

have available in English one of the newest voices from Ljubljana. Debeljak, winner of the Hayden Carruth Prize at Syracuse, deserves more prestigious presentation, but this is a nice start. For my taste, especially his prose—for instance his perspicacious comments on the United States which have been appearing in *Delo*—needs to be translated.

I wish to insist again that, although the reader in English will not be in a position to make interlingual comparisons, the standards of exactness for poetry translation have to be the highest. There must be a religious respect for the original if only because so much has already been lost on the way to the original. As Merwin says in “The Poem,” “Coming late, as always, / I try to remember what I almost heard.”

Michael Biggins’ translations of Debeljak are much more precise than his translations of Kocbek; no doubt he consulted the poet, whose English is very good. However there are, occasionally, slips that do matter, such as the following: *komaj se premikaš* in “Opis zgodovine 4 [Outline of history 4]” is translated as “no sooner do you move;” in other words, the translator has mistaken it for *komaj se premakneš*. (Yes, Slovene verbs are tricky). Or: in “Biografija sna 5 [Dream biography 5]”, *plivka* is “surges”; thus “lapping” becomes “surging.” Who would know about this, if I were not to point it out here? Does it matter? Yes.

A few words about the originals—with the warning that my taste in Slovene poetry runs to Brvar. I stand in awe of Debeljak; and if he can turn out this kind of writing now, just imagine what is to come! But the poetry is too erudite for my poor taste. Pretentiousness is rampant in Ljubljana (perhaps as a product of its real—very romantic, but noxious—fog). How a Marcel Štefančič, jr. [sic] loves the *tujka*! And when Debeljak compares something to *visoki ce Elle Fitzgerald*, I am of course impressed that he has heard her, that he has seen the commercial—but does he know his image is corn? The problem may well be that Debeljak is not Slovene enough for me. One must be local before one can be universal.

Nonetheless I recommend both this volume and the one reviewed above. Quibble as I may, these are wonderful enterprises that promise much in the way of fine writing to come.

Tom Ložar, Vanier College, PQ

Editor’s note: Michael Biggins, the contributor of translations to the last two books reviewed above, informs me that editorial neglect in both publications resulted not only in numerous typographical errors, but also in misreadings of words (what should have been “intimation” in one of Debeljak’s poems was printed as “imitation,” and “from” in one instance became “form”), even the deletion of words and entire phrases in three instances. Of the two publications, the Yugoslav issue of *The Poetry Miscellany* was far more carefully edited than Debeljak’s *Chronicle of Melancholy*.

Ivan Cankar, *My Life and Other Sketches*. Selected and introduced by Josip Vidmar. Transl. Elza Jereb and Alasdair MacKinnon. Ljubljana: DSP MKI, 1988 [= VILENICA SCLC],¹ 130 pp..

Ciril Kosmač, *A Day in Spring*. Trans. Fanny S. Copeland. Foreword by John Parker. Ljubljana: DSP MKI, 1988 [= VILENICA SCLC], 170 pp..

Ivan Potrč, *The Land and the Flesh*. Trans. Harry Leeming. Ljubljana: DSP MKI, 1988 [= VILENICA SCLC], 198 pp..

Dominik Smole, *Antigone*. Transl. Harry Leeming. Ljubljana: DSP MKI, 1988 [= VILENICA SCLC], 70 pp..

Vitomil Zupan, *Minuet for (25-shot) Guitar*. Transl. Harry Leeming. Ljubljana: DSP MKI, 1988 [= VILENICA SCLC], 320 pp..

The first five books in the new *VILENICA* series of Slovene literary works in English translation constitute an important stage in the efforts to make Slovene letters more accessible to the non-Slavic world.² Selected works by five modern Slovene writers—Ivan Cankar (1876-1918), Ciril Kosmač (1910-80), Ivan Potrč (1913-), Dominik Smole (1929-) and Vitomil Zupan (1914-88)—are presented by three native English translators. Recalling views expressed on the subject of small national literatures eleven years ago in *Slovene Studies* (1979) and earlier in *Papers in Slovene Studies 1976*, we turn with especial interest to this major publishing undertaking. To summarize those ideas: it was argued (Lencek 1979) that the key considerations in evaluating a national literature are its treatment of the universals of human life and the manner in which the literature operates within a tradition, first and foremost its linguistic tradition; and (Harkins 1976) that the best arbiter in this process is a knowledgeable outside observer, sympathetic to the target culture. How does the *VILENICA* series appear in this light?

