

BEHIND THE SATIRE OF TODD HASAK-LOWY'S 'THE TASK OF THIS TRANSLATOR': THE VICIOUS CIRCLE OF LITERATURES IN 'OBSCURE' LANGUAGES

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Abstract: The plot of Todd Hasak-Lowy's short story 'The Task of This Translator' (2005) revolves around a 'translation institute' where an amateur translator Ben takes on the job of an interpreter for an unspecified Balto-Slavic language he had studied at college but barely understands. Even though the 'obscure' language remains unrevealed, its description points towards Serbo-Croatian and its successors. By taking Hasak-Lowy's story as a starting point, the present essay engages with the Serbian context in an attempt to illustrate the status of a minorised literature in a wider cultural framework, particularly that of Anglophone countries. The essay takes a sociological approach by concentrating on the roles that educational institutions, publishing industry, and the reading public play in the processes of cultural cross-contamination. The quantitative data are collected mainly from databases and statistical reports, whereas the qualitative data are extracted from interviews and articles by translators, scholars, and publishers involved in the mediation. The essay tests the following hypotheses: 1. the availability of Serbian-language courses at Anglophone universities is limited; 2. in Anglophone contexts, the Serbian language is often taught in combination with Croatian and Bosnian, which lowers the visibility of all three standards; 3. literary markets are largely governed by commercial interests; 4. the general interest in translated literature is lacking in the Anglosphere. Investigating the causal relationship between the hypotheses, the essay argues that it is the combination of these factors that creates a vicious circle preventing Serbian literature from penetrating the canonical barriers of world literature to a greater extent.

Keywords: literary circulation, literature in translation, World Literature, sociology of translation, Serbian literature, Serbian language, Anglosphere, literary markets, commercialism, field theory

Introduction

Even the most conflicting articulations of the concept of world literature, as are those formulated by David Damrosch and Emily Apter, agree that translation lies at the heart of this much-disputed concept. On the one hand, Damrosch, a keen advocate of the idea, maintains that world literature 'encompass[es] all literary works that circulate beyond their culture of origin, either in translation or in their original language' (Damrosch 2003: 4). This understanding puts a translated text on par with one in the original language. The presumed equivalence between the two indicates that translation is indispensable in mediating texts through different cul-

tures. On the other hand, Apter, as of late a bold opponent of world literature, seeks to refute the concept on the grounds of untranslatability, the phenomenon that is, along with incommensurability, crucial to her argumentation 'against world literature' (Apter 2013: 3). Regardless of whether one believes in the long-term viability of world literature, it appears that the very concept is largely contingent upon translation. The availability and accessibility of translation becomes particularly vital when it comes to the transmission of literatures written in languages that are less known globally, outside their native communities (Zabic, Kamenish 2006: 2).

This essay will take as a starting point a short story by the American author Todd Hasak-Lowy, entitled 'The Task of This Translator' (2005) and published in the eponymous collection. Its plot, set in a fictional college town in the U.S., revolves around a curious 'translation institute', where Ted, a student-entrepreneur, struggles to find those working in lesser-known languages for his recently established translation agency (Hasak-Lowy 2005: 151). For lack of better alternatives, Ted convinces his friend Ben to take on a job of an interpreter for the unspecified Balto-Slavic language that he had studied as an undergraduate but barely understands. Even though the 'obscure' language, as the narrator puts it, remains unrevealed, its vivid description points towards Serbo-Croatian and its derivatives. Despite the struggle to identify the story's 'obscure' language, the reader soon realises that pinpointing the exact language is irrelevant, as it is a stand-in for hundreds of cultures, labelled as 'minor', which dwell on the verge of American attention.

Drawing from Hasak-Lowy's story, this essay engages with the Serbian context in an attempt to illustrate the status of a minorised literature in a wider cultural framework, particularly that of Anglophone countries. The idea of this essay is to check whether what is alluded to in Hasak-Lowy's story has concrete grounding in the real world. To this effect, the essay aims to test the following hypotheses: 1. the availability of Serbian-language courses at Anglophone universities is limited; 2. in Anglophone contexts, Serbian is often taught in combination with Croatian and Bosnian, which lowers the visibility of all three standards; 3. literary markets are largely governed by commercial interests; 4. the general interest in translated literature is lacking in the Anglosphere. Investigating the causal relationship between the formulated hypotheses, the essay argues that it is the combination of these factors that creates a vicious circle preventing Serbian literature from penetrating the canonical barriers of world literature to a greater extent.

The body of this paper is divided into seven sections. The first three sections are of theoretical nature and contain a review of current literature on the topic, a definition of the study's theoretical framework, and an overview of the employed methodology, respectively. The fourth section discusses the possible identity of the 'obscure' language and the reasons for which it remains hidden. The final three sections are organised around

the three crucial components – the educational sphere, the book markets, and the general readership. Finally, Conclusions bring the essay's findings together and give suggestions for further research.

Literature Review

Apart from Snezana Zabic and Paula Kamenish's essay 'A Survey of Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian Poetry in English Translation in the U.S. and Canada', the scope of which is genre-specific and directed at South Slavic poetry more generally, I am not familiar there have been any similar studies conducted on the Serbian case. In examining the period between 1970 and 2004, Zabic and Kamenish attempt to grasp what *enables* the circulation of Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian poetries on the North American continent, the presence of which has been continuous, albeit largely peripheral compared to literatures translated from other non-dominant languages (Zabic, Kamenish 2006: 3). The authors argue that the main determinants contributing to the processes of cultural exchange are, in fact, literary mediators – including émigré writers, who are often translators themselves, and scholars of world literature – and a few publishers committed to publishing poetry in translation. In comparison to Zabic and Kamenish's article, this essay employs an inverted approach insofar as it tries to answer what *hinders* the circulation of Serbian literature in the Anglophone transnational field.

Theoretical Framework

This essay adopts the theoretical framework of field theory, developed by French social scientist Pierre Bourdieu. Owing to its wide applicability across disciplines, this theory needs little introduction; yet let us briefly summarise its main points in regard to literary production. In a nutshell, Bourdieu advocates the contextualisation of art works by considering them in *relational* terms:

Constructing an object such as the literary field requires and enables us to make a radical break with the substantialist mode of thought (as Ernst Cassirer calls it) which tends to foreground the individual, or the visible interactions between individuals, as the expense of the structural relations – invisible, or visible only through their effects – between social positions that are both occupied and manipulated by social agents which may be isolated individuals, groups or institutions. (Bourdieu [1983] 1993, 29)

By putting a work in a social perspective – acknowledging its historical as well as spatial distribution – Bourdieu moves away from all forms of 'internal analysis', which he criticises for their isolationist approach that ignores the complex network of social relations that allow the very existence of a text in the first place (Johnson 1993: 10).

With a shift away from nation as the principal unit, Bourdieu's theory has come under close scrutiny for its alleged 'methodological nationalism'. Although the framework of field theory has been commonly adopted in a national context, those more familiar with Bourdieu's oeuvre claim he never explicitly limited it to the space of a nation-state (Sapiro 2018: 2). Indeed, many researchers have fruitfully embraced Bourdieu's field theory in examining phenomena across national borders, focusing on transnational and global fields. Larissa Buchholz, who has written on the theoretical challenges of extending the model beyond the confines of nation-state, stresses that, when doing so, researchers should be careful to take into consideration the specificities characteristic of higher levels, especially their 'multi-scalar architecture' that receives no mention in Bourdieu's original formulation (Buchholz 2016: 32–33).

How are the boundaries of a field – be it national or not – determined in the first place? Sapiro maintains that this is entirely the responsibility of a scholar, for '[t]he field is an abstract concept that allows for the methodological autonomization of an area of activity defined in a relational [. . .] and dynamic way [. . .], provided that this autonomization is justified on socio-historical grounds' (Sapiro 2018: 2). It should also be stressed that the field itself is not a fixed structure, insofar as '[t]he boundaries of fields are related to the processes of differentiation and specialization of activities, as well as to geographic borders, but these boundaries are not given, they evolve over time and are constantly reconsidered and challenged' (Sapiro 2018: 2). Knowing the conceptual perimeters of a field, let us try to circumscribe the fields discussed hereby. This essay looks at the interaction of two literary fields, more specifically at the influence, however marginal it may be, of the Serbian field over that of 'core' Anglosphere. By default, the direction of symbolic goods' circulation within a field is from the centre towards the periphery (Sapiro 2018: 15). Between fields, power relations are as important. To alleviate the all-too-present asymmetries and imbalances, it may be vital to examine in more detail the flow that runs counter to what power relations dictate and the conditions that allow for such reverse distribution.

