edited by Vasa D. Mihailovich, *Bugarštica: An Anthology*, ed. by John Mitchel (1990), *Flashes from Serbian Folk Literature: An Anthology*, ed. by Tihomir M. Vučković (1992), etc.

Translations are almost always the labor of love -- in poetry, even more so. The great American poet of Serbian origin, Charles Simic, has worked tirelessly to promote and popularize Yugoslav poets. Simic translated and



published numerous Yugoslav poets: Slovene Tomaž Šalamun, Macedonians Meto Jovanovski, Slavko Janevski and others, Antun Šoljan and Slavko Mihalić from Croatia, Vasko Popa, Ivan Lalić, Aleksandar Ristović, Milorad Pavić, Desanka Maksimović and others from Serbia, Hamdija Demirović from Bosnia and many others.

In the 1950s in Yugoslavia, poetry was the first to break away and move outside the political arena and progress toward greater freedom of expression. Simic and others who chose to translate Yugoslav poetry had a great number of poets to choose from. Poetry is easier and cheaper to publish, which explains the large number of translations of poetry. Most collections are published by small presses and in a small number of issues.

Serbian poets Vasko Popa, Miodrag Pavlović and Ivan Lalić soon became internationally known, to be joined later by other poets. In particular, Vasko Popa received high critical acclaim, and most of what he wrote has been published in English, translated by Anne Pennington in the UK and Charles Simic in the United States. Since the first volume of Popa's poetry was published in 1970, there have been an additional nine volumes: *Selected Poems* (1969), *The Little Box* (1970), *Earth Erect* (1973), *Collected Poems* (1979), *The Blackbird Field* (1979), *Homage to the Lame Wolf* (1987), etc. Nine collections of Ivan Lalić's poetry have been published in English: *Last Quarter* (1987), *The Works of Love* (1981) *The Passionate Measure* (1989), *Roll Call of Mirrors* (1989), *Fading Contact* (1989), *A Rusty Needle* (1996), *Fire Garden* (1970) etc., and five collections by Miodrag Pavlović: *Links* (1989), *The Slavs Beneath Parnassus* (1985), *The Conqueror of Constantinople* (1976), *Singing at the Whirlpool* (1983), and *A Voice Locked in Stone* (1985). Desanka Maksimović has three volumes in translation (*Poems by Desanka Maksimović: Greetings from the Old Country, Shaggy Little Dog and Poems from Norway*); Aleksandar Petrov, Matija Bećković and Nina Živančević each have two volumes of poetry in English: *Lady in an Empty Dress* (1990) and *Sochi Eroticism. Siberia* (1992); *Che* (1970) and *Epiphany* (1997); *More or Less Urgent* (1988) and *Death of New York City* (2002). One book of poems by Novica Tadić (*Night Mail: Selected Poems* (1992), Stevan Raičković (*Stone Lullaby*, 2003), Jovan Dučić (*Blue Legends*, 1983), and George Vid Tomašević (*Prisms*, 1985) each exist in English translation.

The Croatian poet Slavko Mihalić has two volumes of poetry translated into English (*Atlantis: Selected Poems*, 1983 and *Black Apples: Selected Poems*, 1989) and Milivoj Slaviček, Vesna Parun, Dragutin Tadijanović, Irena Vrkljan and Antun Šoljan one each: *Silent Doors, Selected Poems of Vesna*

*Parun, Selected Poems of Dragutin Tadijanović.* Additional volumes of poetry translation appeared in Slovenia, Macedonia and Bosnia.

Numerous anthologies of Yugoslav poetry in English have been published in this country and in England: *An Anthology of Modern Yugoslav Poetry* ed. by Janko Lavrin, London, 1962; *Contemporary Serbian Poetry*, ed. by Vasa D. Mihailovich, 1971; *Four Yugoslav Poets*, ed. by Charles Simic, 1970; *Reading the Ashes: An Anthology of the Poetry of Modern Macedonia*, ed. by Milne Halton, 1977; *An Anthology of Croat Verse 1450-1950*, 1981; *Serbian Poetry from Beginning to the Present*, ed. by Milne Halton and Vasa D. Mihailovich, 1988; *An Antology of Serbian Poetry: Golden Age*, ed. by Miša Djordjević 1988; *The Horse Has Six Legs: An Anthology of Serbian Poetry*, ed. by Charles Simic, 1992.

Twice as many collections and anthologies of poetry in English have been published in the former Yugoslavia, many of them in Macedonia. For years, Macedonia has been a host to “Struške večeri poezije”, an international gathering of poets, at Struga on lake Ohrid. This generated a great interest in Macedonian poets and resulted in numerous collections of poetry in English published in the Macedonian capital of Skopje.