The *VILENICA* collection's treatment of universal literary themes recommends it to the foreign reader; and I am speaking not only of the obvious *Antigone* theme in Smole's drama, or of the experience of time in Zupan's *Menuet za kitaro*; even the seemingly insular village life depicted by Potrč in *Na kmetih* reveals a trove of perplexities shared by all people. Franček Bohanec described them thus:

Roman *Na kmetih* je najostrejši obračun z zlaganostjo, z razkorakom med besedo in življenjem, med željami in resničnostjo, med ideali svobode in nasiljem, ki mu je izpostavljan človek med vizijami socialistične blaginje in med klavirno resničnostjo. Roman *Na kmetih* je - gledano s tega vidika - ena najbolj mrkih podob kmečkega in s tem občega življenja, kar jih je upodobil doslej katerikoli slovenski pisatelj." (Bohanec 1983: 485)

Similar things could, of course, be said about Cankar and Kosmač, making the entire collection a well-selected and worthy test of Slovene literature's potential in the world. To put it another way, may Bohanec's "katerikoli slovenski pisatelj" be modified by dropping the attributive adjective?

Given the existence of a sizeable literature with a unique tradition—and interacting with other literatures, let us not forget,—the role of the outside (i.e., the translator and cultural interpreter) remains to be addressed. What follows, therefore, are *some* indications of how well those who contributed to this series were able to transpose the coordinates of the Slovene literary language onto an English map.

Harry Leeming has contributed the most to the first five volumes in the series. He demonstrates his versatility as a translator in successfully handling Smole's verses in *Antigone*, the peasant idiom in Potrč's novel, and Zupan's presentation of wartime memories from the point of view of a Ljubljana intellectual turned partisan. The only linguistic drawbacks to Leeming's prose translations are an occasional tendency to neutralize the style of the original by employing a more literary English and, at times, using paraphrase. Some examples of what I mean:

... nekdo mora *prijeti za palico* pri hiši
...

... you needed someone in the house *to put things in order* ... (Potrč, 25)

... je povprašala: "Kovačice?
Krčmarkine?"
"Katero že. Lahko tudi Topličkina katera
..."

... "Is it one of the blacksmith's
daughters? Or the innkeeper's
daughters?" "Maybe. Or perhaps it's *one of of the Toplek girls* ..." (Potrč, 27)

Jezus-nazarenski, kri pljuval!" je tožila
Toplečka ljudem in bila je videti pri tem
potrta in vsa *zlomljena*

Merciful God, he's started coughing
blood now!" Toplechka would complain
to the neighbours. You could see that she
was *worn out* and *heart-broken*
(Potrč, 64).

"Merciful God," "worn out" and "heart-broken" are all less expressive than the original, and "he's started coughing blood now!" lacks force because of its length.

Word-for-word translation is, of course, not an ideal; but in some instances close adherence to the original ordering yields non-lexical meaning. For instance, the repetition "znorel, znorel, znorel ..." becomes "You're crazy, lad! You're crazy!" (Potrč, 64), and the declining cadence of the original, conveying finality and hopelessness, is at odds with the English, which sounds like a protest. Incidentally, it is unfortunate that the key word *noriti* is not linked to other passages in the translation; for example, earlier in the novel we have "Katero dekline pa noriš?" ... 'Kaj bi on koga norel?' ... 'Ženske njega norijo.'" In English: "You've got some girl lined up, have you?" ... 'If only he had!' ... 'It's the girls who are after him!'" (Potrč, 27); and in other places, the adjective *nor* is given as "stupid." Thus a potentially important motif is lost in translation.

In his translation of Zupan, too, Leeming frequently conveys the sense but not the reality of the Slovene:

Strahotno sem vtisnjen v to uro in v ta
prostor

That moment and that place ... are
stamped in my memory (16)

za vsako "nediscipliniranost" je dal
streljati

he had ordered *several* executions for
"lack of discipline" (31)

O tem z nikomer *ni mogoče* govoriti

I shall never *have the chance* to discuss
this with anyone (31)

In these and similar passages Zupan's physical descriptiveness suffers, as can be seen in the following: "Kaj je vse v tisti noči šlo skozi mojo glavo in skozi žične loke spomina!" In English: "What thoughts, what vivid memories, re-echoed in my mind all through the night" (113), obscuring the corporeal basis of memory in Zupan's description.