On the one hand, the Serbian field is a national one and corresponds to the country's borders. While the borders of a national field require little additional explanation, noteworthy is the connection of the Serbian field to the Yugoslav one. Ongoing is an academic discussion as to whether there ever was a genuinely Yugoslav literature or it was merely a conglomeration of individual national literatures.¹ While this is a complex question, the consideration of which exceeds the ambitions of this essay, some factors affecting the emergence of the Serbian national field

¹ For instance, in May 2018 the Faculty of Philology of the University of Belgrade and the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Novi Sad jointly organised a two-day international workshop, entitled 'Was there Ever a Yugoslav Literature? Debating the Histories of Yugoslav Literatures'.

and its relationship with other historically connected structures will be addressed where appropriate. Broadly, the timespan studied is after the disintegration of SFR Yugoslavia and, more precisely, after Serbia's independence in 2006.

On the other hand, the field of the 'core' Anglosphere,² as I propose here, is a transnational one, unified by the English language. By translating a work of Serbian literature into English, it has the potential of becoming a part of this field. The attention of this essay is predominantly split between the contemporary literary scene and the translation market of the U.S. and the U.K., occasionally underpinned with relevant examples from Canada, Ireland, Australia, and New Zealand. What gives us the right to consider the U.S. and the U.K. the essential components of the proposed field is their traditional dominance in the formation of the English-language book market. Namely, the majority of publishing companies is based in these two countries – with centres in London and New York (Holifield 2014). Even though the former Commonwealth countries are working towards establishing their own publishers rather than just distributing what is produced in the U.S. or the U.K., the dominance of these two industries is still overwhelming on the international market (Holifield 2014).

Thanks to the global prominence of the English language, the presence of minorised national literatures at any of the individual Anglophone markets may prove pivotal for their further circulation. Owing to an increasing number of non-native English speakers from across the globe, translation into English has become a mediator catalysing literary exchange between little related cultures. What is more, an English translation can also act as a mediator in a quite literal sense: Maureen Freely, who translates from Turkish into English, asserts in the article 'How I got lost in translation and found my true calling' for the *Observer* that '[those] who translate from non-western languages will often discover, if a book becomes a world phenomenon, that most other translations will be from [their] translation and not the original' (Freely 2010). In this way, an English translation becomes referential for further renderings. While the Anglophone market does not equal the canon of world literature, it certainly is an effective springboard for further circulation and, for this reason, its importance should not be undermined.

² Definitions of the 'core Anglosphere' vary in that they may or may not include the Republic of Ireland and the English-speaking countries of the Caribbean Islands – the Bahamas, Barbados, and Jamaica. As stated, this thesis will use the term 'core Anglosphere' to refer to the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and Ireland. Accordingly, the qualifier 'Anglophone' will be used to refer to these particular states collectively rather than the whole English-speaking world.

Methodology

This research belongs to a somewhat novel field – that of sociology of translation. Thanks to Pierre Bourdieu’s formulation of field theory, many disciplines in the humanities have undergone the so-called ‘sociological turn’.³ Over the course of 1990s, the sociology of translation has established itself within the realm of Translation and Interpreting Studies (Angelelli 2014: 1; Sapiro 2014: 82). A sociological approach shifts the accent from the translation as a product to the intricate ways in which translations are created and circulated. Two research avenues emerge hereby: one centring ‘the agency of translators and interpreters’ and the other ‘the social factors that permeate acts of translation and interpreting’ (Angelelli 2014: 1). In lieu of interpersonal relations, the essay will inquire into the significance of the so-called ‘large-scale’ factors. In Gisèle Sapiro’s opinion, these include – but are not limited to – translation schools, literary and academic journals, publishing houses, translation prizes, professional associations, and, finally, society as a whole (Sapiro 2014: 82). It is through the examination of educational institutions and publishing industry in the first place that this essay will attempt to track the circulation of Serbian literature in translation throughout the Anglophone world. As this is a highly underexplored area of research, the quantitative data will be collected from various online sources, databases, and statistical reports. The hypotheses will be supported by qualitative data extracted from interviews and texts by translators, scholars, and publishers actively involved in the process of mediation.

As this essay takes a macro perspective by concentrating on the roles that institutions and the general reading public play in the processes of cultural mediation, the notion of ‘distant reading’ resurfaces accordingly. Although Franco Moretti is not the sole proponent of ‘distant reading’,⁴ his theorisations are most germane to us, thanks to their engagement with the concept of world literature. In order to methodologically grasp the massive literary conglomeration of world literature, which is filled with differences and asymmetries, Moretti claims that one may need to sacrifice the text, for ‘the ambition is now directly proportional to the distance from the text: the more ambitious the project, the greater must the distance be’ (Moretti 2013: 48; emphasis in the original). What the researcher gets in return is the opportunity to ‘focus on units that are much smaller or much larger than the text: devices, themes, tropes – or genres and systems’ (Moretti 2013: 48–49). Moretti, therefore, endorses the idea of scaling the method so as to correspond to the object of study as neatly as possible. ‘And if, between the very small and the very large’, Moretti

3 In some publications, it is also referred to as ‘social turn’.

4 It should be mentioned that Franco Moretti is not the only scholar associated with ‘distant reading’. Apart from Moretti, we find the term, most notably, in Peter Middleton’s monograph *Distant Reading: Performance, Readership, and Consumption in Contemporary Poetry* (University of Alabama Press, 2005).

continues, ‘the text itself disappears, well, it is one of those cases when one can justifiably say, Less is more’ (Moretti 2013: 49). Culler points out that ‘distant reading’ in Moretti’s sense ‘would turn any sort of attention to an individual text into close reading’ (Culler 2010: 20). It is exactly the ease with which Moretti’s model allows travelling along the close/distant axis that makes it complementary – rather than opposed – to the formally antonymous practice of ‘close reading’. This essay, devoid of textual analysis in the classical sense, will look up to Moretti’s model in discussing the parallel between the circumstances found in real life and in the fictional world Hasak-Lowy’s story.

Unveiling the ‘Obscure’

The first obstacle that prevents us from determining the exact language that the protagonist Ben is trying to master is the fictional multilingualism of ‘The Task of This Translator’. Albeit entirely in English, the story conveys the impression of being partially written in an unspecified language. As Fotini Apostolou points out,

this language [. . .] is vaguely present but mostly absent throughout the text, not only because of the absence of a name, but also because of its complete physical absence; not a single word of the language is given, apart from the client’s name’ (Apostolou 2014: 76).

From the narrator, we learn the following:

This language is a European language, but seriously Eastern European, entirely marginal in pretty much anyone’s genealogy of languages, just barely getting invited to the Indo-European family table. Just barely. Balto maybe, Slavic probably. (Hasak-Lowy 2005: 152)

What strikes the reader as foreign-language passages are in fact Ben’s not-so-reliable translations from the language in question, initially filled with numerous ‘blahs’, which later evolve into more intelligible yet never fully coherent entities.

The isolated linguistic signifier that Apostolou mentions (Apostolou 2014: 76) is the male name Goran Vansalivich, with which the mysterious client signs off the letter, composed in clumsy English, where he requests the Institute’s services (Hasak-Lowy 2005: 154). Drawing from Jacques Derrida’s suggestion that ‘a proper name, in the proper sense, does not properly belong to the language’ (Derrida 1985: 172), in that it resists *intra-lingual translation*, we should be careful not to jump to conclusions based merely on this signifier. If we do decide to follow this clue in search for the ‘obscure’ language, then a few elements should be taken into account. First of all, ‘Vansalivich’ is probably misspelt to signal the estrangement from ancestral land, as no such surname comes up in Google search.⁵ The

⁵ The only results that do come up are quotes from Hasak-Lowy’s story.

provided alternatives – ‘Vasilevich’, ‘Vasilovich’, ‘Vasilyevich’ – seem to be transliterated to match the norms of English orthography. It should be noted that the transliteration of proper names is often haphazard insofar as it is a matter of personal preferences in which the linguistic criterion does not necessarily play the decisive role. The most important clue found in the signed surname, then, would be the suffix ‘-ivich’, characteristic of a wider Slavic region (Apostolou 2014: 76). The regional distribution of the name Goran is more narrow: according to Mike Campbell, it appears in four South Slavic languages – Serbian, Croatian, Slovene, and Macedonian – thereby pointing towards the Balkans, or, more specifically, former Yugoslavia (Campbell 2017).

