
MILOŠ NEMANJIĆ

PATHS TO TRANSLATION

Culture, by which, in this case, we primarily mean specific forms of knowledge, such as philosophy, sociology, psychology, linguistics etc., implies creativity, the study and contemplation of that part of human and social reality which gives birth to such creativity. At the same time, however, one of the basic precepts of culture is transmission, the exchange of certain ideas and their inter-influence, confrontation with the rejection or acceptance of imparted ideas. The less creativity is developed in a particular culture, the more intensive is the transmission of ideas born in other milieus, which correspond to other social and human conditions. The value and utility of these ideas, their conceptual strength, increases in proportion to the degree of their generality, universality and ultimate truth, that is, when they can be applied beyond a limited circle. However, even a culture possessing a developed level of creativity in certain fields of knowledge has a need for ideas stemming from other environments, so as to enrich the general fund of ideas and knowledge. In this case, the circulation of ideas is usually two-way.

This transmission of ideas most frequently also implies a transcultural and translinguistic process. Although the number is growing of those who know other languages besides their mother tongue, the role of the translator and of translation is still great. Both are bridge-builders between different cultures. In this respect, translation is an individual intellectual act which can be equated with creativity, but which is also an important social activity. As for any social activity, certain social conditions must exist for it to flourish. There must be a certain intellectual and social climate in order for translation to really grow into an important social activity. On the one hand, this calls for the evolution of able translators, who will possess both an excellent knowledge of their own and the foreign language they are translating from as well as in-depth knowledge of the field they are dealing with.

On the other hand, society must formulate and state its needs for a certain kind of translation literature, and a certain kind of intellectual public must develop manifesting a sufficient degree of interest in various translated works.

Many of these conditions already exist in Yugoslavia. There is no question but that we have a pleiade of excellent translators. According to one source¹⁾, we have 58 translators of philosophical literature and 85 of literature from the field of the social sciences. Since many of them translate both kinds of literature, we can say that the social sciences group includes 28 translators from the philosophical literature group. This, let us note, is still a large enough number of translators for intensive activity in the art of translating. Although society, as represented by its publishing houses and their editors, still does not offer a precise definition of specific needs, the appearance of many new editions and library series in the last decade alone testifies to the formation of certain conceptions by and the arrival of people who are capable of feeling and expressing the needs of society and culture. Let us mention just a few famous collections: "Današnji svet" from the "Prosveta" publishing house, "Zodijak" of the "Vuk Karadžić" publishing house, "Književnost i civilizacija" and the renowned "Sazvežđa" collections published by "Nolit". All of these collections basically encompass translated works. According to the UNESCO Statistical Yearbook²⁾, in 1968 alone 1,295 books were translated, the majority, 699, from the fine arts, followed by 323 from the social sciences. It is still an open question as to whether or not there is a certain intellectual public with a sufficient degree of interest in these fields of literature, but certain data reveals that books dealing with current and important topics do find a reading public.

Yet another interesting question remains however, and that is the basic concern of this paper: to what degree does Yugoslav publishing succeed in making a timely presentation to our reading public of new and important books published in a foreign language? When we say "timely", we mean the interval existing between two publishing dates, the time it takes for a certain book to be published in translation in Yugoslavia after having appeared on the foreign book market. Of course, this

¹⁾ *Modern Literary Translators of Yugoslavia*, Belgrade, The Union of Yugoslav Literary Translators, 1970, Page 269.

²⁾ *Statistical Yearbook, Annuaire Statistique 1970*, Paris, UNESCO, 1971.

problem also entails criteria for selecting the books to be translated, for to translate everything published in a given country, no matter from what field, would mean a lack of certain standards in determining what is truly worthwhile and what is transient and fashionable.

At the same time, this question can also be narrowed down to the conditions which exist for translating and publishing certain kinds of literature. Unfortunately, it is more fact than impression that sometimes an entire decade can go by before we succeed in publishing many important works in translation, not to mention that many already almost classic works from between the two world wars or even earlier, have not been made available to that segment of our reading public which has no knowledge of foreign languages.

We shall back this claim with a small systematic analysis which we feel can serve as only a prelude to a problem about which both translators and publishers can have a lot to say.