Leeming does a good deal of re-combining sentences and re-paragraphing: the former more in Potrč, whose periods are longer; the latter in Zupan, whose logical train of thought runs through sometimes lengthy paragraphs. Often such re-arranging is necessary and helpful; however, there are enough examples like the following where syntactic alterations change the meaning, suggesting that more caution should have been exercised: "Ker me

nihče ne pogleda, vem: tak sem tudi sam, kakor bi bil v začetku razpadanja” as “No one was looking at me either, as I was well aware. I was just like them, in the first stages of decay” (Zupan, 196). Here, dropping the colon and changing the object of *vedeti* obfuscates the causation.

In both novels there are, besides, a few sentences omitted; such errors are “left” (Zupan, 189) for “desno,” and “article” (Zupan, 151) for “stavek”; a number of needless modifications along the lines of “Preklel je vse” as “He cursed *just about* everything” (Potrč, 6) and “Tako si je dal duška” as “These words *seemed to* relieve his feelings” (Potrč, 5).

Ivan Cankar’s “Moje življenje” is nicely presented by Jereb and MacKinnon, who manage to convey both the narrator’s wittiness and the impassioned point of view of the child. Their translation of Cankar’s one-paragraph judgment of Rousseau (38-39) is worth the price of the book. The only serious criticism that can be made is of their decision to leave proper names unexplained or unglossed. Thus, on the very first line of “My Life,” the reader is faced with “our «Slovenska maticas»” (11). (For some inexplicable reason this book, alone among the five, has guillemets instead of quotation marks.) Some readers are sure to be puzzled: what is Matica? How does it differ from “the authorities” (a loose translations of *državni uradi*)? And why should it employ Slovene instead of Croatian? Also, those unfamiliar with Slovene geography must depend on context and a gazetteer. The only gloss in the volume is of “the «Tenth Brothers»” and reads: “*Jurčič: Deseti Brat”, explaining nothing (30).

The sketches that follow “My Life” appear to be more unevenly translated than the title story. I think that Cankar in this English version is somewhat less engaging and frank than in the original. If true, this tendency would, of course, run counter to the author’s intention. Another issue for the specialist is the selection and ordering of the sketches, without reference to the cycles to which they belong or to their publication dates. Cankar’s introduction to his final cycle, “Podobe iz sanj,” is not identified as such amidst the sketches. In his introduction Josip Vidmar is so concerned with relating Cankar’s work to the development of capitalism in Slovenia and explaining how “partisan brigades bearing his name ... entered the fight for the true freedom of their nation” that he neglects to attend to such literary matters as the stylistic difference between cycles of sketches, or even what a sketch is in the first place. The introduction should, simply, have been omitted from the reprint.³

While all the books in this series are a pleasure to read, *A Day in Spring* must be called the standout. Copeland’s translation is good, containing some places that rival Kosmač’s original. Two of my favorite examples:

Tedaj ga bo spet objela prejšna tišina,
ki v njej tako pritajeno hrumi.

Again he would be enveloped in that
former silence, pregnant with muffled
voices. (33)

Zibala se je in ob šumenju reke
preizkuševala moč krhkega, še
nerazvitega, neizlaganega grla.

Swaying up and down, she pitted the
strength of her voice, as yet brittle,
uneven, and underdeveloped,, against
the surge and ripple of the water. (53)

And then there is Copeland’s marvelous handling of the exchange between the pastor and the carpenter that hinges on the word-play between *Podzemlja* as a family name and the “nether regions” (48).

Copeland is precise with natural description. She also does many readers a service by supplying English equivalents, where possible, of place names, family names, and nicknames: "Pogorišče" is "Burnt Farm" and "Pogoriščar" is "the goodman of the house," "Obrekarjev dob" is "Obrekar Oaks," "Ilovica" is "Claylands" and "Banška planota" is "Banška Fell." In this way Copeland turns the restricted setting to her advantage as a translator of culture.⁴ I must also mention her fortuitous use of upper case in "the Boy" for the Slovene *pob*, the protagonist.

There have been minor syntactic and punctuation changes from the 1959 printing to this one. Otherwise the two are identical, even in their unfortunate omission of roughly 1200 words in the original, in four different places in Part One, Chapter Five. Several lesser omissions have been made in other chapters. In addition, this printing leaves out two stanzas quoted (in English) from Tennyson's "Charge of the Light Brigade" and about 150 words that immediately follow it (18).