Furthermore, one cannot ignore the parallels between the turbulent history of the Balkans – particularly the conflict that ensued from the disintegration of SFR Yugoslavia in the 1990s – and the narrator’s lurid description of the story’s mysterious language.

This language hardly gets much mention outside of its local habitat, though it is the language spoken by those unfortunates that every fifteen years or so, whether under the auspices of fascist, Communist, or unspecified geopolitical misguidance, rise to international attention as they and their linguistic neighbors do horrible things to each other in the name of nation, religion, ethnicity, etc. (Hasak-Lowy 2005: 152)

The specific mention of ‘linguistic neighbours’ in lieu of simply ‘neighbours’ might be there to remind us of the fluid identity of South Slavic languages. In the aftermath of Yugoslav wars, once different varieties of Serbo-Croatian have been standardised as Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian, and Montenegrin. The mocking tone of the story seems to be mostly directed at an average American, who does not care to understand the circumstances surrounding the odd mixture of socio-political reasons causing the mutually understandable languages to become officially separate. Yet, it may also be that the ‘obscure’ language remains deliberately vague because its blurry boundaries are somewhat unclear even to its own speakers.

Serbian- and Slavic-Language Courses at Anglophone Universities

‘The Task of This Translator’ openly criticises the system of higher education in the U.S., which has not gone through any kind of fundamental reform since the story’s publication in 2005. In what Hasak-Lowy humorously terms ‘a ferociously overpriced, nearly prestigious private college’ (Hasak-Lowy 2005: 150), where Ben first had the opportunity to study the Balto-Slavic language, students appear to be neither enthusiastic nor diligent. With no deeper interest in the humanities, their selection of class-

es to attend seems random. For instance, we learn that Ted, the founder of the so-called Translation Institute, took a class named Transnationalism and Borders ‘by mistake’. (Hasak-Lowy 2005: 150) Similarly, Ben, who had ‘to fulfil the foreign language requirement’ (Hasak-Lowy 2005: 151–52), was stirred into learning the ‘obscure’ language by ‘helplessly following a striking romantic interest’ (Hasak-Lowy 2005: 152). In contrast, Ben’s ‘starry-eyed’ professor (Hasak-Lowy 2005: 152) of the Balto-Slavic language approaches the class with much more enthusiasm, naïve enough to believe that ‘once this language program got off the ground [. . .] the students would sign up regularly, appreciating the sheer beauty of the language’ (Hasak-Lowy 2005: 152). The fact that the class’s survival depends on a series of external factors, such as secured external funding or the number of signed-up participants, reflects the underlying power relations that chase a small language out of the big picture.

This section will examine some aspects of these power relations as well as some of the funding models for foreign-language teaching. In writing about the absence of the Serbian language at important Slavic departments across the world, journalist Marina Vulićević stresses that the presence of a language, especially a small one, at a foreign institution of higher education is the best way to promote not only the language but also the culture, for, in this way, writers are being translated and artists are invited to visit, all of which strengthens the cultural collaboration and makes way for new economic partnerships (Vulićević 2017). As the presence of Serbian at Anglophone universities is a prerequisite for further cultural exchange, this section will be somewhat longer than the other ones in its attempt to sketch the complexity of the investigated phenomenon.

The Availability of Slavic- and Serbian-Language Courses at Anglophone Universities

Hasak-Lowy notes that this language ‘hardly gets much mention outside of its local habitat’ (Hasak-Lowy 2005: 152). In the American context, the narrator describes it as thoroughly ‘underappreciated’:

[I]t rarely surfaces even at gigantic state universities, places where enough people learn and teach, say, Flemish to push a few tables together at some popular bistro right off campus at the end of the semester in order to celebrate this Flemish thing they’ve built. (Hasak-Lowy 2005: 152)

To assess the validity of this statement, I will try to briefly outline the availability of Slavic- and, more specifically, Serbian-language degrees and courses at the institutions of higher education in three English-speaking countries, focusing first on the U.S., where the story takes place, and, then, on Canada and the U.K.

U.S.A.

The statistics reveals that, in the U.S. the total of thirty-nine universities offer a degree, or at least a course, in Slavic studies ('Slavic Departments and Related Programs' 2017; 'Departments and Programs' 2017; see Appendix A: Table 1). This constitutes less than 1% of all accredited tertiary institutions⁶ in the U.S. Content-wise, on offer are either language, literature, culture, or some combination of the three. Russian, the largest native language in Europe, can be studied separately at twenty-one university, while Slavic languages collectively with a concentration on a particular one are to be found at thirty-one institution ('Slavic Departments and Related Programs' 2017). A degree in an individual Slavic literature other than Russian can only be found at Columbia, which regularly offers separate degrees in Polish, Ukrainian, and Czech literature, and Yale, where Polish literature can be studied 'by special arrangement' ('Slavic Departments and Related Programs' 2017). Finally, Russian domination is confirmed by the fact that six institutions offer degrees or courses only in Russian, without the possibility of choosing another Slavic language ('Slavic Departments and Related Programs' 2017).

As for Bosnian, Serbian, and/or Croatian, commonly abbreviated as 'BSC' in the North American context, these are found – either as a major or minor – at the total of fifteen U.S. universities (see Appendix A: Table 1), which is less than half of all institutions where Slavic languages are taught. The following institutions offer a program or course in the Bosnian, Serbian, and/or Croatian cluster: Arizona State University, the University of California (Berkeley),⁷ the University of Chicago, Harvard University, the University of Illinois (Chicago and Urbana-Champaign), Indiana University, the University of Kansas, the University of Michigan, the University of North Carolina (Chapel Hill), the Ohio State University, the University of Pittsburgh, Princeton University, the University of Texas (Austin), the University of Washington, the University of Wisconsin (Madison).

The size of the university is directly proportionate to the possibility of pursuing a degree in Slavic languages in the U.S.: the bigger the institution, the better the chances (see Appendix A: Table 1). Russian or Slavic departments are to be found at as many as twenty one 'extra large' U.S. universities that have more than 30,000 students enrolled. However, the mere fact that a Slavic department exists within a university does not guarantee the availability of courses or degrees in all Slavic languages. For

⁶ According to 'Digest of Education Statistics, 2015', in the academic year 2014/15, there were 4,627 accredited degree-granting postsecondary institutions in the U.S.

⁷ University systems, which constitute of multiple affiliated institutions, are counted as a single institution. In this way, the University of Illinois at Chicago and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, for example, are considered one rather than two institution. The particular institution of the system is indicated parenthetically.

example, Bosnian, Serbian, and/or Croatian appear only at half of those 'extra large' institutions that do teach Slavic languages. This figure somewhat confirms Hasak-Lowy assertion that the 'obscure' language central to his story is underrepresented even at 'gigantic state universities' (Hasak-Lowy 2005: 152). Outside these 'extra large' universities, Slavic languages collectively made it to a negligible number of ten 'large' (between 15,000 and 30,000 students), six 'medium' (between 5,000 and 15,000 students), and only two 'small' institutions (fewer than 5,000 students) in the U.S. In addition to the aforementioned ten 'extra large' institutions, Bosnian, Serbian, and/or Croatian are on offer only at three 'large'- and two 'medium'-sized universities.

Canada

Across the northern border, in Canada,⁸ the situation is as grim: Slavic studies are to be found only at three institutions ('Departments and Programs' 2017; see Appendix A: Table 2), which makes up only 1% of all universities and colleges.⁹ Serbian, Croatian, and/or Bosnian are taught only at the University of Toronto, where these three are offered as separate languages. It might be important to mention the demographic aspect, insofar as the City of Toronto is the largest Serbian settlement in Canada, with almost twenty thousand citizens constituting the Serbian ethnic minority ('Census Profile, 2016 Census: Toronto, City' 2019). Nevertheless, the University of Toronto falls into the category of 'extra large' institutions, which means that the local demographic landscape is not necessarily the crucial component in the choice of foreign languages on offer.

U.K.

Across the ocean, the situation is somewhat better: in the U.K., Russian and East European Languages are taught at as many as seventeen universities ('University Subject Tables 2018: Russian and East European Languages' 2017; see Appendix A: Table 3), approximately 10% of all tertiary institutions in this country.¹⁰ If we were to exclude Russian, however, the percentage would drop sharply. A full time degree in Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian, and/or Montenegrin – our presumed 'obscure' language(s) – can only be pursued at two institutions in the U.K.: University College London and the University of Nottingham.

⁸ Note that Canada does not have an accreditation system. Instead, membership in the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) is considered to be a substitute.

⁹ According to 'Canadian Universities', in Canada there are 223 universities and colleges that are members of the AUCC.