Of all the collections we have mentioned, perhaps the "Sazvežđa" library will serve as the most illustrative example. This collection shows the history of an important cultural undertaking which has been in process for almost a decade now and which offers a look at the time gaps which had to be conquered and the degree to which we still lag behind in translation, even with respect to this particular collection. Founded in 1964 with the aim of offering "our reading public the latest works from various fields", the "Sazvežđa" collection chose as its first book for publication Erich Fromm's famous "Escape From Freedom", first published in 1942 in New York. This first book, awaited with great interest, had to bridge a time gap of over 20 years. In the interim, since 1964, another 29 books have appeared in this famous library collection. Only four of them were by Yugoslav authors, — the rest were translated from other languages: 10 from French, 6 from English, 4 from German, 3 from Polish and 1 from Russian.

Most of the books translated during this period were from the field of the social sciences: 11 books dealt with anthropology, psychology and sociology, 6 with philosophy, 5 with the arts and literature and 4 with linguistic studies.

The following survey shows the date of original publication, the date it appeared in Yugoslav translation, and the language from which the book was translated.

Author and Title of Book	Yr. of Orig. Publication	Yr. of Yugo. Trans.	From
1. Erich Fromm, <i>Escape from Freedom</i>	1942	1964	English
2. Leszek Kolakowski, <i>Philosophical Essays</i>	—	1964	Polish
3. Pierre Francastel, <i>Art and Technique</i>	1956	1964	French
4. S. M. Eisenstein, <i>Essays on Film</i>	—	1964	—
5. <i>Čovek danas</i> , (Man Today) — Anthology (Yugo.)	—	—	—
6. Hans Reichenbach, <i>The Rise of Scientific Philosophy</i>	1951	1964	English
7. Nikola Milošević, <i>Antropološki eseji</i> , (Anthropological Essays), (Yugo.)	—	—	—
8. D. T. Suzuki and E. Fromm, <i>Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis</i>	1960	1964	English
9. Norbert Wiener, <i>Cybernetics and Society</i>	1954	1964	English
10. Roger Caillois, <i>Man, Play and Games</i>	1958	1965	French
11. David Riesman, <i>The Lonely Crowd</i>	1960	1965	English
12. Claude Levy-Strauss, <i>La Pensée Sauvage</i>	1962	1966	French
13. Bertolt Brecht, <i>Dialectics in the Theatre</i>	1963	1966	German
14. Marek Fricland, <i>Marx's Ethical Thought</i>	1961	1966	Polish

15. E. Bloch, <i>A Tübingenian Introduction to Philosophy</i>	1963	1966	German
16. Roman Jakobson, <i>Linguistics and Poetics</i>	—	1966	—
17. M. Bahtin, <i>Problems in Dostoyevski's Poetics</i>	1963	1967	Russian
18. Adam Schaff, <i>Marxism and the Human Individual</i>	1965	1967	Polish
19. T. Adorno, <i>The Philosophy of Modern Music</i>	1958	1968	German
20. Karl Mannheim, <i>Ideology and Utopia</i>	1965	1968	English
21. Jean Piaget, <i>The Psychology of Intelligence</i>	1961	1968	French
22. Jovan Hrišćić, <i>Oblici moderne književnosti, (Forms of Modern Literature), (Yugo.)</i>			
23. Sreten Marić, <i>Glasnici apokalipse, (The Heralds of the Apocalypse), (Yugo.)</i>			
24. Ferdinand De Saussure, <i>Course in General Linguistics</i>	1949	1969	French
25. Jean-Paul Sartre, <i>Existentialism ...</i>	1960	1970	French
26. Louis Althusser, <i>Pour Marr</i>	1965	1971	French
27. Roland Barthes, <i>Literature, Mythology</i>	1953—66	1971	French
28. Jean Piaget, <i>Insights and Illusions of Philosophy</i>	1965	1971	French
29. Fung Yu-Lan, <i>History of Chinese Philosophy</i>	1948	1971	English
30. Michel Foucault, <i>Words and Things</i>	1966	1971	French