All English speakers interested in Slovene culture can be thankful to the translators and to the Društvo slovenskih pisateljev for bringing us this collection. Hopefully, the series will continue, difficulties and costs notwithstanding. Should a continuation be possible, the publishers should seek better proofreading, to decrease the too-numerous typographical errors and mistakes in punctuation and spacing, which are most glaring in the Potrč and Cankar volumes. So that readers will feel more at home in the handsomely bound and printed pages, the series should adhere more closely to British and North American publishing practices. Attention to details like the following is essential to making a translated work familiar and thus accessible: (1) the translators' names must appear on the title page; (2) a series editor should be listed on a copyright page, and this should appear at the front; (3) a translator's note should be included and identified as such; (4) publication information about the original work should be included; (5) a uniform method of spelling proper names should be adopted; (6) clear introductions, directed at non-Slovenes, would be desirable; (7) the names of the authors of introductions and prefaces should be listed in the proper place; (8) the series title should appear on the half title page instead of on its verso; (9) the language on the dust jacket should be simplified and edited by a qualified speaker of English, especially if proper introductions are to be included; (10) the front material should be paginated separately from the text of the translated work. These modifications would enhance the translators' work and prepare the reader to better appreciate it. A serious endeavor such as this deserves good production.

NOTES

1. Abbreviations: DSP = Društvo slovenskih pisateljev; MKI = Mladinska knjiga International; SCLC = Slovene contemporary literature collection.
2. This is so because of the simultaneous publications of these five translations; at least four of them are re-publications, but first appeared at various times and in various places: the Jereb-Mackinnon translation of Cankar, in Ljubljana (Državna založba, 1971); the Copeland translation of Kosmač, in New York (London House & Maxwell, 1959) and London (Lincoln-Praeger, 1959); the Leeming translation of Potrč, in London (Peter Owen, 1969); and the Leeming translation of Smole, in *Scena* 7 (1984) 16-89. An extract of the Leeming translation of Zupan was published in *Le livre slovène* 22/ii-iii (1984) 9-15.
3. One drawback to the understandable decision to reprint this translation is that no advantage is taken of more recent translations of Cankar, such as the one by Anton Druzina (Cankar 1982).
4. But, for some reason, *Preseka*, the name for a bend in the road, is omitted on p. 58 and elsewhere. Also, *Pekni dom* is rendered as "Pekni dum" twice (120, 162).

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Timothy Pogacar, Bowling Green State University

Riglerjev zbornik. Ob šestdesetletnici rojstva. Uredila Jože Toporišič in Velemir Gjurin [= *Slavistična revija* 37/1-3]. Maribor: Obzorja, 1989. 383 pp.

This triple issue of the 37th volume of *Slavistična revija* is dedicated to the sixtieth anniversary of Jakob Rigler's birth, with whose death four years ago Slovene linguistics lost one of its finest scholars. Thirty-one linguists, more than half of them from abroad, contributed to the volume; contrary to the usual policy of the journal, the articles appear in their original languages. The issue was presented to the public at a press conference in Ljubljana in September 1989, an event that underscored its importance for Slovene culture.

The topics of the articles cover all the numerous areas of Rigler's scholarly interest in the Slovene language, i.e., Modern Standard Slovene, primarily phonology, accentology, morphology and lexicology; dialectology; and the history of the Slovene phonemic system, accent, and lexicon. Some papers deal with topics that go beyond Rigler's immediate interests, such as sociolinguistics, etymology and textology, but these only broaden the scope of this rich collection of linguistic studies. The editors grouped the contributions in four broad themes: I. Sound and Accent; II. Phrases, Words and Forms; III. Dialects and Languages; IV. Languages and Linguistics.

Most of the papers in the first section deal with the historical development and reconstruction of the Slovene phonemic system. Two of them are concerned with problems connected with the earliest period of Slovene. The first (H.G. Lunt) discusses the position of "Common Slovene," primarily its hypothetical phonological system, in the linguistic (dialectal) changes of Late Common Slavic. It posits that the earliest fundamental structural changes took place in the Alpine and Pannonian areas. The second, dealing with the same period of Slovene phonology (J. Gvozdanović), offers a plausible and thought-provoking explanation of the heterogeneous and seemingly inconsistent markings of the vowels and the consonants in the Freising Fragments, which consequently provides new information about the earliest stage of the Slovene vowel system and accent.

Two articles deal with problems of historical dialectology and could just as well have been placed in the second section. F. Kortlandt, applying Slovene and West Bulgarian dialectal material, provides a reconstruction of the accentual patterns of neuter nouns in Common Slavic, with special attention to the evidence of length in the unstressed nom. and acc. pl. ending. Slovene offers more direct evidence, supported by Bulgarian material, and also helps to explain West Bulgarian accentual classes. Particularly interesting is W.