¹⁰ According to 'Check if a University or College is Officially Recognised', there are 169 officially recognised universities and colleges in the U.K..

Names of Serbo-Croatian's Successors at Anglophone Universities

How do all these universities deal with the problem of languages' names? Are the derivatives of Serbo-Croatian taught separately or under the same umbrella? Owing to a lack of continuity, these questions ought to be examined on a temporal axis. A tentative timeframe will be taken from the Croatian linguist Marko Samardžija, who, in writing about the Croatian language at foreign universities, distinguishes three periods, that is three 'Slavic paradigms':

The 'first Slavic paradigm', which lasted from the discipline's inception till the Second World War, was characterised by a strong interest in Paleoslavistics rather than in individual living Slavic languages (Samardžija 2008: 133);

The 'second' or the 'new Slavic paradigm', lasting from the end of the Second World War till the 1990s, was deeply rooted in Russistics, while the study of other Slavic languages was largely subsidiary (Samardžija 2008: 135). The residual effects of this paradigm are still visible at a large number of Anglophone institutions of higher education that favour Russian over other Slavic languages;

The 'third Slavic paradigm', which took over in the 1990s, has yet to be properly articulated; as a result of its poor definition, smaller Slavic languages get increasingly excluded from universities, even in countries with a well-established tradition of teaching Slavic languages (Samardžija 2008: 138).

This section will concentrate on the final phase, the beginning of which – in addition to the fall of the Iron Curtain – roughly coincides with the collapse of SFR Yugoslavia. Many foreign institutions where Serbo-Croatian was studied before the 1990s attempted a not-so-systematic reorganisation, undertaken with the aim of reflecting the emergence of new states and languages on the international scene. An overview of these regroupings, with the accent on current state of affairs, will be provided below. It should be mentioned, however, that certain factors other than political and linguistic fragmentation have made an impact upon these reconstructing efforts. The identification and discussion of these fall outside the scope of this essay. Worthy of mentioning, however, is a diminishing interest in traditional philological studies, which are being replaced by cultural studies (Hawkesworth 2004: 280; Pasini 2008: 145).

U.S.A.

To investigate this issue on the territory of the U.S., I have used the Modern Language Association's *Language Enrollment Database, 1958–2016*, which provides comprehensive enrollment data for foreign languages taught in institutions of higher education in the entire U.S. from 1956 to 2016. The MLA stresses that names of languages are entered as delivered by institutions in each census ('Language Enrollment Database,

1958–2016’ 2019) and notes that ‘language variants or different course names may produce enrollment listings that must be searched separately but might usefully be considered together’ (‘Language Enrollment Database, 1958–2016’ 2019). In case of Serbo-Croatian and its derivative, we encounter as many as six different listings: Serbo-Croatian, Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian, Serbian/Croatian, Bosnian/Croatian/ Serbian (see Appendix B, Table 1). Montenegrin does not come up in search results, neither individually nor in any language cluster.

Let us try to reconstruct a chronological overview. Expectedly, Serbo-Croatian is listed as the only language from 1974 (when first data for Serbo-Croatian is available) to 1990. In 1995, the first MLA census after the disintegration of SFR Yugoslavia, Croatian and Serbian appear individually for the first time in addition to the Serbo-Croatian, while Bosnian does not appear individually till 2006. Combinations encompassing more than one language, such as Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian and Serbian/Croatian appear in 2006 and 2009 respectively. Those combinations show a steady rising trend, while there is a precipitate decline in individual languages. In 2016, the last year for which the provided data is available at this point (January 2019), Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian separately have zero enrollments. On the other hand, the clusters of Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian and Serbian/Croatian both display rising trends from their first appearance. Interestingly, Serbo-Croatian still exists, although it records a substantial fall from 2006 – when the first cluster was introduced – henceforth. In 2016, the Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian cluster achieved the greatest number of enrollments, the total of 159; the Serbian/Croatian cluster came second with thirty-seven enrollments; and the Serbo-Croatian occupied the last place with just eighteen enrollments.

Canada

In Canada, the University of Toronto offers four separate undergraduate courses grouped under the heading of ‘South Slavic’ – Bosnian, Croatian, Macedonian, and Serbian. It remains unclear from the information available at their website if the Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian standard are actually taught separately.

U.K.

In the U.K., however, both University College London and the University of Nottingham opt for the Serbian/Croatian phrasing.¹¹ Does the

11 For a detailed history of teaching the Serbo-Croatian and its successors in the U.K., see Celia Hawkesworth’s article ‘Serbo-Croatian and its successors in British Universities’ in Ranko Bugarski and Celia Hawkesworth’s edited volume *Language in the Former Yugoslav Lands* (Bloomington, IN: Slavica, 2004), especially pp. 273–277.

names' compatibility emerge as a result of a systematic grasp of the issue or it is sheer coincidence? According to Celia Hawkesworth, who spent most of her career as a lecturer in Serbo-Croatian, and subsequently Serbian and Croatian, at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies (SSEES) at University College London, universities are given no legal guidance on the matter.¹²

Government bodies, such as the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the British Council, or government-funded institutions, such as BBC World Service, make decisions based on the political facts [. . .] But the universities are left to respond as they see fit. (Hawkesworth 2004: 273).

The unclear situation in regard to the languages' new names forces lecturers to manage on their own. This often means making decisions that are 'inevitably ideological', despite the efforts 'to adopt a neutral and scholarly course of action' (Hawkesworth 2004: 273).

Teaching Serbo-Croatian and Its Successors in Practice

Lecturers are clearly put in an unenviable position and staying neutral seems like an impossible task. So, official regulations (or lack thereof) aside, how do those teaching manage in practice? What does instructing Serbian/Croatian/(Bosnian) in one classroom actually look like? A rare insight can be found in Celia Hawkesworth's article; hereby I quote a short excerpt:

In our teaching practice, it is quite clear that we view the language, whatever its name, as one linguistic entity. Texts in all regional variants of the language are studied by all students. On the other hand, our practice has always been that individual students should select a particular version of the language and stick to that choice consistently in their own speech and writing. (Hawkesworth 2004: 277)

This kind of compromising solution is also adopted by the American professor of linguistics Wayles Browne, who teaches Slavic languages at Cornell University in the U.S., an Ivy League institution where the Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian cluster is offered from time to time.

[S]tudents should work on one standard – depending on the preferences of their teacher, or their textbook, or their friends, or their expected places of work – but they should also gain some experience in reading and understanding the other standards. (Browne 2004: 269).

¹² For the regulations of this issue in some non-Anglophone contexts – particularly those of France, Austria, and Scandinavia – see contributions in part V, entitled 'Serbo-Croatian (Serbian/Croatian/Bosnian) Abroad', of Ranko Bugarski and Celia Hawkesworth's volume *Language in the Former Yugoslav Lands* (Bloomington, IN: Slavica, 2004).

Browne underlines a series of factors other than personal ones that play a decisive role in student's choice of a particular standard.

Although it may be hard, if not impossible, to generalise the competences and preferences of teaching staff, let us take a look at several possible scenarios. University College London, for example, has two lecturers – one for Croatian, funded by the Croatian government, and one for Serbian, employed by the College (Požgaj Hadži 2018: 477). Despite the presence of separate lecturers, the languages are taught together with a view to attracting a greater number of students (Požgaj Hadži 2018: 477). Yet not all institutions have optimum financial conditions to keep separate lecturers, so one person often has to cover all standards. Even though the official name of the course is, say, Serbian, in practice it does not necessarily mean that the study of Serbian will be guaranteed (Brborić 2015). In the experience of Wayles Browne, who comes from the American context, '[t]eachers willing and able to teach a standard other than their own were a rarity' (Browne 2004: 265). In this way, one standard can easily become more prominent than the others.

The main reason behind this asymmetry is, expectedly, of financial nature. In short, the funding of foreign-language lecturers is not always the responsibility of the institution where they teach, as there is also a portion of those whose funding is split between the foreign institution and their home country. Part of the problem lies in that the model of study sections, employed both by Serbia and by Croatia, is such that the study sections are currently under the jurisdiction of a relevant ministry (Vulićević 2017; Požgaj Hadži 2018: 482).¹³ As ministries are only administrative bodies (Požgaj Hadži 2018: 482), the status of study sections is underregulated. For this reason, both Serbian and Croatian philologists strongly advocate a systematic reorganisation, which would involve the establishment of a separate body, an umbrella organisation, in their respective countries, which would promote their languages abroad and oversee the related activities (Dragićević 2017; Požgaj Hadži 2018: 482). Interestingly, both Serbian and Croatian experts claim that their countries should look up to the Slovenian¹⁴ model of study sections (Dragićević 2017; Požgaj Hadži 2018: 482), which has been successfully developed and implemented worldwide.