When we analyse and compare the original and Yugoslav dates of publication, we discover that initially very large time gaps were bridged which still occasionally exist even with respect to later translations of books. According to a rough time groupation, divided into 5, 6—10, 11—15 and 16—20 year time gaps, we get the following situation: a 5 year time gap exists in the case of 10 translated books, out of which only 4 have what we may call a tolerable gap of 3 years, while the rest show a gap of over 3 years, usually 4—5 years. The majority of books in this group have been translated from English, followed by German and French. The next 6—10 year time gap group contains 9 books in translation, out of which 3 were translated after a full 10 years. The remaining two groups, with 11—15 and 16—20 year time gaps, are quite sparse. One, *The Rise of Scientific Philosophy*, was translated 13 years after its original publication, and the other, *Course in General Linguistics*, 20 years after.

Clearly, the collection flourished in its first year, when it published 9 books, out of which 7 were translations. This period conquered some of the largest time gaps. As we have seen, one book was translated after 22 years, one after 13, and one, *Cybernetics and Society*, after 10. Although no particular rule applies later on whereby this gap is greatly cut down with respect to newer translations, among those translated and published in 1971 only one, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*, translated from the 1948 English edition, shows a very great gap of 23 years. This gap edges on the limits of a wider range of tolerance of 5 years in all other cases.

Although we have no intention of offering praise or assuming the role of a critic, this library collection has been and is conquering these negative time gaps and has been and is filling many of the voids in our culture by transmitting many ideas and knowledge necessary for a culture which does not wish to be poor or languor. There is still, however, the question of a certain consistency in such transmission. In 1966, for example, *Dialectics in the Theatre* and *A Tübingenian Introduction to Philosophy* appeared in translation. Both were originally published in 1963 in Frankfurt and both are of unquestionable value and importance. Only in 1968, however, did the book, *The Philosophy of New Music*, originally published in 1958 in Frankfurt, appear in translation, while Saussure's famous work, published in Paris back in 1949, was translated in 1969. Naturally, it is difficult to say who is more important, Brecht or

Adorno, Bloch or Saussure and which work should have been given translating priority. We are only noting certain "divergencies", while bearing in mind that the publication of any new book in translation, even in the case of a collection with its own specific concept, results out of a certain meeting between the publisher and the translator; in this case, above all, between the editor and the translator.

Let us add that 24 Yugoslav translators, the majority of whom are members of the Literary Translators Union and have already done several important translations, worked on the translation of these 26 books. They are as follows, in alphabetical order: Tomislav Bekić, Ranko Bugarski, Olga Vlatković, Mirjana Vukmirović-Mihailović, Vjera Vuletić, Branko Vučićević, Gustav Gavrik, Slobodan Đorđević, Branimir Živojinović, Branko and Jelena Jelić, Sreten Marić, Božidar Marković, Milica Nikolić, Svetozar Nikolić, Draginja Pervaz, Ljubomir Radanović, Davor Rodin, Aleksandar I. Spasić, Olivera Stefanović, Dušan Stojanović, Darko Suvin, Radoje Tatić and Ivan Foht. Some of them, like Slobodan Đorđević, Sreten Marić, Svetozar Nikolić and Aleksandar I. Spasić, have translated two books, while several translators worked on the translation of certain books such as *Linguistics and Poetics*.

These translators greatly contributed to the prestige of this library collection by virtue of their choice of translation, when possible, but most of all by virtue of their translations themselves. However, since we do not wish to write only about this collection and about translating as translating, for that is the concern of other experts, but rather of a problem concerning society and culture, let us note the example of other books which reveal the same problem, regardless of the fact that they may or many not belong to a particular collection. This group of books should be seen as a control group.

As can be seen, out of the 10 listed books, 6 of which are translated from English, 3 from French and 1 from Italian, four show a tolerable gap of five years, 4 show a 6–10 year time gap, and 2 fall into the over 20 year time group. If we add to this the fact that Susanne Langer's classic work was translated from the third edition published in Cambridge in 1960, and that Thorstein Veblen's equally classic work was translated from a later edition, then things look even less rosy.