The source for most of the data presented here, as mentioned earlier, has been the comprehensive bibliography of Yugoslav literatures by Vasa D. Mihailovich, published in one volume and three supplements from 1984 until 1998. For the more recent translations, the Unesco website for translations from Bosnian, Croatian, Slovene and Serbian literatures from 1995 until 2003 was used. It reveals that during that period there have been 143 entries: two from Bosnia, eighteen from Croatia, 24 from Macedonia, 25 from Slovenia, and 73 from Serbia. The translations from Serbia represent a bit more than 50% of all the works translated in that period. However, only one third of these 143 translations, or 47 translations total, appeared in the United States and England, while the remaining 96 were published in their country of origin. Out of 47 works (both poetry and prose), which appeared in the USA and England, three are three literary works from Croatia, two from Bosnia, eight from Slovenia, one from Macedonia and 34 from Serbia. Translations from Serbian literature account for more than 70% of all translations in that period.

Obviously, more literary translations from the former Yugoslavia are being published today than ever before. Much of that is published in Zagreb, Belgrade, Skoplje, Sarajevo and Ljubljana. Macedonia seems to be the most active in this respect, followed by Croatia. Hower, these translations are not

as well received as the translations published in this country or in England. There are probably many reasons. For one, these translations are often found not to be as transparent as Americans prefer foreign translations to be. In the former Yugoslavia, English translations are published soon after the appearance of a book, and sometimes not enough care is given to produce what is called a “smooth translation”. The translation into English of the works by the local writers was treated in the same fashion. The second and probably the more important reason is the market. There is little motivation to promote and publicize books which have been published elsewhere.

However, a good translation is not a sufficient reason to ensure that a book will be published and well received. For example, the second book of *Migrations* by Miloš Crnjanski has been translated by an outstanding translator (Ellen Elias Bursać and is ready to be published, yet the first book of *Migrations* did not do well enough financially to warrant the publication of a second book.

On the other hand, the market can determine the success of a book even when its translation is far from perfect. This is the case for Andrić's *The Bridge on the Drina*. While *Tranička Hronika* (*Bosnian Story, Bosnian Chronicle, The Days of the Consuls*) by Andrić exists in three different translations and *Prokleta Avlija* (*Devil's Yard, The Damned Yard*) in two, *The Bridge on the Drina* is available only in the translation by Lovett Edwards, first published in 1959. It has been reprinted regularly every few years since then, even though this translation is far from perfect. According to Bogdan Rakić, Edwards missed 135 full sentences and far many more clauses, phrases and individual words. In authors like Andrić who cared deeply about each and every word, these omissions are very grave. There are more than 150 grave mistranslations. For example, “sakrija”, a string instrument, was translated as ‘a drum’, ‘northwest’ as ‘northeast’, ‘guilt’ as ‘innocence’, ‘parents’ as ‘relatives’, ‘floor’ as ‘ceiling’, ‘coast’ as ‘torrent’, ‘grove’ as ‘hamlet’, etc., etc.<sup>4</sup>

In conclusion, the impetus to translate literary works written by the writers from the former Yugoslavia may have come as a result of a favorable political climate, and their reception may have depended on swings in political opinion. However, once the works appeared, they either received critical acclaim or were ignored solely on the basis of their aesthetic qualities. A number of writers became fairly well known and their works remain in print consistently enough to be used in college courses, which

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<sup>4</sup> To learn more about this read Rakić 1998: 243–270.

is the main method of promoting these works. Translations from Serbian literature into English represent a high percentage of all translations from the former Yugoslavia's successor states. This reflects both Serbia's size relative to the other new independent states, but also Serbia's role in the major historical events.

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Radmila Gorup

## SRPSKA KNJIŽEVNOST U ENGLESKOM PREVODU

**Rezime:** U kulturnoj razmeni zemlje skoro nikad ne učestvuju ravnopravno. Što je zemlja manja, pre će se naći u podređenom položaju. Manje nacije nisu veliki igrači. Njihove književnosti retko dopiru do velike publike, i poznavaoi se svode na šačicu eksperata iz određenog polja. Ovaj rad razmatra istoriju prevodenja srpske književnosti na engleski jezik. Prevodi sa srpskog na engleski uzimaju maha tek od 19. veka. U određenim vremenskim intervalima politička klima i javno mnjenje su stvarali povoljne uslove za odabir pojedinih dela srpske književnosti za prevodenje na engleski jezik. Srpskoj i jugoslovenskoj kulturi je poklonjeno najviše pažnje 1961. godine, kada je Ivo Andrić dobio Nobelovu nagradu za književnost. Čak i nakon jugoslovenskih ratova tokom devedesetih dela pisaca koje je pratila dobra reputacija, a koja su prevedena na engleski jezik, redovno su objavljivana tako da su pronašla put do univerzitetskih kurikuluma, što je i osnovni način promovisanja takvih dela. U radu zaključujemo da je Srbija, uprkos svojim malim razmerama, u tom smislu zabeležila značajniji uspeh od svojih komšija.

**Ključne reči:** Engleski prevod, srpska književnost, istorija prevoda, selekcija, kulturna razmena, promocija.