13 In Croatia, the Ministry of science and education (Ministarstvo znanosti i obrazovanja) is in charge for study sections (Požgaj Hadži 2018: 473). In Serbia, the responsibility in previous years has been somewhat split between the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technological Development (Ministarstvo prosvete, nauke i tehnološkog razvoja), on the one hand, and the Ministry of Culture and Information (Ministarstvo kulture i informisanja), on the other (Vulićević 2017); it has been announced that the forthcoming reform of the Law on Higher Education will allow for a better regulation of the status of Serbian lectors abroad (for the text of the bill, see *Predlog zakona o izmenama i dopunama zakona o visokom obrazovanju*, available for download at: www.parlament.gov.rs/upload/archive/files/lat/doc/.../2889-18%20-%20Lat..doc).

14 For more on the Slovenian model of study sections, see the Centre for Slovene as a Second and Foreign Language's webpage, available at: <https://centerslo.si/en>.

Outcomes of Linguistic Training

Hasak-Lowy exposes the fact that studying a new language at a U.S. institution is no guarantee that one would actually master it: when hired for a job, Ben opts for alternative methods of, as the author puts it, '(re-)learning' the language (Hasak-Lowy 2005: 155). The story documents the protagonist's various attempts to improve his linguistic skills, which include memorising words from the dictionary and rehearsing conversations from a film with an English subtitle (Hasak-Lowy 2005: 155–56). Real-life underpinnings for Hasak-Lowy's fictional assertion can be found in Eric Dickens' essay 'Literary Translation in Britain and Selective Xenophobia'. Although based on the example of the U.K., Dickens also expresses his concerns in regard to the actual competence of those who study foreign languages at British institutions of higher education.

It is quite true that languages tend to be taught rather half-heartedly in many British schools [. . .]. Not until university can young people encounter smaller, rarer, languages and only the tiniest of fraction of young people in Great Britain learn these to any degree of competence. (Dickens 2002: 4)

While this too is an important aspect contributing to the total number of lecturers and translators from non-dominant languages, its investigation certainly requires a whole separate study.

Serbian Language at Anglophone Institutions of Higher Education – Summary

The evidence presented in this section confirms the two hypotheses formulated in regard to the status of the Serbian language at Anglophone institutions of higher education. First of all, the statistics on the availability of Slavic- and Serbian-language courses at universities of three Anglophone countries confirms the pertinence of Hasak-Lowy's multifaceted criticism of academia as well as the hypothesis that the availability of Serbian-language courses at Anglophone universities is limited. Secondly, the investigation of the institutional reorganisations of South Slavic programs and courses during the 'third Slavic paradigm' confirms that in Anglophone contexts, the Serbian language is often taught in combination with Croatian and Bosnian. The accounts of teaching Serbian, Croatian, and/or Bosnian in practice point towards the conclusion that teaching the three standards cannot be evenly distributed when they are taught under a single heading, even when there is willingness for such feat. This confirms part of the hypothesis that teaching Serbian, Croatian, and Bosnian collectively lowers the visibility of all three standards. Overall, the analysis presented in this section gives us reasons to believe that limited accessibility of formal training and its uncertain outcome in terms of linguistic proficiency are some of the key reasons for the shortage

of Slavic-language teachers and translators in the Anglophone countries under study. In case of the Serbian language, its often unclear status in relation to other Serbo-Croatian successors further complicates the matter, making it even less visible in an already marginalised setting occupied by relatively small languages.

The Commercial Component of Literary Markets

Hasak-Lowy moves away from Walter Benjamin's idealised notion of the translator as formulated in the landmark essay 'Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers'¹⁵ ('The Translator's Task', also translated into English as 'The Task of the Translator'), underlining an aspect that Benjamin dismisses altogether in his seminal essay – the commercial side of the profession. For Benjamin, translation belongs to the domain of art, and '[w]hen seeking insight into a work of art or an art form, it never proves useful to take audience into account' (Benjamin [1923] 2012: 75). These days, unfortunately, more often than not, translations are not only done for a particular audience, but for a specific client. This client, as we can see from Hasak-Lowy's story, is not necessarily someone competent to make relevant linguistic, aesthetic, or other judgements in regard to the quality of translation. But Ben's interpreting, even though it does not live up to the standards prescribed by the academic or professional community, satisfies the client, who declares in the end:

- When I return in five years, I want you to be my blah again.
- Your what?
- My translator.
- Oh. Of course. (Hasak-Lowy 2005: 177)

This points towards the conclusion that no translation is 'good' or 'bad' *per se*; the provisional success of a translation is a matter of expectations. In assessing a translation as 'bad', as we are all-too-often tempted to do, we are in fact aligning with a certain set of conventions.

In doing so we are emphatically upholding and reaffirming our idea of 'translation', what it is and what it evidently is not, *and* at the same time we are appealing to a publicly recognized and acknowledged category, both a concept and practice, to which *this* translation should be made to correspond if it is to be accepted as a valid translation. (Hermans 1997: 5; emphasis in the original)

15 Numerous hints, including the story's title ('The Task of This Translator' vs. 'The Task of the Translator') and the protagonist's name (Ben, which is short for Benjamin), indicate that Hasak-Lowy fictional piece is a creative response to Walter Benjamin's cornerstone text – the one foundational to the discipline of Translation Studies. For more on the relationship between Hasak-Lowy's short story and Walter Benjamin's essay, see Fotini Apostolou's chapter 'Walter Benjamin revisited: A literary reading in Todd Hasak-Lowy's short story "The Task of This Translator"' in *Transfiction: Research into the realities of translation fiction*, ed. Klaus Kaindl and Karlheinz Spitzl (Amsterdam and Philadelphia, PA: J. Benjamins, 2014), 69–86.

It is exactly this ‘institution’ of translation, as Theo Hermans terms it (Hermans 1997: 5), that Hasak-Lowy ridicules in his story by portraying a series of non-conventional practices, which depart from the idea of translation encountered in scholarly circles – the idea built on the premises of Benjamin, one of the founding fathers of ‘the institution of translation’.

How does this rise of commercialism reflect on literary markets? Let us take a closer look at the commercial side of publishing and translational practices in Serbia, the country where, in all likelihood, an – if not *the* – ‘obscure’ language is spoken. Naturally, translators working from Serbian into English and vice versa are much easier to find in Serbia than it is the case in the fictional America of Hasak-Lowy. A concern of the literary translator Zoran Paunović, however, is that translations produced in Serbia are of variable quality – presumably by academic and professional standards. In an interview with Marina Vulićević for *Politika*, he expresses the following view:

A large number of publishers sees translation merely as a routine step in a series of steps necessary for the production of a book. Therefore, publishers prefer to hire translators who work quickly and for a minimum wage rather than those who care about the quality of translation. (Paunović 2009)¹⁶

In the same text, Paunović adds that it is the Association of Literary Translators of Serbia (Udruženje književnih prevodilaca Srbije) that should lead the way in establishing the system of quality checks (Paunović 2009). According to Dickens, the situation is not much better in the U.K. either: he asserts that literary translation in the U.K. has become ‘a marginalised field where dilettantes hold sway’ (Dickens 2002: 8) and calls for literary translators to ‘be treated as professionals and paid at a decent rate’ (Dickens 2002: 8). Based on Paunović’s and Dickens’ statements, we may arrive at the conclusion that the disinterest in a standardised level of quality and the overall devaluation of expertise is more of a global trend than a country-specific occurrence.

Another important aspect to be taken into consideration when discussing the commercial component is the dynamicity of respective national markets. In rough terms, the production of literary translations from Serbian into English is split between the Anglophone countries and Serbia. Data available on the Index Translationum, UNESCO’s database dedicated to books in translation, shows that, in case of Serbian literature in English translation, the publishing output is not evenly divided between the ‘source’ and ‘target’ cultures. To avoid inconsistencies that may arise as a result of changes in the state’s and language’s name, I have decided to delimit my search to the period between 2006 and 2018, which was characterised by stability – both in terms of state and language

16 ‘Nemali broj izdavača posmatra prevodenje tek kao jedan u nizu zanatskih, rutinskih koraka u proizvodnji knjige, te im je otuda važnije da angažuju one prevodioce koji rade brzo i za minimalni honorar, nego one kod kojih je u prvom planu kvalitet prevoda.’

names. During this twelve-year period, the total of eleven book-length literary translations from Serbian into English came out in the 'core' Anglosphere: four in the U.S., four in Canada, three in the U.K., and none in Ireland, Australia, and New Zealand. Over the same time span, the number of those published by Serbian presses is 115, which is approximately ten times more in comparison to their Anglophone counterparts (see Appendix C, Table 1). Considering the modest size of the Serbian book market, this asymmetry speaks in favour of the Anglophone market's highly competitive nature.

