

Ivan Čolović*
The 20th Century Library
Belgrade, Serbia

THE RANKO BUGARSKI LIBRARY**

1.

Since its foundation in 1971 the Twentieth Century Library has published the majority of Ranko Bugarski's monographs; in total thirteen books.¹ No other author has contributed as many volumes to the edition, which means that we would be justified in calling it the Ranko Bugarski Library. This would be logical not simply because of the number of Bugarski's works the Library contains, but also because it was with his assistance and cooperation that I was also able to introduce several other important writers in the field of linguistics and sociolinguistics.² When invited to give

* E-mail address: ivcol@eunet.rs

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¹ *Lingvistika o čoveku* [Linguistics on Man] (1975, 1983), *Jezik u društvu* [Language in Society] (1986), *Jezik od mira do rata* [Language from Peace to War] (1995), *Lica jezika* [Facets of Language] (2001, 2002), *Nova lica jezika* [New Facets of Language] (2002, 2009), *Žargon* [Slang] (2003, 2006), *Jezik i kultura* [Language and Culture] (2005), *Evropa u jeziku* [Europe in Language] (2009), *Jezik i identitet* [Language and Identity] (2010), *Portret jednog jezika* [The Portrait of a Language] (2012), *Sarmagedon u Mesopotamiji* [Sarmageddon in Mesopotamia] (2013), *Putopis po sećanju* [Travel Memoirs from Memory] (2014), and *Jezici u potkrovlju* [Languages in the Attic] (2016).

² In two instances Bugarski collected and introduced the works of other authors: Edward Sapir, *Ogledi iz kulturne antropologije* [Essays in Cultural Anthropology], selection and introduction R. Bugarski, trans. A. I. Spasić, 1974, 1984; and Benjamin Lee Whorf, *Jezik, misao i stvarnost* [Language, Thought and Reality], selection and introduction R. Bugarski, trans. S. Sindelić, 1979.

an example of a work of linguistics characteristic of the Twentieth Century Library I usually mention the title of the first work that Bugarski published with us in 1975 – *Linguistics on Man*.

The Twentieth Century Library edition does not focus solely on linguistic and sociolinguistic literature, it also introduces authors from a wider field, expounding on anthropological and cultural themes, dealing with man, society and culture. Although it is largely thanks to Bugarski that, for many years now, works on language have enjoyed the most prominent place in the Library, there are, nonetheless, objective justifications for what we might term the ‘privileged status’ of linguistics. At the time of creating this Edition, at the beginning of the 1970s, general linguistics was considered a pilot science, a science which served as an example, in terms of theory, to many other social sciences including ethnology, anthropology, psychoanalysis, history, and also philosophy. This was the time of structuralism. From the mid-1960s researchers of society and culture had had to gain a familiarity with the basics of structural linguistics and the related semiotics (semiology), theory of signs, the difference between signum and signatum, syntagm and paradigm, the way synchrony and diachrony are determined by linguistics, and the basics of generative grammar. You had to know your Saussure, Jakobson, Benveniste, Hjelmslev, Martinet, Lotman, and later on Chomsky. At that time I considered myself sufficiently familiar with the literature to prepare a thematic section for the magazine *Delo* entitled *Trends in Modern Linguistics (Putevi moderne lingvistike)* (July, 1969). This led to my first meeting with Ranko Bugarski. In response to a request from me he introduced Noam Chomsky’s basic linguistic concepts for the section in *Delo*.

The influence of linguistic structuralism and semiology is still felt in the social sciences today, though doubtless far less so than before. New circumstances arose in the meantime, and with them new reasons for the necessity of linguistics, and its importance in studying society and the world in which we live. After the end of the Cold War, the processes of globalisation accelerated and the mobility of the world population grew apace. The links between different cultures also intensified, prompted by new forms of electronic communication via the internet. Such a situation created the need to research the relations between cultures more thoroughly, and various models of these relationships were offered: multiculturalism, interculturalism, transcultural communication and so on. The issues of relationship between different languages, between language and culture, language and identity, the problems of language policy in different cultures,

and the way language issues are viewed by European Union institutions, came to the fore. With the growing strength of nationalism in Yugoslavia, until the war and break-up of the united state, it became important to research the role of language and linguists in this context, and to critically present examples of the language of nationalism and political manipulation of languages, and also to follow and analyse the processes which led to an official rejection of the most widely used language in Yugoslavia, Serbo-Croatian. The greatest contribution to research on these topics came from Ranko Bugarski. By listing them I am in fact summarising the content of the books that he dedicated to these topics.

2.

Ranko Bugarski is one of the most significant followers of the enlightenment tradition in Serbia and the region as a whole. It is, of course, the European Enlightenment that I refer to, which can be seen at work in our region, but which mostly remains in the shadow of its ideological antipode, European romanticism and nationalism, the most radical seedlings of which form the basis of today's ethno-nationalist ideology. This is why it has never been easy to represent the enlightenment tradition in Serbia. But there have always been those who persisted in spite of everything. One of them is Bugarski. His intellectual and ethical position could be explained in the same way Ernest Gellner described his own position in science and society, in one of his last books, saying he was a follower of "enlightenment scepticism", i.e. "an enlightened rational fundamentalist".³

Where is this concretely observable? In the fact that in Bugarski's work, knowledge on language, on language and culture, on language and society, his scientific, reliable, well-founded, trustworthy, lucid and systematic scholarship, as a rule, is drawn out in opposition to some form or other of ignorance, or false knowledge. Moreover, Bugarski offers this real knowledge in answer to concrete manifestations and forms of ignorance, here and now.