Well-known translators and experts in individual fields worked on the translation of these 10 books. They are the following: Žarko Vidović,

<i>Author and Title of Book</i>	<i>Yr. of Orig. Publication</i>	<i>Yr. of Yugo. Translation</i>	<i>From</i>
1. Leslie White, <i>The Science of Culture</i>	1949	1970	English
2. Thorstein Veblen, <i>The Theory of the Leisure Class</i>	1957	1966	English
3. Lucien Goldmann, <i>For A Sociology of the Novel</i>	1964	1967	French
4. Georges Gurvitch, <i>The Modern Call of Sociology</i>	1963	1965	French
5. Umberto Eco, <i>Open Work</i>	1962	1965	Italian
6. Marshall McLuhan, <i>Understanding Media</i>	1964	1971	English
7. Susanne Langer, <i>Philosophy in a New Key</i>	1960	1967	English
8. Bronislaw Malinowski, <i>Scientific Theory of Culture</i>	1941	1970	English
9. Edgar Morin, <i>The Spirit of the Times</i>	1962	1967	French
10. Erich Fromm, <i>The Sane Society</i>	1959	1963	English

Nadežda Vinaver, Branko Vučićević, Slobodan Đorđević, Branko Jelić, Radoslav Konstantinović, Nika V. Milićević, Nikola Mišić, Zaga Pešić-Golubović, Nerkez Smailagić, Aleksandar I. Spasić and Anđelija Todorović. A certain number out of these 12 translators are scholars or experts in their field, and at least 3 are professional translators: Branko Vučićević, Slobodan Đorđević and Aleksandar I. Spasić, who have specialized in translating works from the field of the social sciences. This only proves that even this division into professional translators and scholars who also translate is very relative. A true scholar should, in principle, be an equally able translator of literature from his own field, and parallelly, a professional translator of specialized literature must be proficient in the field he is working with. It is essential, in any case, to note that we do not lack in translating potential and that we do not have to seek the causes of a still unfavourable situation in that direction.

And so the basic questions remains: why are we still tardy in translating some of the important works of world literature from various fields in the social sciences? If we take translating as a social activity in which other actors take part beside the main actor of the translator, then we must ask ourselves, where are the causes of this delay? At the same time, a desirable or tolerable time limit must be set for a book worthy of translation to be translated. It seems to us that the desirable time limit would be at the most two years, and a tolerable time limit not more than three. We have seen that only a few cases show such a set tolerable time limit, while the desirable time limit we have set hardly exists at all.

If we look at things this way, then the following questions seem relevant to the problem:

Who most often takes the initiative in the translation of certain books? What is the role of the translator and what is the relationship between him and the publisher, or the editor of a particular collection? What are the criteria set for selecting certain books for translation? How much time does the translator need for his work, and how much time goes by from the day that the translated text is placed on the editor's desk to the day it appears in the form of a book? To what degree, if at all, is the translator materially stimulated in his work? What is the circulation number of translated books and do such books have their own reading public and buyers?

It is difficult to answer the majority of these questions without a deeper look at the prota-

gonists in this process, — the translator and the publisher. The author of this paper thought of making a series of interviews with translators and editors, but, unfortunately, he was not able to carry his idea out to the end. However, the talks he had were priceless for clarifying at least some of the problems which crop up, especially since they are relevant to the collection which serves as the framework for this paper, the "Sazvežđa" collection.

The issue of who initiates a translation loses its alternative meaning when this joint job of translation and publication of a book is approached by a translator who is proficient in his work and has a feeling for the specific type of literature he is dealing with and an editor who has his own idea and concept of the collection. This is exactly the case with the "Sazvežđa" collection. Aleksandar I. Spasić, one of our most prolific and expert translators, translated together with Slobodan Đorđević two books which appeared in this collection: *"Escape from Freedom"* and *"The Rise of Scientific Philosophy"*. Both of them were translated at the request of the editor, but similarly, they translated these books in accordance with their own affinity for this kind of literature, — they were intellectually motivated. This is also the case with the majority of other books in this collection, translated at the initiative of the editor, Miloš Stambolić. In this joint endeavour a pleiade of translators who are authors several times over joined in the work as professional translators and as experts in a particular field. Many of them also selected certain texts for translation. However, very often the translator also appears as the immediate initiator and has an active role. Susanne Langer's famous book *Philosophy in a New Key* was published at the initiative of translator Aleksandar I. Spasić.