If we disregard the possible oscillations in quality that Paunović mentions (Paunović 2009), a major problem with translations produced in Serbia is that they are predominantly aimed at the domestic market, as publishers generate more profit by distributing translations from English into Serbian than the other way round. For instance, the Index Translationum's statistics reveals that the number of literary translations from English into Serbian from 2006 to 2018 is 2945 (see Appendix C, Table 2), which is as many as twenty-five times the number of translations in the opposite direction. Even when a publishing house does take the financial risk of translating Serbian literature into English, the work rarely travels outside the Serbian market, thereby failing, in Damrosch's phrase, to 'circulate beyond its culture of origin' (Damrosch 2003: 4).

To sum up, Paunović's and Dicken's impressions of how literary translations are commissioned in their countries indicate that economic interests subordinate other factors. In addition, the competitive nature of the Anglophone book markets further contributes to the low circulation of Serbian literature in translation. For, even when an English translation of Serbian work does exist and has been printed in Serbia, Anglophone publishing houses are not interested in distributing it in their territory. These two aspects, discussed in this section, largely confirm the hypothesis put forward in this essay's introduction, that literary markets are largely governed by commercial interests. The inability of translations produced in Serbia to be distributed in the Anglosphere brings us to a much broader issue – that of a generally dwindling popularity of translated literature in the Anglophone countries, both among readers and among publishers.

Insufficient Anglophone Interest in Translated Literature

Before accepting the job of an interpreter, Ben's engagement with other cultures was limited to International Sushi Night, 'which falls on any and all odd-dated Tuesdays' (Hasak-Lowy 2005: 155). It is through the interaction with – and in – the 'obscure' language that the protagonist discovers a whole new world existing outside his immediate sphere of interest. The satiric tone of the story, which stresses Ben's initial ignorance about cultures other than his own, is directed at an average representative of the American culture (Apostolou 2014: 76). In addition, Hasak-Lowy

plays with power relations in that his purposeful role reversal privileges the 'obscure', as we find traditionally advantaged native speakers of English struggling not only linguistically but also culturally.

Given that the awareness of other cultures can be raised through reading foreign literature, to blame for Ben's ignorance would be the low translation rates in English-speaking countries. According to Margo Fitzpatrick, '[i]n America and the United Kingdom, translations only constitute 3 percent of publications, with fiction accounting for less than 1 percent of that figure' (Fitzpatrick 2016). The Three Percent translation database, created by Chad W. Post at the University of Rochester, was launched with a view to reassessing the accuracy of this often quoted figure that lacks sufficient empirical backing (Post 2019). Post's database collects information on translated literature published in the U.S. from 2008 onwards. While the Three Percent translation database is invaluable material for research, it is restricted to works previously unpublished in English, thereby excluding retranslations of the classics and reprints of old editions. In spite of having information on translated works, we are still in the dark in terms of the total number of books published on the U.S. market, which disables us from calculating the exact percentage that translated literature constitutes in the U.S.

A more detailed account of circulation is given in Alexandra Büchler and Giulia Trentacosti's statistical report that concentrates on the U.K. and Ireland. The report's findings suggest that 'the percentage of literature-related translations [. . .] over the twelve-year period [2000 – 2012] is [. . .] consistently above 4%, peaking at 5.23% in 2011' (Büchler, Trentacosti [2013] 2015: 5), which is significantly lower in comparison to other European markets of a similar size. For instance, in 2011 Germany's total yearly output of translations, both literary and non-literary, was approximately 12%; France's 16%; Italy's 20%; and Poland's 33% (Büchler and Trentacosti [2013] 2015: 5). Furthermore, the report, which emphasises that Eastern European languages are notably underrepresented (Büchler, Trentacosti [2013] 2015: 5), dedicates a whole section to a case study of translations from the 'Balkan languages', a collective name for Serbo-Croatian, Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian, and Montenegrin (Büchler, Trentacosti [2013] 2015: 20). Although national literatures written in the Balkan languages are in a particularly precarious position, the figures reveal that the overall situation is as daunting.

Despite the discrepancies in the statistics presented in this section, the percentage of translated literature is exceptionally low in comparison to other markets, which confirms the hypothesis formulated in this essay's introduction that the general interest in translated literature is rather low in the Anglosphere. Before proceeding with conclusions, let us briefly consider some actors that have undertaken the quixotic task of promoting literature in translation, undiscouraged by its grim prospects. In the opinion of the literary translator Maureen Freely, for the presence

of translated literature in the U.K., however marginal it may be, we ought to thank ‘the dozen or so publishers which remain committed to fiction in translation even as the walls of fortress English grow and grow’ (Freely 2010). In case of literature coming from the Balkans, Büchler and Trentacosti’s report commends efforts of Istros Books in particular, an independent U.K.-based press which ‘has brought a change to the publishing scene by highlighting a region that had until recently been *terra incognita*’ (Büchler, Trentacosti [2013] 2015: 24). Hopes remain that more publishing houses would dare to follow in Istros Books footsteps, as the task of acquainting a worldwide readership with Serbian literature has yet to be fulfilled.

In addition to these adventurous publishers, Freely singles out three U.K. institutions dedicated to preserving ‘the art of literary translation’: the British Centre for Literary Translation at the University of East Anglia, the Translators Association, and the *Independent* Foreign Fiction Prize (Freely 2010). Since the publication of Freely’s text in 2010, more prizes similar to *Independent*’s one have emerged, such as the Warwick’s Prize for Women in Translation,¹⁷ set up by Freely and her colleagues at the University of Warwick, and the TA First Translation Prize, set up by the literary translator Daniel Hahn, who generously ‘donat[ed] half his winnings from the International Dublin Literary Award to help establish a new prize for debut literary translation’ (Cowdrey 2017). Similarly to Freely, Dickens lists possible solutions that could remedy the current situation, despite his pessimistic view of the current state of the U.K. publishing industry put forward in the opening paragraphs. Namely, he claims that this tendency of monolingualism can carry on unchanged as ‘Britain does not appear to need things that happen in foreign languages, politically, economically, or culturally’ (Dickens 2002: 2). Nevertheless, towards the end of the article he places emphasis on the importance of more frequent publication of literary translations in periodicals, the need for more reviews of foreign literature in weeklies, and a better informed selection of works to translate (Dickens 2002: 9). It remains to be seen how (if at all) those in charge will respond to any of these calls.

Conclusions

‘The Task of This Translator’, the short story against which the status of Serbian literature has been analysed in this essay, comes across as an ominous image of a future society, too self-obsessed to take notice of other cultures and blind to realise that maintaining transnational cul-

17 For more on the University of Warwick’s Prize for Women in Translation, see, for example, Višnja Krstić’s interview with the Prize’s coordinator Chantal Wright in *Knjiženstvo*, vol. 8, available in English at: <http://www.knjizenstvo.rs/en/journals/2018/interview/women-in-translation-prize>. For the Serbian version, see: <http://www.knjizenstvo.rs/sr/casopisi/2018/intervju/nagrada-za-zene-u-prevodu-univerziteta-vorik>.

tural ties is to their own benefit. Yet this essay's findings signal that the blame should be on both sides. On the one hand, the Anglosphere's higher education displays a systematic exclusion of less popular languages, the obstacle stemming from the fact that the choice of available languages is contingent on the demand, which is why only large universities can afford to continuously offer even less sought-after languages. A lack of interest, then, causes a shortage of language teachers and professional translators. In addition, the literary markets of the U.S. and the U.K. are highly competitive and publishing works of Serbian literature in an English translation is exceedingly difficult in these countries, especially in light of their dwindling public interest for literature in translation. On the other hand, translations produced in Serbia, although much greater in number, are rarely distributed outside the domestic confines. The combination of these elements thereby constitutes a vicious circle that hinders the circulation of Serbian literature in the Anglophone transnational field.