Ignorance or fallacies about language, about language and culture are numerous. For example in the book *Language and Culture*, Bugarski speaks

³ Ernest Gellner, *Posmodernizam, razum i religija* [Postmodernism, Rationality and Religion], trans. Silva Mežnarić, Jesenski Turk, Zagreb 2000, p. 99.

of “deep-rooted fallacies and prejudices”, of “amateurish categorization of things”, of “well-established stereotypes and prejudices”, of “pure ignorance and prejudice”, of the “irrational prejudices of the uninformed”, of “clichéd thinking”, of “over-simplified popular understandings”, of what “people take for granted”, of a “narrow and deceptive frame of mind” and “well-established lay beliefs”.⁴

Of course not all these fallacies and prejudices are of the same kind or significance. They vary according to the genre of speech in which they occur; they are to be found in folk lore and traditional culture, in particular forms of magical and religious practice but also in academia, politics and the media. These fallacies can be harmless, comical – Bugarski often gives examples of this ilk – but also highly dangerous. One of the most dangerous and oft-exploited in contemporary political discourse is the stand on the supposed ‘organic unity’ of language and nation. Speaking of the manipulation of language, culture and identity, he says in one place that “the reduction of a complex identity to one dimension, the ethnic, is both scientifically and ethically indefensible, but nonetheless, thanks to inherited stereotypes it is also very useful when the goal is manipulation, for which there is ample evidence in the recent experience of war undergone by the peoples of Yugoslavia, herded as they were, without pardon or appeal, into their respective ethnic pens in order to fight, even to the death, for the national cause.”⁵

Ranko Bugarski proffers his services then, as a guide through the “verbal fog”, a tireless interpreter and critic of prejudices about language and culture, of the manipulation of language and culture, a follower of the best traditions of education and intellectual engagement. This consistent and unflagging commitment to the fight for affirmation of the critical analysis of language and its place in culture and society has won him extensive recognition among his colleagues. This is apparent in the three collections of papers which have been published in his honour, presenting the work of linguists and sociolinguists the world over.⁶

⁴ Ranko Bugarski, *Jezik i kultura* [Language and Culture], Biblioteka XX vek, Beograd, 2005, p. 31, 43, 75–77, 94.

⁵ Ranko Bugarski, *Jezik i kultura* [Language and Culture], Biblioteka XX vek, Beograd, 2005, p. 69.

⁶ *History and Perspectives of Language Study – Papers in Honor of Ranko Bugarski* (eds O. Mišeska Tomić and M. Radovanović), Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2000; *Jezik, društvo, saznanje: Profesoru Ranku Bugarskom od njegovih studenata* [Language,

In this region too, he has a relatively wide circle of admirers, not among linguists alone. I have kept an e-mail I received from the writer Miljenko Jergović, overjoyed with Bugarski's book *Travel Memoirs from Memory*:⁷ With Jergović's permission, I read this communication at the promotion of the book and publish it again here:

I have just finished *Memoirs*, an amazing achievement from an amazing individual. I have always envied (and I mean quite literally envied) those multitalented people who dedicate their life's work to one vocation, leaving two or three other talents aside as unworthy of their condescension. For me, as someone who can do nothing but the one thing I know, and am wholly untalented for anything else, this is a kind of miracle. Bugarski writes like a force of nature, as if he had spent a lifetime in nothing but the production of prose and memoir. But to the same degree that he is unpretentiously well-educated, knows so much and understands his fellow men so well, he is also a witty, often a wickedly witty provocateur... I really love the way that, in the additional segments of the book, Bugarski continues his previous or several previous works. This goes beyond all established literary standards, from Gutenberg to the present day, but it is brilliant and wholly justified.⁸

But it is only to be expected that, in official linguistic circles, among linguists with a decisive influence over language policy in Serbia, Bugarski

Society, Cognition: To Professor Ranko Bugarski from his Students] (eds D. Klikovac and K. Rasulić), Belgrade: Faculty of Philology, 2003; *Jezik u upotrebi. Primenjena lingvistika u čast Ranku Bugarskom / Language in Use. Applied Linguistics in Honour of Ranko Bugarski* (ed. V. Vasić), Novi Sad/Beograd: Društvo za primenjenu lingvistiku Srbije, 2011.

⁷ Ranko Bugarski, *Putopis po sećanju* [Travel Memoirs from Memory], Biblioteka XX vek, Beograd, 2014.

⁸ [The original quote] "Dočitao sam *Putopis po sećanju*. Nevjerojatna knjiga, nevjerovatnog čovjeka. Uvijek sam zavidio (ali, zaista i bez pretjerivanja – zavidio) tim multitalentiranim ljudima, koji se jednim poslom bave cijeli život, a preostalih dva-tri talenta ostave po strani, onako gospodski ih prezru. Meni koji ne znam ništa osim onoga čime se bavim, i savršeno sam netaleantiran za ostala umijeća, to djeluje k'o neko više čudo. Bugarski piše k'o zmaj, k'o da se cijeloga života bavio samo pisanjem proze i memoara. Ali kako je samo nenametljivo obrazovan, kako sve zna i svakog razumije, kako je samo duhovit, kakav zajebant i provokator... I strašno mi se sviđa to što Bugarski u ovoj knjizi, u dodatku nastavlja prethodnu, ili nekoliko prethodnih. To je potpuno izvan svih standarda knjiških, od Gutenberga do danas, ali je sjajno i ispravno."

has remained undesirable, silently, and on occasion openly rejected. In this too he shares the fate of many an enlightened educator, people who, in spite of powerful resistance from the political and cultural elites in their own environment, nonetheless broaden the space for knowledge and freedom.