Therefore, we could say that one of the principle conditions for success in translating is an encounter between an able translator and an editor who knows what he wants. We have seen that we have a pleiade of good translators, and the number of professional and capable editors is growing who are giving certain collections a particular physiomy.

The books which have been translated so far reveal certain criteria, affinities and a feeling for what has been missed, for what should be offered to the reader, etc. We may not agree with all of the criteria, we may not have the same affinities, but obviously, as Mr. Spasić notes, a period of intellectual poverty has been transcended. Unfortunately, and this must be emphasized, there have been too many voids and

it was a tremendous job to become acquainted with the results of philosophical and scientific thought in the world. Much remains to be translated.

On the other hand, as with any activity, the translation and publication of books calls for certain conditions, a certain time and a certain stimulus. A translator needs about one year and sometimes less, for working on a serious book from the field of philosophy or some other social science, unless he does nothing else. Preparations for publishing a book and the technological process of printing last for at least six months. If we admit some lost time in-between amounting to six months, that is again a year. That means that there is a possibility for what we call a desirable time lapse between the date of original publication of a foreign book and its published translation here. However, publishing in Yugoslavia is obviously subject to other rhythms as well, to other oscillations and some other conditions. There are economic and organizational problems, problems of placing and selling the book, etc. This imbalanced rhythm can be noticed in the "Sazvežđa" collection. After 1964, when seven translated works were published, only 1966 was more productive as a publishing year. The ensuing years see 2-3 books at the most, but in 1971 the number is on the upgrade again. At the moment, about 30 books are awaiting publication in this collection, out of which many have been already translated.

Author's royalties, unfortunately, are hardly stimulating for the translator, even when they reach the maximum rate. Let us say that a book numbering 15 printing signatures (16 pages each), costs the translator about 1,000 hours of work. If he gets 400 dinars gross per printing signature, his total fee should bring him 6,000 dinars. This means that the translator's hour is not valued at more than 6 new dinars. There is still the intellectual satisfaction and the possibility of a certain compensation by having works published in journals and reviews, although this is not always certain.

And finally, the question of an intellectual public, interested in this kind of literature. When the "Sazvežđa" collection began, its editor, Miloš Stambolić, was rather dubious as to whether or not the set circulation of 4,000 copies would sell. Fortunately, it seems as if he was not quite justified in his doubts. The first book, *Escape from Freedom*, had a second reprinting, and the third edition is now being prepared. *Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis* also was reprinted. Perhaps this success is due to Erich Fromm's exceptional popularity in our intellectual milieu.

However, another 12 books besides these two in this edition are almost sold out. As far as the copies of the remaining ten or so books, they number in some cases only 1,000 waiting in stock.

Therefore, a special public for this kind of book already exists, and shows and proves its interest. We can ask ourselves who is that public and have all of its fringes been reached and its needs been satisfied. In any case, this public is composed of two levels: the professional segment of the public and the unprofessional segment. The professional level, and here we mean university professors, high school teachers, scholars in various fields of the social sciences, partially satisfy the needs which arise from their specific kind of intellectual activity with this kind of literature. The unprofessional segment of the public, which has a certain need for knowledge, a certain kind of interest and curiosity, satisfies a relatively free intellectual need. If this literature were to solely depend on the first group, important though it is, it would not be able to count on a very large circulation or sale of its books, for a large segment of this group discovers many works in their native tongue, before they have been translated into Serbo-Croatian. Therefore, such literature covering highly diverse disciplines must concentrate on expanding the unprofessional segment of the public, which already possesses certain educational and psychological postulates for being interested in this kind of literature.

This means, then, that it is necessary in this complex social and cultural process, which begins with a selection of certain books to be translated, the translation itself and ends with the publication of the book, for all participants to work towards a basic goal: the development and satisfaction of certain of man's needs for knowledge.

(Translated From the Serbo-Croatian by
KRISTINA ZORIĆ)