Rather than shifting the blame onto each other, we should jointly work towards understanding what enables and disables the processes of cultural and literary mediation. The obstacles outlined in this paper are immensely complex and stem from a number of different sources: multifaceted institutional constraints, commercial character of the publishing industry, and general public disinterest. All of these appear to be promising research avenues and more studies, venturing deeper into each of the three spheres, are necessary to confirm and solidify the findings of this essay. Hopes remain that institutions on both sides will work towards protecting the processes of transnational cultural cross-contamination, for, if the discouraging trend persists, the already slow rate of circulation could be further impeded and the existing connections even permanently severed.

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APPENDIX A

The list of institutions of higher education offering courses in Slavic studies in the U.S., Canada, and the U.K.

Table 1. Courses in Slavic studies: the United States of America

| # | INSTITUTION and DEPARTMENT'S WEBSITE | AREA OF STUDIES | Bosnian, Croatian, and/or Serbian | SIZE |
|---|---|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------|
| | Arizona State University https://silc.asu.edu/content/bosnian-croatian-serbian | Polish (minor) | YES | XL |
| | | Russian | | |
| | | Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian (minor) | | |
| | Boston College http://fmwww.bc.edu/SL/ | Russian Language and Literature | / | M |
| | | Slavic Studies | | |
| | | General Linguistics | | |
| | Brown University http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Slavic_Languages/ | Russian Language and Literature | / | M |
| | | Slavic Linguistics | | |
| | Bryn Mawr College https://www.brynmawr.edu/russian/ | Russian Language | / | S |
| | Columbia University http://www.columbia.edu/cu/slavic/ | Russian Literature | / | XL |
| | | Polish Literature | | |
| | | Ukrainian Literature | | |
| | | Czech Literature | | |
| | | Russian Translation | | |
| | | Slavic Cultures | | |
| | Cornell University http://russian.cornell.edu | Russian Language | / | M |
| | Duke University http://www.duke.edu/web/slavic/ | Russian Literature | / | M |
| | | Slavic Linguistics | | |

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|-----|----|
| | Florida State University http://www.fsu.edu/~modlang/divisions/russian/ | Slavic Languages and Literatures | YES | XL |
| | Harvard University http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~slavic/index.html | Slavic languages and literatures with concentration on the study of literature | YES | L |
| | | Slavic languages and literatures with concentration on the study of Slavic linguistics | | |
| | Indiana University http://www.indiana.edu/~iuslavic/ | Russian Literature | YES | XL |
| | | Slavic Linguistics | | |
| | | Slavic Literature and Culture | | |
| | Michigan State University http://linglang.msu.edu/degree-programs/russian/ | Russian Language | / | XL |
| | Middlebury College http://www.middlebury.edu/academics/lr/russian/ | Russian Language | / | S |
| | New York University http://www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/russian/ | Russian and Slavic Studies | / | XL |
| | Northwestern University http://www.slavic.northwestern.edu/ | Slavic Languages and Literatures | / | L |
| | Ohio State University http://slavic.osu.edu/ | Specialization in Linguistics | YES | XL |
| | | Specialization in Literature | | |
| | | Russian Literature | | |
| | | Slavic Linguistics | | |
| | Pennsylvania State University http://german.la.psu.edu/slavic | Slavic and East European Languages and Literatures | / | XL |
| | Princeton University http://www.princeton.edu/~slavic/ | Russian Literature | YES | M |
| | | Slavic Linguistics | | |
| | San Francisco State University http://www.sfsu.edu/~russian/ | Russian | / | XL |
| | Stanford University http://www.stanford.edu/dept/slavic/ | Slavic Language and Literature | / | L |
| | State University of New York, Albany http://www.albany.edu/llc/ | Russian Studies | / | L |
| | State University of New York, Stonybrook http://www.sunysb.edu/eurolangs/ | Slavic Languages and Literatures | / | L |
| | University of Arizona http://russian.arizona.edu | Russian and Slavic Languages | / | XL |

| | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|----|
| | University of California, Berkeley http://ls.berkeley.edu/dept/slavic/ | Slavic literature and Culture | YES | XL |
| | | Slavic Linguistics | | |
| | University of California, Los Angeles http://www.humnet.ucla.edu/humnet/slavic/index.html | Slavic Languages and Literatures | / | XL |
| | The University of Chicago http://humanities.uchicago.edu/depts/slavic/ | Slavic Languages and Literatures | YES | M |
| | The University of Illinois http://www.library.uiuc.edu/spx/ | Slavic Linguistics and Literature | YES (the University of Illinois at Chicago and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign) | XL |
| | University of Kansas http://www.ku.edu/~slavic/ | Slavic Languages and Literatures | YES | L |
| | | Russian Language and Literature | | |
| | | Russian Culture | | |
| | University of Maryland https://slc.umd.edu/russian/undergraduate/major | Russian Language | / | XL |
| | University of Michigan http://www.lsa.umich.edu/slavic/ | Russian Literature | YES | XL |
| | | Slavic Languages and Literatures | | |
| | | Slavic Linguistics | | |
| | University of Missouri https://grs.missouri.edu | Russian Studies | / | XL |
| | University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill http://www.unc.edu/depts/slavdept/ | Russian Literature and Culture | YES | L |
| | | Comparative Slavic and East European Literatures and Cultures | | |
| | | Slavic Linguistics | | |
| | University of Oregon http://reecs.uoregon.edu | Russian Studies | / | L |
| | | East European Studies | | |
| | | Eurasian Studies | | |
| | University of Pittsburgh http://www.pitt.edu/~slavic/ | Slavic Literature | / | XL |

| | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|----|
| | University of Southern California http://www.usc.edu/dept/las/sll/ | Slavic Languages and Literatures | / | XL |
| | University of Texas, Austin http://www.utexas.edu/cola/depts/slavic/ | Slavic Languages and Literatures | YES | XL |
| | University of Virginia http://www.virginia.edu/~slavic/ | Slavic Linguistics | / | L |
| | | Slavic Literatures | | |
| | | Contemporary Russian Studies | | |
| | | Russian Literature | | |
| | | Slavic Linguistics | | |
| | University of Washington http://depts.washington.edu/slavweb/ | Russian Studies | YES | XL |
| | | Slavic Studies | | |
| | | Slavic Languages and Literatures | | |
| | University of Wisconsin http://slavic.lss.wisc.edu/ | Slavic Languages and Literatures | YES (University of Wisconsin, Madison) | XL |
| | Yale University http://www.yale.edu/slavic/ | Russian Literature | / | L |
| | | Medieval Slavic Literature and Philology (by special arrangement) | | |
| | | Polish Literature (by special arrangement) | | |

Sources

'Slavic Departments and Related Programs'. *Slavic Information Literacy: Departments and Associations*, University of Arizona Library, intranet.library.arizona.edu/users/brewerm/sil/prof/slavdepts.html. Without pagination, Web. 27 Sept. 2017.

'Departments and Programs', AATSEEL, American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages, 2017, www.aatseel.org/graduate_programs. Accessed 28 Sept. 2017.

Table 2. Courses in Slavic studies: Canada.

| # | INSTITUTION and DEPARTMENT'S WEBSITE | AREA OF STUDIES | Bosnian, Croatian, and/or Serbian |
|----|--|----------------------------------|---|
| 1. | University of Alberta http://www.mlcs.ualberta.ca/ | Russian Studies | / |
| 2. | McGill University https://www.mcgill.ca/langlitcultures/about-us/russian-studies | Russian and Slavic Studies | / |
| 3. | University of Toronto http://sites.utoronto.ca/slavic/ | Slavic Languages and Literatures | YES (Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian) |

Sources

'Slavic Departments and Related Programs'. *Slavic Information Literacy: Departments and Associations*, University of Arizona Library, intranet.library.arizona.edu/users/brewerm/sil/prof/slavdepts.html. Without pagination, Web. 27 Sept. 2017.

'Departments and Programs', AATSEEL, American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages, 2017, www.aatseel.org/graduate_programs. Accessed 28 Sept. 2017.

'Canadian Universities'. *University Study*, 2017, www.universitystudy.ca/canadian-universities/. Accessed 28 Sept. 2017.

Table 3. Courses in Slavic studies: the United Kingdom.

| # | INSTITUTION and DEPARTMENT'S WEBSITE | AREA OF STUDIES | Bosnian, Croatian, and/or Serbian |
|----|---|--|-----------------------------------|
| 1. | University of Bath http://www.bath.ac.uk/polis/study/ | Interpreting and Translating (Russian) | / |
| | | Translation and Professional Language Skills (Russian) | |
| 2. | University of Birmingham http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/lcahm/departments/languages/index.aspx | Russian and East European Studies Translation Studies (Russian) | / |
| 3. | University of Bristol http://www.bristol.ac.uk/russian/ | Russian Studies | / |
| | | Modern Languages (Czech) | |
| | | Comparative Literature and Culture | |
| | | Translation Studies | |

| | | | |
|-----|---|--|-------------------------------|
| 4. | University of Cambridge http://www.mml.cam.ac.uk/slavonic | Polish Studies Russian Studies Ukrainian Studies | / |
| 5. | University of Central Lancashire https://www.uclan.ac.uk/courses/ba_hons_modern_languages.php | Modern Languages (Russian) | / |
| 6. | University of Durham https://www.dur.ac.uk/mlac/russian/ | Russian Studies | / |
| 7. | University of Edinburgh http://www.ed.ac.uk/literatures-languages-cultures/delc/russian | European Languages and Cultures (Russian) | / |
| 8. | University of Exeter http://humanities.exeter.ac.uk/modernlanguages/russian/ | Modern Languages (Russian) | / |
| 9. | University of Glasgow https://www.gla.ac.uk/subjects/cees/ | Central and East European Studies | / |
| | | Russian Language | |
| 10. | University of Leeds https://www.leeds.ac.uk/arts/info/20058/russian_and_slavonic_studies | Russian and Slavonic Languages and Cultures | / |
| 11. | University of Manchester http://www.alc.manchester.ac.uk/modern-languages/study/languages/russian-studies/ | Russian and East European Studies | / |
| 12. | University of Nottingham https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/clas/departments/modern-languages/modern-languages-cultures.aspx | Russian and Slavonic Studies | YES (Serbian/ Croatian) |
| 13. | University of Oxford http://www.mod-langs.ox.ac.uk/russian | Russian Studies | / |
| | | Czech (with Slovak) Studies | |
| | | Polish (as subsidiary) | |
| 14. | Queen Mary, University of London http://russian.sllf.qmul.ac.uk/russian/ | Russian Studies | / |
| 15. | University of Sheffield https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/russian | Russian and Slavonic Studies | / |
| 16. | University of St Andrews https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/modlangs/russian/ | Russian Studies | / |
| 17. | University College London https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ssees/ | Slavonic and East European Studies | YES (Serbian/ Croatian) |

Sources

'University Subject Tables 2018: Russian and East European Languages'. *The Complete University Guide*, Independent, 3 May 2017, www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/league-tables/rankings?s=Russian%2B%26%2BEast%2BEuropean%2BLanguages. Accessed 20 Sept. 2017.

'Check if a University or College is Officially Recognised'. *GOV.UK*, UK Government, www.gov.uk/check-a-university-is-officially-recognised/recognised-bodies. Accessed 21 Jan. 2019.

Appendix B

Language enrollment figures.
All figures shown are for autumn semester

Table 1. Language enrollment figures in the U.S. institutions of higher education, 1986–2016.

| | 2016 | 2013 | 2009 | 2006 | 2002 | 1998 | 1995 | 1990 | 1986 |
|--------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Bosnian | 0 | 0 | 55 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Croatian | 0 | 1 | 44 | 24 | 3 | 1 | 11 | 0 | 0 |
| Serbian | 0 | 0 | 90 | 16 | 36 | 37 | 97 | 0 | 0 |
| Serbo-Croatian | 18 | 61 | 155 | 247 | 209 | 78 | 130 | 220 | 243 |
| Serbian/Croatian | 37 | 33 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian | 159 | 154 | 24 | 26 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total under all names | 214 | 249 | 380 | 321 | 248 | 116 | 238 | 220 | 243 |

Source

'Language Enrollment Database, 1958–2016'. *MLA: Modern Language Association*, 2019, https://apps.mla.org/flsurvey_search. Without pagination, Web. 28 Jan. 2019.

Appendix C

Translations of literature from Serbian into English and vice versa, 2006–2018

Table 1. The number of published book-length translations of literature from Serbian into English per country, 2006–2018.

| Country | Number of published literary translations from Serbian into English |
|--|---|
| Australia | 0 |
| Canada | 4 |
| Ireland | 0 |
| New Zealand | 0 |
| U.K. | 3 |
| U.S.A. | 4 |
| Serbia | 115 |
| Total in 'core' Anglosphere | 11 |
| Total in 'core' Anglosphere and Serbia | 126 |

Source

'Bibliographic Search.' *Index Translationum*. UNESCO, 2019, <http://www.unesco.org/xtrans/bsform.aspx>. Web. 21 Jan. 2019.

Table 2. The number of published book-length translations of literature from English into Serbian per country, 2006–2018.

| Country | Number of published literary translations from English into Serbian |
|-----------|---|
| Australia | 0 |
| Canada | 0 |

| | |
|---------------------------------|------|
| Ireland | 0 |
| New Zealand | 0 |
| U.K. | 0 |
| U.S.A. | 0 |
| Serbia | 2945 |
| Total in 'core' Anglosphere | 0 |
| Total in Anglosphere and Serbia | 2945 |

Source

'Bibliographic Search.' *Index Translationum*. UNESCO, 2019, <http://www.unesco.org/xtrans/bsform.aspx>. Web. 21 Jan. 2019.

Вишња Јовановић

Иза сајтице приповејке „Задатак овој преводиоца” Тога Хасака-Луја: зачарани круи књижевности на „ојскурним” језицима

Резиме

Приповетка „Задатак овог преводиоца” (2005) аутора Тога Хасака-Луја прати рад необичног „преводиошког института”, где тек свршени студент Бен ради као преводац са, како наратор каже, „опскурног” балто-словенског језика који једва разуме мада га је учио на факултету. Иако је име „опскурног” језика неизречено, опис указује на српскохрватски и његове наследнике.

Узимајући приповетку Хасака-Луја као полазну тачку у формулисању хипотеза, овај есеј бави се српским контекстом у намери да прикаже статус маргинализоване националне књижевности у ширем културном оквиру англофоних земаља. У начелу, приступ је социолошки будући да рад испитује улогу коју образовне установе, издавачка индустрија, као и опште читалаштво играју у процесу културне крос-контаминације. Материјал за квантитативну анализу сакупљен је из разних база података, статистичких извештаја и других електронских извора, док основ за квалитативну анализу чине интервјуи и текстови преводаца, професора и издавача који су активно укључени у процес посредовања.

Есеј тестира следеће хипотезе: 1. доступност српског језика на англофоним универзитетима је ограничена; 2. у англофоним контекстима, српски се често изучава у комбинацији са хрватским и босанским, што смањује видљи-

вост сва три стандарда; 3. књижевним тржиштима у великој мери руководе комерцијални интереси; 4. заинтересованост за књижевност у преводу је на изузетно ниском нивоу у Англосфери. Анализирајући узрочно-последичну везу између формулисаних хипотеза, есеј аргументује да управо комбинација ова четири фактора ствара зачарани круг који спречава српску књижевност да у већој мери пробије канонске баријере светске књижевности.

Централни део рада подељен је у седам целина. Прве три су теоријске природе и ту је дат преглед литературе, дефинисан теоријски оквир есеја, и образложен избор методологије. Четврти део разматра могући идентитет „опскурног језика“, као и разлоге због којих он остаје сакривен. Последње три целине организоване су око три испитиване сфере – образовног система, књижевног тржишта и општег читалаштва.

Истраживање је потврдило све четити постављене хипотезе. С једне стране, систем образовања у англофоним земљама системски искључује мање популарне језике; ова препрека произилази из чињенице да је избор језика условљен потражњом, што доводи до тога да само изузетно велики универзитети могу да у континуитету уврсте у понуду и оне мање тражене језике. У случају српског, ситуацију додатно отежава лоше дефинисан однос са осталим наследницима српскохрватског. Недостатак интересовања доводи до мањка стручних кадрова, било да је реч о професорима језика или о професионалним преводиоцима. Уз то, на књижевним тржиштима Велике Британије и Сједињених Америчких Држава влада изузетно велика конкуренција, те је јако тешко објавити дела српске књижевности у преводу на енглески у овим земљама, нарочито у светлу све мањег општег интересовања за књижевност у преводу. Са друге стране, преводи објављени у Србији, мада знатно бројнији, ретко буду дистрибуирани ван домаћих граница. Комбинација ових елемената тако доводи до зачараног круга који спутава циркулисање српске књижевности на транснационалном пољу Англосфере.

Кључне речи: циркулисање књижевности, књижевност у преводу, светска књижевност, социологија превођења, српска књижевност, српски језик, Англосфера, књижевно тржиште, комерцијализам, теорија поља

Примљен: 6. 9. 2020.

Прихваћен: 30. 3. 2021.